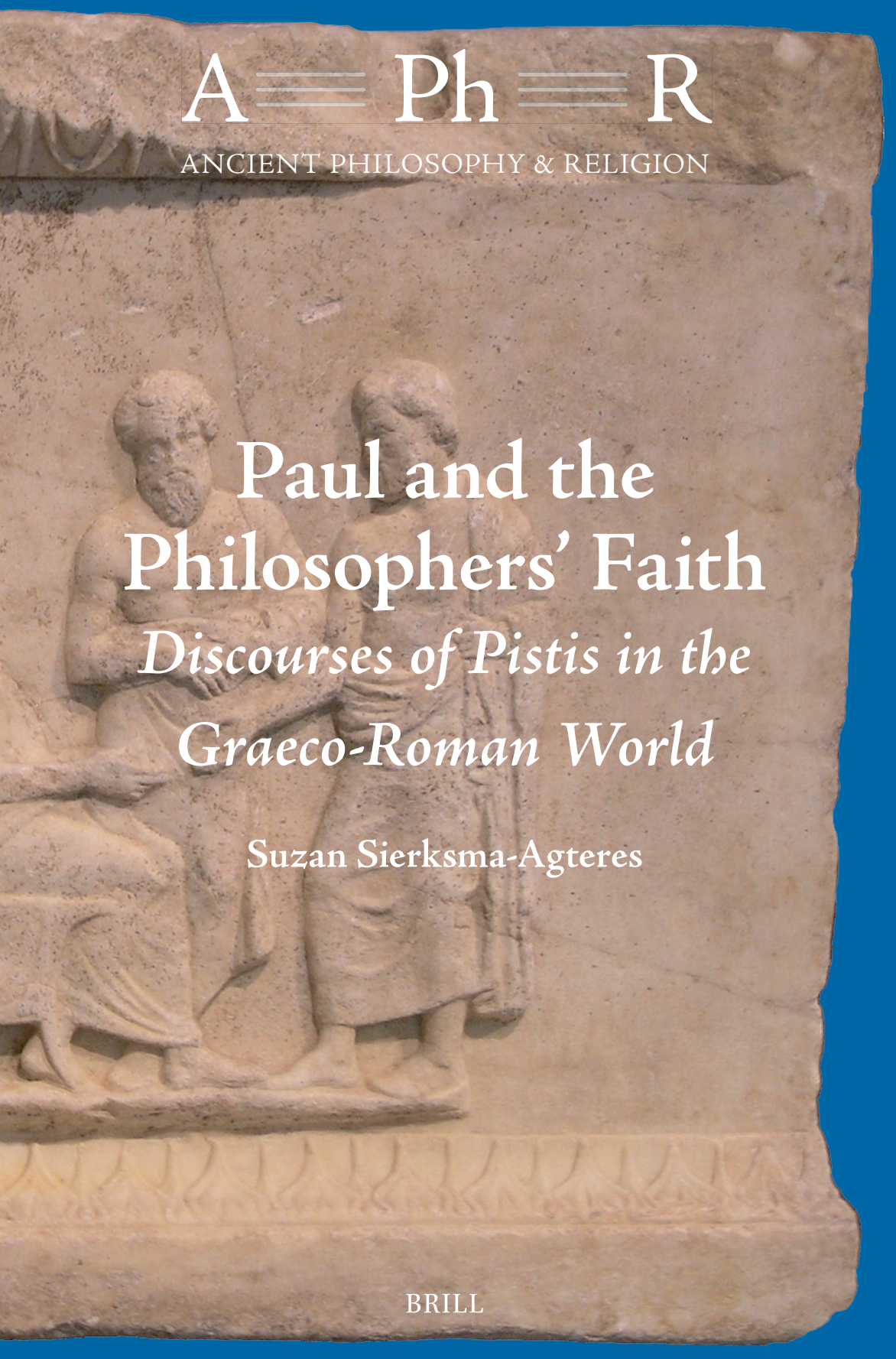


A ≡ Ph ≡ R

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION



Paul and the  
Philosophers' Faith  
*Discourses of Pistis in the  
Graeco-Roman World*

Suzan Sierksma-Agteres

BRILL

## Paul and the Philosophers' Faith

# Ancient Philosophy & Religion

*Edited by*

George Boys-Stones (*University of Toronto*)  
George van Kooten (*University of Cambridge*)

*Advisory Board*

Gábor Betegh (*Cambridge*)  
Troels Engberg-Pedersen (*Copenhagen*)  
Reinhard Feldmeier (*Göttingen*)  
Matyáš Havrda (*Prague*)  
Philippe Hoffmann (*École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris*)  
George Karamanolis (*Vienna*)  
Anders Klostergaard Petersen (*Aarhus*)  
David Konstan (*New York University*)  
Winrich Löhr (*Heidelberg*)  
John Magee (*Toronto*)  
Maren Niehoff (*Hebrew University of Jerusalem*)  
Ilaria Ramelli (*Milan*)  
Gretchen Reydams-Schils (*Notre Dame, USA*)  
Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta (*Groningen*)  
Gregory E. Sterling (*Yale*)  
Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler (*Göttingen*)  
Shaul Tor (*King's College London*)  
Robbert van den Berg (*Leiden*)  
Peter Van Nuffelen (*Ghent*)

VOLUME 12

The titles published in this series are listed at [brill.com/aphr](http://brill.com/aphr)

# Paul and the Philosophers' Faith

*Discourses of Pistis in the Graeco-Roman World*

*By*

Suzan Sierksma-Agteres



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON



This is an open access title distributed under the terms of the CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license, which permits any non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided no alterations are made and the original author(s) and source are credited. Further information and the complete license text can be found at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

The terms of the CC license apply only to the original material. The use of material from other sources (indicated by a reference) such as diagrams, illustrations, photos and text samples may require further permission from the respective copyright holder.

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan, 1984- author.

Title: Paul and the philosophers' faith: discourses of pistis in the Graeco-Roman world / by Suzan Sierksma-Agteres.

Description: Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2024. | Series: Ancient philosophy & religion, 2542-3576; vol.12 | "This book aims to contribute to a better understanding of the pistis language (for now, we might translate this as 'faith') in the letters by Paul of Tarsus by comparing it to similar language in the (mostly pagan and often philosophically oriented) literature of his time"—Chapter 1. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023036501 (print) | LCCN 2023036502 (ebook) | ISBN 9789004549081 (hardback; acid-free paper) | ISBN 9789004684539 (e-book)

Subjects: LCSH: Bible. Epistles of Paul—Theology. | Pistis (The Greek word) | Faith—Philosophy. | Philosophy and religion—Greece—History—Early church, ca. 30-600. | Philosophy and religion—Italy—Rome—History—Early church, ca. 30-600.

Classification: LCC BS2655.F2 .S54 2024 (print) | LCC BS2655.F2 (ebook) | DDC 227—DC23/eng/20231006

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023036501>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023036502>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: [brill.com/brill-typeface](http://brill.com/brill-typeface).

ISSN 2542-3576

ISBN 978-90-04-54908-1 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-68453-9 (e-book)

DOI 10.1163/9789004684539

Copyright 2024 by Suzan Sierksma-Agteres. Published by Koninklijke Brill BV, Leiden, The Netherlands. Koninklijke Brill BV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Hotei, Brill Schönigh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress. Koninklijke Brill BV reserves the right to protect this publication against unauthorized use.

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

# Contents

- Preface IX  
Text Editions and Translations of Ancient and Modern Texts XIII  
List of Figures XIV  
List of Bibliographical Abbreviations XV  
Inclusion of Previously Published Work by the Same Author XVI
- 1 Introduction: Tracing the Semantics and Discourses of Faith in Paul's World 1**
- 1.1 Another Work on Faith? 1
  - 1.2 Faith: How a Semantic Domain Approach Helps to Overcome Essentializing Word Studies 3
  - 1.3 Paul: How Discourse Analysis Helps to Overcome Canonomania and Parallelomania 15
  - 1.4 Philosophers: How Philosophical Contextualization Helps to Overcome Anachronistic Conceptions of Faith 29
  - 1.5 The Route Travelled: Scope, Terminology, Method, and Outline 40

## PART 1

### *A Pistis Cosmology*

- 2 Pistis, Theos, and Logos: Faith as the Standard of Philosophical Religion 51**
- 2.1 Disentangling Modern and Ancient Semantics of Faith 51
  - 2.2 The Problem of Approaching Religion and Faith in the Ancient World 56
  - 2.3 The Theologia Tripartita: Theorizing Religion in Graeco-Roman Discourses 80
  - 2.4 Faith as a Indication of Philosophical Religion in Paul's Letters 114
  - 2.5 Conclusion 169
- 3 Pistis, Dikaiosynē, and Nomos: Faith as Unwritten Law of the Golden Age 171**
- 3.1 Paul the Universalist? New Perspectives on an Old Debate 171
  - 3.2 'Justification by Faith': an Outline of the Debated Issues 173

- 3.3 The Golden Age and Unwritten Law: Juridical Usage of Pistis in Graeco-Roman Discourses 184
- 3.4 Faith as Unwritten Law and Christ as Living Law in Paul's Letters 239
- 3.5 Conclusion 284

## PART 2

### *A Pistis Mentality*

- 4 **Pistis, Doxa, and Epistēmē: Faith as Firm, Human Conviction Anticipating Divine Knowledge** 289
  - 4.1 Faith Opposed to Knowledge? 289
  - 4.2 The Stigma of Early Christian Pistis Being a Low-Level Epistemological Category 293
  - 4.3 A Fideistic Turn in Plato's Wake? Epistemological Usage of Pistis in Graeco-Roman Discourses 302
  - 4.4 Pistis as Firm but Provisional Knowledge of God in Paul's Letters 353
  - 4.5 Conclusion 393
- 5 **Pistis, Peithō, and Sophia: Faith as Transformative Persuasion of the Wise** 396
  - 5.1 Is Faith a Religious 'Acceptance as True'? 396
  - 5.2 The Dichotomy of Greek Cognitive Conviction and Jewish Relational Faith 400
  - 5.3 Rhetoric and Dialectic, Scepticism and Dogmatism, Sophism and Sagehood: Persuasive Usage of Pistis in Graeco-Roman Discourses 417
  - 5.4 Faith as Transformative Persuasion in Paul's Letters 455
  - 5.5 Conclusion 485
- 6 **Pistis, Ἔθος, and Mimēsis: Faith as Attitude and Virtue Imitating the Divine** 487
  - 6.1 Faith and Works: an Unhappy Couple? 487
  - 6.2 Faith in Christ versus Faithfulness of Christ and the Key Discourse of Imitation 490
  - 6.3 Character Formation and Philosophical Imitation: Ethical Usage of Pistis in Graeco-Roman Discourses 503
  - 6.4 The Mimetic Chain of Faith and Faithfulness in Paul's Letters 531
  - 6.5 Conclusion 565

**PART 3*****A Pistis Society***

- 7 **Pistis, Charis, and Dynamis: Faith as Transjuridical and Transethnic Bond of Trust** 569
- 7.1 On the Crossroads of Faith and Grace, Imperialism and Benefaction, and Old and New Perspectives 569
- 7.2 Pauline Faith and Grace as Responses to Graeco-Roman Imperialism and Benefaction 573
- 7.3 A Religious, Bridging, Asymmetrical, Reciprocal, Universal, and Interior Virtue: Public Usage of Pistis in Graeco-Roman Discourses 593
- 7.4 The Proclamation of a Transjuridical and Transethnic Bond of Trust in Paul's Letters 660
- 7.5 Conclusion 689
- 8 **Pistoi, Hagioi, and Apistoi: Faith as Philosophical-Religious Group Identity** 692
- 8.1 How to Make More Semantic Sense of the Reverse of Pistis 692
- 8.2 Denouncing All Outsiders or Criticizing Particular Antagonists? Us-Versus-Them Thinking by Pagans and Paul 698
- 8.3 Identifying the Faithless: Social-Religious Usage of Pistis in Graeco-Roman Discourses 710
- 8.4 Apistia as a Polyvalent and Deviantizing Boundary Marker in Paul's Letters 751
- 8.5 Conclusion 804
- 9 **Concluding Reflections: Paul beyond the Philosophers' Faith** 808
- 9.1 The Distinctiveness of Paul's Contribution to Discourses of Pistis 810
- 9.2 A Pauline Response to Present-Day Discourses of Faith 823
- Bibliography** 827
- Index of Ancient Texts** 900
- Index of Selected Modern Authors** 926
- Index of Selected Names and Subjects** 932





## Preface

This book is the end result of almost a decade of research and writing, though the underlying questions concerning the nature of faith have been on my mind for even longer. As a student in classics and theology, I have always been interested in situating the emergence of new ideas within wider cultural phenomena. How can it be that words of this *pistis* word group, indicating trust, conviction, or faithfulness, gained such prominence within the Christian movement? What ‘bells’ did it ring, what stories and associations came to mind among non-Jews of that period when they heard early Christian preachers like Paul speak of ‘faith’? Was it a religious concept at all? Was the opposition of faith and reason a commonplace in classical thought or a modern invention? And what are the implications of these cultural discourses for evaluating how we tend to think about faith and its relationship to reason, community and salvation in the present?

If you, as a reader, are as intrigued by these questions as I was and still am, I hope you will find this book helpful to orient yourself within both early Christian and Graeco-Roman narrative contexts in which ‘faith’ gained sway. Chapter 1 functions as an introduction to the methods that informed my research, to the book’s set-up, and to the position of this work in the fields of classics and New Testament studies. In this preface, I would like to make a few more personal notes on the embeddedness of my research project in various academic circles and take the opportunity to thank some of the many people who contributed and supported me along the way.

The research resulting in this monograph first took shape in 2012 as a PhD project within the interdisciplinary project ‘Overcoming the Faith-Reason Opposition: Pauline Pistis in Contemporary Philosophy’, carried out at the Radboud University Nijmegen and the University of Groningen funded by the Dutch Research Council NWO (project number 360–25–120). Within this overarching project, I was appointed as a PhD researcher focusing on Paul’s use of *pistis* language as compared to its usage in ancient philosophical sources. I am deeply grateful to my first promotor and supervisor George van Kooten, whose unfailing enthusiasm for the ideas we shared encouraged me to keep going all these years. His visionary approach to ancient intercultural encounters by combining the fields of classics and theology will continue to inspire me through academic and non-academic undertakings. The Nijmegen-Groningen research group, under the generous and learned leadership of my second promotor Gert-Jan van der Heiden and also including Ben Vedder, Antonio Cimino, and Ezra Delahaye, proved a fruitful cooperation between researchers

in the fields of contemporary—that is, ‘modern’—philosophy and New Testament studies. This rich environment was immensely helpful in deepening my knowledge of both ancient and contemporary philosophy, and the discussions of my work at the monthly research meetings helped to develop my argument at an early stage.

As part of my PhD research, I was privileged to study for a term as a ‘recognised student’ at the University of Oxford in the Spring of 2014 under the supervision of Teresa Morgan. She kindly shared her own published and unpublished research on *pistis/fides* with me, and her critical engagement with earlier versions of my chapters helped to sharpen my methodological considerations. I thank Tim Whitmarsh for his kind efforts to provide an excellent context for my stay at the faculty of Classics and at Corpus Christi College, and David Lincicum and Kylie Crabbe for inviting me to participate and present my work in the New Testament Graduate Seminar. In January–February 2016, I was able to visit Stellenbosch University, where I enjoyed several enlivening conversations about earlier versions of chapter 4 with Johan Thom, who further introduced me to the ‘scholarly school’ of reading the New Testament writings in light of ancient philosophical texts. *Baie dankie!*

My work has also benefited greatly from interactions with a variety of scholars in classics, philosophy, and theology at various international conferences. In June 2013, I presented a paper on *pistis* as an anti-Epicurean boundary marker in Paul’s letters to the Corinthians at the interdisciplinary ‘Disbelief in Antiquity’ conference at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. This paper formed the basis of chapter 8 and my argument was strengthened by the suggestions and constructive comments I received there. In that same year, I presented parts of what later became chapters 3 and 7 at the Colloquium Biblicum in Leuven. Many thanks are due to Lautaro Roig Lanzilotta for introducing me to the remarkable scholars and scholarship of the Réseau Thématique Plutarque at their meeting also in Leuven, in September 2013. I am particularly grateful for the comments by Jan Opsomer, Geert Roskam, and Michiel Meeusen on the paper I presented there on Plutarch’s epistemology, which enriched and sharpened my argument in chapter 4. Parts of what later became chapters 5 and 6, on *pistis* as a fundamental attitude or ethos, were discussed and benefitted greatly from comments at the Graeco-Roman Society and the New Testament session of the EABS in Vienna in July 2014, chaired by Ekaterini Tsalampouni.

Closer to home, the faculty of Theology and Religious Studies in Groningen proved to be a stimulating home base during my employment as a PhD researcher. Both the graduate school meetings and the monthly CRASIS Ancient World Seminars (and dinners afterwards) were a true interdisciplinary

playground for discussing preliminary results. I wish to thank the fellow members of the NOSTER (Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion) network-group and NOSTER seminar Biblical Studies for their comments on early versions of chapter 2. I also presented parts of this chapter at the Groningen New Testament & Early Christianity Seminar 'Chronisantes' in January 2015. After having met briefly at an OIKOS (National Research School in Classical Studies in the Netherlands) Ancient Philosophy meeting in 2016, René Brouwer was so kind as to also offer various detailed comments on my argument about *pistis* and the Stoic sage (included in chapter 5). Equal thanks are due to Claire Stocks for keeping me updated on the proceedings of the conference she organized in May 2015 on *fides* in Flavian literature, information that proved particularly relevant for my chapter 7. In 2018, I was invited to respond to a paper by Peter-Ben Smit at a NOSTER thematic seminar on the Pastoral Epistles in Leuven, a task that not only stimulated me to expand my knowledge of *pistis* to the Pastorals (which informed parts of various chapters of this book) but also challenged me to interact with the domain of masculinity studies. The members of the Amsterdam New Testament Research Colloquium were a continuous source of scholarly inspiration, and their comments and questions upon my presentations in 2019 and 2021 on chapters 3 and 7 helped me to refine my argument in the final stages of my writing. Chapter 1 formed the backbone of an invited lecture I gave at the Studiosorum Novi Testamenti Conventus in May 2019. The insightful formal response given at that occasion by Myriam Klinker-De Klerck was particularly helpful in thinking through the consequences of my method and outcomes.

At the Protestant Theological University in Amsterdam, I have found a second academic home ever since my appointment as lecturer in New Testament Greek in 2017. I would like to thank my colleagues at the department of Sources, in particular Klaas Spronk, Annette Merz, Lieve Teugels and Jan Krans, who were all very supportive of my endeavour to finish this book project alongside my teaching responsibilities. It is through my students that I am reminded daily of the importance of deep engagement with language and texts. I hope to continue to serve and teach them now that I have been appointed Assistant Professor in New Testament Studies at this university.

The final version of this book profited greatly from the astute comments of my reading committee, consisting of Teresa Morgan, Christoph Jedan, and Annette Merz, as well as from the advice of the Brill Ancient Philosophy and Religion Series editors, George Boys-Stones and George van Kooten. Edward Jacobson and Luana Hauenstein, this book reads much more smoothly because of your sharp proofreading efforts. Finally, I am thankful for the professional collaboration with Brill Academic Publishers whose staff has given

me the ample assistance in taking the last hurdles of bringing this 'project of faith' to completion.

Beyond the strange lands of academia, I wish to extend a final more personal word of thanks to the wonderful people in my life without whom undertaking a research project itself would seem pointless or unfeasible. To my parents, whose continuous loving faith in me has given me the courage to pursue my own creative path and intellectual interests. To my brother and sister-in-law, for their open-minded kindness and open-hearted sharing. And to my parents-in-law, for being our 'extended family' over the past years and spending countless hours with their two grandsons so that I could spend an equal amount of time immersed in my writing. Finally, to Allard, my love, for honest and deep reflection and for lovingly supporting me in my many pursuits in academia, church, and society. I am so happy to travel through life with you, and I am looking forward to travelling a bit lighter again now that this book is finally finished.

*Suzan J.M. Sierksma-Agteres*

Amersfoort

April 2023

# Figures

All figures have been designed by the author.

- 1 From semantic domains to discourses 14
- 2 *Pistis* vocabulary in the undisputed letters of Paul 40
- 3 Semantic domains of *pistis* and Paul's faith language 46
- 4 Varro's tripartite theology as compared to Dio of Prusa's 103
- 5 The identity of the *apistoi* according to two different models 704

# Bibliographical Abbreviations

As this work pertains to a variety of disciplines, the use of abbreviations in the main text, bibliography, and footnotes has been limited with the exception of these recurring ones:

- LSJ            Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie (eds.). 1925. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- SVF            Hans F. A. von Arnim (ed.). 1964. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. 3 vols. Stuttgart: Teubner.
- BDAG        Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. 2000. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- NRSV        *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, Anglicised. 1989. National Council of the Churches of Christ.

## **Text Editions and Translations of Ancient and Modern Texts**

Unless otherwise indicated (and included in the bibliography), the 28th edition of the Nestle-Aland was used for the books of the New Testament and the Loeb Classical Library editions have been used for (other) classical works. Unless another translation is referenced, the following translations have been used, with minor alterations by the author where necessary: for books belonging to the New Testament, the New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA), for books belonging to the Septuagint, the New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS), and for (other) classical sources, those included in the Loeb Classical Library (LCL).

When non-English literature is cited, my own English translation is used in the main text, and the German, French, Dutch, or Italian original is provided in the footnotes. If an English edition of a work in another modern language was available, the English edition was used and referenced.



## **Inclusion of Previously Published Work by the Same Author**

Earlier and shorter versions of chapter 3 have been published as Sierksma-Agteres 2017 and of chapter 6 as Sierksma-Agteres 2016. Some of the initial findings of the author's research were published as Sierksma-Agteres 2015b; the sources discussed there became part of chapters 2, 3, 6, and 7 in the present work. Finally, several publications in Dutch journals each cover some of the contents of these chapters: Sierksma-Agteres 2014 (chapters 5 and 6), Sierksma-Agteres 2015c (chapters 2 and 3), Sierksma-Agteres 2018 (chapters 3 and 7), and Sierksma-Agteres 2021 (chapters 4 and 7).

# Introduction: Tracing the Semantics and Discourses of Faith in Paul's World

## 1.1 Another Work on Faith?

This book aims to contribute to a better understanding of the *pistis* language (for now, we might translate this as 'faith') in the letters by Paul of Tarsus by comparing it to similar language in the (mostly pagan and often philosophically oriented) literature of his time. In this chapter, I reflect on the route I followed and three important methodological choices that determined my trajectory since I started this project in 2012. This way, I hope to convey the added value of taking this route, my contribution to what has grown into quite a network of *pistis* studies in the scholarship of the past decades.

Perhaps it is helpful to clearly state here at the beginning that this book does not offer a diachronic word study leading to a particular definition of what *pistis* is for Paul. Instead, it is a study which takes as its starting point the plurality of meanings found in contemporary semantic domains and discourses. 'Contemporary', in this case, refers to the Hellenistic and imperial Roman period of roughly the first century BC until the second century AD, a period I usually indicate with the adjective 'Hellenistic-Roman'. It is, moreover, not an exclusively Jewish or a canonical contextualization, but one that focuses mostly on the pagan Graeco-Roman world, the cultural habitat of Paul's first addressees. And, finally, it does not pay more than minimal attention to the particularities and social embeddedness of each of Paul's letters, but it presumes a certain level of coherence in Paul's ideas, such that he may be compared to other authors and schools in his intellectual milieu, notably those writing from a philosophical angle.

By now, probably one or more alarm bells have gone off. If recent scholarship focusing on Paul has established anything, it is that, in reverse order, situationality of the letters is everything, Paul was and remained very much a Jew, and that parallelomania is the Achilles heel of the search for comparative material. In the following sections of this introductory chapter, I address these concerns by elucidating my approach in light of what scholarship has said and done before.

First, I briefly summarize the insights from the field of cognitive linguistics, in particular the notion of semantic domains, that helped provide a framework

for my polysemic starting point, my synchronic approach, and my thematic structure (§1.2: 'Faith'). Second, I explain how the intertextual method of discourse analysis allows us to do justice to the Graeco-Roman contexts of our main author, Paul (§1.3: 'Paul'). This method helps to avoid 'parallelomania', an overenthusiastic obsession with the influence of specific extra-biblical parallel texts on Paul's letters, while also offering a remedy for the reverse condition of 'canomania', a term I coined to describe a cautious confinement to Scripture as the only relevant context for understanding of Paul's writings. Third, I discuss the usefulness of philosophical discourses in particular for understanding Paul's ideas and texts (§1.4: 'Philosophers'). In this regard it is helpful to see how in this period there are no strict boundaries between religion and philosophy, or between elite, philosophical thought and popular, lived practice. In all three sections, I refer to key academic publications on *pistis* to explain how my own approach differs and intends to contribute. In the final section of this introduction (§1.5), I explain in more detail which route I followed to obtain my results and how the chapters have been structured accordingly.

My research project was thus informed by a combination of linguistic insights, literary methods, and philosophical perspectives, which are explained and substantiated in the current chapter. Its methodological contribution lies in the move from lexical semantics to intertextual comparison on the level of discourses. In terms of content, this book offers a comprehensive survey of the usage of *pistis* in the pagan, often philosophically oriented literature of the first century BC until the second century AD. The proof of the pudding, naturally, is in 'eating' the results of my approach set out in the remaining chapters. In these chapters, I demonstrate the usefulness of the Graeco-Roman material for offering a cohesive reading of different sections of Paul's extant writings. And it is also in these remaining chapters that I engage with existing paradigms, scholarly debates, and specific interpretations of the texts in detail.

When travelling, it is good to have travelling companions and a travelling agency. While I would not repeat the important companions named and thanked in the acknowledgements section, on a more formal level, it is good to elucidate how this research project came into being. The overarching project formed a part of a project funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and carried out by researchers in contemporary (present-day) philosophy at the Radboud University Nijmegen and researchers in New Testament studies at the University of Groningen (2012–2016).<sup>1</sup> This overarching project was entitled 'Overcoming the Faith-Reason Opposition:

---

1 NWO project number: 360-25-120.

Pauline Faith in Contemporary Philosophy'. The ambiguity of 'contemporary' is intended, for while I have learned a great deal from studying modern readings of Paul by Heidegger, Agamben, Badiou, and others, the present work hopes to offer not so much a philosophically sound but a historically plausible reading of Paul's faith language. Every now and then, though, some of these modern insights are used heuristically and tested for plausibility in light of ancient discourses.

## 1.2 Faith: How a Semantic Domain Approach Helps to Overcome Essentializing Word Studies

One of the first things we notice when looking at *pistis* vocabulary in Hellenistic-Roman sources is its semantic richness. This observation begs the question whether a similar multivalence should be assumed when interpreting Paul's faith language. However, one of shared characteristics of *pistis* studies in the fields of classics and biblical studies is that they aim to provide one essential, original, or most fundamental meaning of the word group. My starting point and conclusions differ considerably from these studies, for informed by insights from the field of cognitive linguistics, my approach aimed to outline multiple meanings relevant for understanding Paul's diverse usage of *pistis* language.

### 1.2.1 *Previous Research: in Search of the Fundamental Meaning of Pistis and Fides*

There is discussion about the original character of *fides* (the Latin equivalent of *pistis*) ever since Eduard Fraenkel's article 'Zur Geschichte des Wortes Fides' (1916). Unlike the scholarly consensus up to then, which expressed the meaning of *fides* in terms of relational trust and faith, Fraenkel's argument is that it was originally more of a morally indifferent, formal, juridical term. He states that in pre-imperial Rome the word basically means 'alles, worauf man sich verlassen kann, Garantie im weitesten Sinne', and that the moral meanings of 'trust', 'faithfulness', and 'faith' only fully developed in imperial Rome, out of their rhetorical usage in the late republic.<sup>2</sup> This development in meaning

---

2 Fraenkel 1916, at 187. Fraenkel's position on the original non-moral function of *fides* was taken even further by Georg von Beseler (1934). It still has proponents, see for instance De Wilde 2011, 460 ('Originally, however, the notion of *fides* lacked these moral connotations'), who follows Wieacker 1988, 506.

which Fraenkel perceived has received critical responses up until the present.<sup>3</sup> Richard Heinze (1928) rejects Fraenkel's conclusion that the moral meaning of *fides* is a post-republican development. As *fides* is always two-sided or reciprocal in nature, even if it denotes some kind of a legal obligation, it cannot go without trust (*fides*) in this law.<sup>4</sup> Hence, for the Romans in the republican period, he argues, *fides* was already very much a social virtue of 'trustworthiness', 'faithfulness', and 'credibility' ('Zuverlässigkeit', 'Treue', and 'Glaubwürdigkeit').<sup>5</sup> Gérard Freyburger (1986) built on Heinze's work by arguing for an early, basic meaning of *fides* as trust ('confidence') in a double sense: active trust placed in another, and passive trustworthiness eliciting trust placed in oneself.<sup>6</sup> In this discussion on the diachronic development of the meaning of *fides*, we see some of the outlines of the semantic richness of this word, which at least includes some bipolar, dual, or reciprocal structure.

One important question that arises from this academic discussion concerns the extent to which the lexica of Latin *fides* and Greek *pistis* overlap: do they refer to the same attitudes, things, and actions? Heinze, for example, sharply distinguishes both terms. Whereas *fides* always had this moral or social tone which then became more objective or reified, Heinze perceives an opposite development in the use of *pistis*: from active attitude of trust, to a reified, objective guarantee, to the passive, subjective virtue of trustworthiness, a virtue the Greeks did not give the centrality it had in Rome.<sup>7</sup> This thesis, however, is built on unsteady ground given the scarce sources available and the examples Heinze provides.<sup>8</sup> Freyburger, instead, focuses on the shared Indo-European root (*\*bheidh*) of both terms, from which the Greek word group *peithō* (πειθω), 'to persuade', and perhaps also the Latin *credo*, 'to believe',

3 Critical responses include Heinze 1928, 147; Freyburger 1986, 20–21; Morgan 2015, 5. Hölleskamp reasons that as power is always morally charged, a 'moralisch farblose Bedeutung' is an impossibility (Hölleskamp 2004, 134, esp. at n. 129).

4 See Heinze 1928, 146: 'Das muß, wenn wir mit Recht die Doppelseitigkeit der *fides* festgestellt haben, schon auf Grund dieser Erkenntnis als unwahrscheinlich gelten.' This discussion on the relation between 'faith' and 'law', see chapter 7, esp. §7.3.2.

5 Heinze 1928, 140.

6 See Freyburger 1986, 37, where he answers this question negatively: 'Faut-il ne considérer le sens actif de "confiance que je donne" que comme un dérivé, secondaire, du sens passif de "confiance que j'obtiens"?'

7 Heinze 1928, 163–164. The term 'reified' is a useful term I borrowed from Teresa Morgan (2015), who uses it (at 6, n. 14) 'to refer to entities (such as an oath or legal trust) or concepts (such as proof) which derive conceptually from relational trust but are distinguished from it, acquiring technical meanings in the specialized discourses of law, philosophy or rhetoric.' Cf. Schunack 1999, 298: 'eine Konkretion'.

8 See also Gruen 1982, 64, n. 68: 'The thesis is asserted rather than substantiated. Heinze must

also derives.<sup>9</sup> Still, even if there were different diachronic developments in meaning, the increasing cultural connections and exchanges in the Hellenistic period certainly left its mark on language and semantics as well. An argument based on different usage of both terms often leans heavily on a passage from Polybius narrating a supposed linguistic misunderstanding on the meaning of *fides* between Greek and Roman forces in 190 BC.<sup>10</sup> Yet this passage offers no conclusive evidence of such a divergence in language use (see §7.2.2 below). The current academic consensus rather speaks of a large overlap in meaning, whereby some technical senses are expressed in only *pistis* terms (such as a rhetorical or philosophical ‘proof’, see esp. §5.3.1 below) or *fides* terms (such as the legal procedure of *fidei commissum*, on which see §7.2.1 below).<sup>11</sup>

The search for the most basic or fundamental meaning of *fides* or *pistis*, however, continues up to this day, particularly in theological scholarship dealing with the nature of Christian faith. A linguistic landmark within this field was James Barr’s *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961), in which the author laid bare several fallacies in earlier scholarship, including studies into the meaning of *pistis*.<sup>12</sup> As Barr so emphatically and convincingly argued, the etymological background of a word does not establish its present meaning (diachronic priority), and the entire palette of senses is not reflected in every (or any) single occurrence (illegitimate totality transfer).<sup>13</sup> Still, there is a per-

---

assume, for example, that the frequent references to *fides* in Plautus and Terence are quite independent of any Greek models—which begs the question.’ Heinze mentions the exception of Epictetus, who turns out to be more ‘Roman’ than ‘Greek’, yet such a cross-over shows the arbitrariness of the distinction in this period. For a more elaborate discussion, see §7.2.2 below.

- 9 Freyburger 1986, 33, and so also Hellegouarc’h 1972 [1963], 25. On faith and persuasion, see chapter 5 below.
- 10 E.g. Momigliano 1987, 283, Schumacher 2017, 302–303.
- 11 See i.a. Gruen 1982; Calderone 1964; Morgan 2015, 7. Morgan (at p. 7, n. 17) admonishes to take the relative amounts of the genres of extant texts into account in judging the semantic range, as we have more philosophical material in Greek and more legal material in Latin.
- 12 Hebert 1955; Torrance 1957; Torrance 1960, 74–82.
- 13 Barr 1961, i.a. 115 (for the first fallacy), 218 (for the second). Barr also criticized the still influential *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*: ‘the great weakness is a failure to get to grips with the semantic value of words in their contexts, and a strong tendency to assume that this value will on its own agree with and illuminate the contours of a theological structure which is felt to be characteristic of the New Testament and distinctively contrasting with its environment’ (at 231). Cf. though on the relative importance of derivational relationships for semantic relationships, particularly in Hebrew yet also beyond, Shead 2011, 30.

sistent belief that biblical language is more consistent or comprehensive than such linguistic insights would allow.<sup>14</sup>

Dieter Lührmann, for instance, rejects the possibility of *pistis* having a polysemous character, but states that it offers a ‘concrete designation of distinctive facts, especially with a key word like “belief”’.<sup>15</sup> While Lührmann distances himself from the older type of etymologizing research, he assumes in advance a unity of concept. Such a unity, however, is suspect—as we will explain in the next subsection—from a linguistic point of view, since usage determines meaning.<sup>16</sup> Instead, in this study, occurrences of *pistis* and cognates in Paul are not seen as having a single core meaning or as part of one large discourse. This makes it easier to account for specific usages without first placing them in a semantic straitjacket.

It may be due to the influence of Augustine of Hippo that biblical scholarship was for a long time dominated by a duality, albeit a slightly different one: that between *fides quae*, the (content of the) faith which is believed, and *fides qua*, the faith by means of which one believes.<sup>17</sup> While the preference for one or the other differs depending on the theologian in question, the aspect of ‘trustworthiness’, ‘loyalty’, or ‘faithfulness’ was lost or deemed less important for understanding *pistis* as a key notion of Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

14 For a critical discussion of the influence of Barr on biblical scholarship and an application of Barr’s insights to the *pistis* lexeme, see Botha 1987. Botha seems to overstate Barr’s case, however, in his wish to distinguish meticulously between meaning and context and in his insistence to disambiguate each instance between the four senses he established. E.g. according to Botha (at 237–238), when Mary is called ἡ πιστεύουσα in Luke 1.45, she cannot both believe God’s words as true and trust that God will do what he had promised, as these are two distinct senses and this would amount to illegitimate totality transfer.

15 Lührmann 1973, 19: ‘Dabei ist ein Wort nicht mehr oder weniger zufällige Ausdrucksform für vorgegebene Inhalte, sondern konkrete Benennung unverwechselbarer Sachverhalte, zumal bei einem Schlüsselwort wie “Glaube”.’

16 See also Brandenburger’s critique (Brandenburger 1988, 173) of Lührmann: ‘Vor allem vermag die Glaubensdefinition Lührmanns nicht das gesamte Vorkommen von “Glaube” abzudecken, auch nicht im Sinne eines Problemhorizontes zwischen Bekenntnis und widerständiger Welterfahrung, der für alle Verwendungen von “Glaube” ursprünglich und prägend wäre.’ And at 174: ‘Insgesamt wird man also folgern dürfen, daß es ratsam erscheint, die unterschiedlichen Verwendungstypen von “Glaube” gesondert zu bedenken und nicht von einer angeblich allen Verwendungen gleicherweise zugrundeliegenden Glaubensdefinition oder Glaubensfrage (Problemhorizont) auszugehen.’

17 Augustine, *De Trinitate* 13.2.5.

18 Cf. e.g. Wißmann 1926, who sharply distinguishes between *pistis* and Christian piety, by understanding the first, in the manner of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, in line with the ‘eschatologisch-juridische Einstellung des Spätjudentums’ as a mission slogan denoting one’s ‘Heilsgewißheit’ before God (at 115).

This changed in the last decades, with the increase of publications on *pistis Christou*: a debate within New Testament scholarship on the meaning of this phrase, which is found in several Pauline letters and was traditionally rendered as ‘faith in Christ’, yet has now been argued to mean the ‘faithfulness of Christ’ (on which see my chapter 6 below). This particular debate turned out to be merely the tip of the iceberg. Of particular interest is Von Dobbeler’s monograph on faith (1987), which takes a sociological-communicative approach and concludes that since Paul’s use of *pistis* referred to both belief in God and to faithfulness (within the community), it could function as a means to constitute communal participation.<sup>19</sup> Some other authors go so far as to suggest that the core message of Christianity originally was not that ‘faith’ or ‘belief’ saves, but that instead ‘allegiance’ or ‘faithfulness’ brings about salvation.<sup>20</sup>

The new emphasis on the ethical and relational aspects of Christian *pistis* gained a firm foundation in *Roman Faith and Christian Faith* by Teresa Morgan (2015), who elaborately describes the ‘sociocultural context’ of the early Roman empire in which the Christian usage of ‘faith’ arose.<sup>21</sup> Her conclusion is that the ‘centre of gravity’ of this faith vocabulary is not to be located in either of Augustine’s poles, but rather in ‘a relationship which creates community’, that is, a relationship of reciprocal trust and trustworthiness.<sup>22</sup> A somewhat similar conclusion, this time informed largely by Jewish literature including

---

19 See Von Dobbeler 1987, 312: ‘Die paulinische Sicht der πίστις als die Gemeinde konstituierende Größe war so für pagane Rezipienten in der doppelten Dimension des Gottesglaubens und der innergemeindlichen Treue zu verstehen.’ For his method which he describes as ‘wirkungsgeschichtliche Hermeneutik’, see p. 5. Von Dobbeler argues that precisely this double meaning of *pistis*, both attested in pagan sources, made it possible for it to become a kind of catchword (p. 312: ‘Schlagwort’). Von Dobbeler is critiqued by Egon Brandenburger (1988, 170, n. 22), who takes issue with the semantic judgment reflected in his title, *Glaube als Teilhabe*, ‘Faith as Participation’: ‘Denn dabei werden Assoziationsphänomene in den Glaubensbegriff selbst eingetragen.’ The lexical meaning, however, cannot be separated from its horizons of understanding (‘Verstehenshorizonte’); at most we can speak of the prototypicality of certain usages (see §1.2.2 below). Brandenburger’s own focus is on the meaning of *pistis* in contexts of mission and conversion as ‘Rettung oder Bewahrung vor Untergang oder Verderben’ (p. 193) is based on his reading of passages from Philo and several Septuagint texts (*Judith*, *Wisdom*, *Jonah*).

20 Respectively: Bates 2017; Wallace & Rusk 2011, chapter 8: ‘Faithfulness’.

21 Morgan’s monograph prompted a lively discussion amongst classicists and New Testament scholars, some of whose contributions were taken up in a collection of papers in the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40/3 (Konstan 2018; Oakes 2018; Alexander 2018; Lieu 2018; Morgan 2018a) and in *New Testament Studies* 64/2 (Watson 2018; Seifrid 2018; Morgan 2018b). I shall return to some of these responses in the subsequent chapters.

22 Morgan 2015, 14 (the ‘centre of gravity’ is a term she uses at i.a. 5, 9).



the Septuagint and Josephus, was reached by Nijay Gupta (2020b), who understands the increasing popularity of *pistis* vocabulary among early Christians as a Greek expression of a covenant-relationship and as an attempt at translating this Hebrew concept to a Graeco-Roman world.

My own approach is in line with these more recent studies to the extent in which they continue to allow for a diversity of meanings. The relationality and reciprocity of faith is important for understanding most if not all of Paul's *pistis* usage, even if it is not always the marked or foregrounded aspect of its meaning. Yet, more than the scholarly tradition on which this work builds, my research was set up to look out for a variety of specific semantic domains in which *pistis* and *fides* vocabulary is used. This approach is informed by the academic field of cognitive linguistics.

### 1.2.2 *Semantic Domains and Paul's Faith Language*

Cognitive linguistics is a relatively young branch of linguistics; it developed out of the earlier structuralist and Chomskyan paradigms.<sup>23</sup> Structuralism, advanced by Ferdinand de Saussure, represents a view of language as highly autonomous: the meaning of a linguistic form is determined by the language system and not by the world outside or people's experience of the world outside. A similar thing can be said for the next major paradigm in linguistics, advanced by Noam Chomsky, who emphasized the brain as the generative location of a 'system of knowledge'. What was revolutionary about this idea is that language ceases to be an independent system, yet is tied to the human mind. Also in this paradigm, however, the language system is viewed as an autonomous brain component, independent of other mental faculties. The criticism of this autonomy-thesis in both variants eventually led to an alternative approach that came to be known as cognitive linguistics, for the experiences of the whole mind are taken to affect the language used.<sup>24</sup>

These overarching views of the nature of language underlie more specific assumptions about the meaning of words. De Saussure's structural approach to language offers some valuable insights which remain valid and useful for the present study. The first is that a word, or more properly, a linguistic sign consists of a lexeme and a mental conceptualization, or in De Saussure's termino-

23 For an overview of this development, see Taylor 1995, 16–19.

24 Seminal works that led to these insights include Charles Fillmore's publications on 'frame semantics' (1976; 1982), George Lakoff's *Women Fire and Dangerous Things* (1987), and Ronald Langacker's *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar* (1987 and 1999).

logy, the signifier (French: 'signifiant'), and the signified (French: 'signifié').<sup>25</sup> Their relationship is arbitrary; there is no pre-existing, integral conceptual meaning for each lexeme, referring to a specific object in reality. Yet it is stable, so that the sign may be distinguished from others within the socially constructed language-system.<sup>26</sup>

The second insight is the logical consequence that this language-system is time-bound: the value of a linguistic sign vis-à-vis other signs at a specific time determines its meaning (a synchronic approach), not the preceding development (a diachronic approach).<sup>27</sup> While a diachronic survey is valuable in itself, synchronic usage is generally to be prioritized in order to understand a lexeme's meaning at a specific period.<sup>28</sup> Whereas, as we just saw, many word studies of *pistis* and *fides* focused on etymology or language development, my approach is as synchronic as can be expected considering the limited amount of surviving source material (see on scope and delineation §1.5 below).

The third insight concerns the types of relationships between words within a language system, which can be syntagmatic and paradigmatic. A word relates to another word in a syntagmatic, 'horizontal' manner when both are used within the same sentence structure. And a word relates to another word in a paradigmatic, 'vertical' manner when both could be used at the same spot in a sentence. Whereas the syntagmatic relations are usually taken into account in methods that involve close reading, paradigmatic relations are equally important for understanding a given instance of *pistis* language. An inventory of paradigmatic relations is essential for understanding the conscious or unconscious choices language users face, a process which is known in present-day linguistics as 'lexical competition'.<sup>29</sup>

---

25 De Saussure understood the *signifiant* as a mental, phonological appearance, see Komatsu & Harris 2014, 74: 'Le signe linguistique repose sur une association faite par l'esprit entre deux choses très différentes, mais qui sont toutes deux physiques et dans le sujet: une image acoustique est associée à un concept. L'image acoustique <n'est pas le son matériel>, c'est l'empreinte physique du son.'

26 See Saussure 1959, 117: 'When they are said to correspond to concepts, it is understood that the concepts are purely differential and defined not by their positive content but negatively by their relations with the other terms of the system. Their most precise characteristic is in being what the others are not.'

27 De Saussure (1959, 88–89) compares language with a game of chess in which the history does not affect the value of the pieces at a given moment.

28 An exception to this rule are newly coined words consisting of different parts (like θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3.12), whereby the etymology of the parts is important to grasp the whole.

29 Cf. e.g. Peels 2014, 14.

Nevertheless, there are phenomena which are less easily accounted for within the paradigm of structuralism. One is polysemy: how are we to account for words which represent multiple genuinely different meanings?<sup>30</sup> Another is that the same concept may be described by several lexemes, yet these lexemes may be differently connoted to real world events. These phenomena can only be adequately understood from a perspective that takes the working of the human mind seriously: it is here that cognitive linguistics steps in to emphasize the impact of cognitive experiences like perception, memory, and categorization on language.<sup>31</sup> The classical, structural perspective is in line with traditional Aristotelean categorization, whereby an entry in a lexicon knows a precise definition to distinguish it from other words in that language. By contrast, cognitive linguists assume that ‘a lexical item used with any frequency is almost invariably polysemous’.<sup>32</sup> This amounts to an encyclopaedic type of semantics: ‘a lexical meaning resides in a particular way of accessing an open-ended body of knowledge pertaining to a certain type of entity.’<sup>33</sup>

In line with this open-endedness, I have not looked for or come up with one, two, or three ultimate meanings of *pistis*, as they do not exist.<sup>34</sup> Language users encounter different uses of a particular word which adds to an inventory of meanings categorized like a network. On the other hand, a word never corresponds with an unlimited number of meanings. A meaning is not merely produced inside an individual mind; it must be socially conventionalized by

---

30 Cf. on this problem Rademaker 2005, 10–13.

31 See Langacker 2008, 8: ‘Compared with formal approaches, cognitive linguistics stands out by resisting the imposition of boundaries between language and other psychological phenomena. Insofar as possible, linguistic structure is seen as drawing on other, more basic systems and abilities (e.g. perception, memory, categorization) from which it cannot be segregated. Rather than constituting a distinct, self-contained entity (a separate “module” or “mental faculty”), language is viewed as an integral facet of cognition.’

32 Langacker 2008, 37.

33 Langacker 2008, 39.

34 To complicate matters, parallel to cognitive linguistics, an alternative theory of monosemy was proposed by Charles Ruhl (1989), which pushed against the multiplicity of meanings in lexicons. This theory emphasizes the grammatical monosemy of a lexeme, while acknowledging its pragmatical polysemy. In essence, however, both theories uphold both the ultimate connectedness of different senses (either located in the lexeme itself or in the brain of the language user) and the importance of context in selecting between specialised senses. An application of this linguistic model to Paul’s *pistis* language is offered by Downs & Lappenga 2019.

a ‘speech community’, which limits the semantic flexibility of the lexemes.<sup>35</sup> Rather than speaking of a core meaning, cognitive linguists understand the dominance of a specific sense in terms of prototypicality, markedness, and centrality.<sup>36</sup> Thus, *pistis* in the sense of ‘trust’ may be a well-trodden path for a specific speech community which needs very little contextual markers to be activated.<sup>37</sup> Yet, the specific literary context, the real-world or imagined contexts a combination of words refers to, together with the sociohistorical context of the speech community, determine which senses are selected by an audience. For instance, if *pistis* language is used in a context of asymmetrical power relationships, senses like ‘protection’, ‘loyalty’, and ‘commitment’ come to the fore, while ‘conviction’, ‘proof’, and ‘credibility’ are selected in the context of (contested) truth claims. The frequent co-occurrence of both syntagmatically and paradigmatically related words thus exhibits a conceptual network in which each word’s meaning is established.<sup>38</sup> This is, as will become clear, not unlike the presumptions underlying the method of discourse analysis (see §1.3.2).

The contexts that elicit specific senses of a word are known by cognitive linguists under different names, including ‘semantic fields’, ‘language games’, ‘semantic domains’, or ‘frames’, each of them signalling subsequent developments in the field. From within a structuralist perspective, a ‘semantic field’ is filled with related words that can only be understood if one possesses knowledge of this field.<sup>39</sup> The increasing awareness of the lacunae in structuralism, particularly in accounting for the world outside language and the

---

35 See Langacker 2008, 38: ‘Meanings (like other linguistic structures) are recognized as part of a language only to the extent that they are (1) entrenched in the minds of individual speakers and (2) conventional for members of a speech community. Only a limited array of senses satisfy [*sic*] these criteria and qualify as established linguistic units.’

36 See Langacker 2008, 37: ‘A lexical item (...) has multiple, related meanings that have all been conventionalized to some degree. Among these related senses, some are more central, or prototypical, than others, and some are schemas that are elaborated (or instantiated) by others. To some extent the senses are linked by categorizing relationships to form a network.’

37 Cf. Taylor 2017, 256: ‘Word meaning is therefore encyclopaedic in scope, and inherently fluid and subject to ongoing negotiation. The illusion (and it is, I believe, an illusion) that words have fixed and stable meanings may be due to the fact that some paths are very well-trodden and likely to be activated in default (or zero) contexts, or in the absence of contrary indications.’

38 Cf. Taylor 2017, 261: ‘Words provide a gateway to networks of conceptual knowledge, which is selectively activated as occasion demands.’

39 The term semantic field (‘Bedeutungsfeld’) was first used in 1924 by Gunther Ipsen (1924, 225). As for the pre-Saussurean development, see Nerlich & Clarke 2000, esp. 129–133. The first major study that explores its implications is Trier 1931. Cf. at p. 5: ‘Das Wortzeichen-

real life experience thereof, was most famously expressed in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) with the adage 'language is use': usage (in a particular 'life shape' or 'language game') precedes meaning.<sup>40</sup> This idea was fully embraced and further developed in the school of cognitive linguistics. Here, the specific context that is determinative for the meaning of a word is often called a 'semantic domain': a network of knowledge and experiences in which a lexeme is conceptualized.<sup>41</sup> Unlike the earlier notion of semantic fields, such domains are not abstract structures within a language system, but networks inside the brain which share characteristics with other 'brains' in a speech community under the influence of language acquisition and socialization. A highly polysemic lexeme (which I would indeed hold *pistis* to be)<sup>42</sup> shares in many domains and subdomains which may be (partly) overlapping: this can be mapped and depicted in a domain-matrix.<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, the current book is set up in chapters that cover such domains, indicated by three salient lexemes in each chapter title. I have chosen not to draw a detailed map, a domain-matrix that indicates the prototypicality of specific uses of *pistis* vocabulary, because in a historical survey of dead languages this would amount to a rather circular process. Frequency of use may

---

feld als Ganzes muß gegenwärtig sein, wenn das einzelne Wortzeichen verstanden werden soll, und es wird verstanden im Maße der Gegenwärtigkeit des Feldes. Es "bedeutet" nur in diesem Ganzen und kraft dieses Ganzen. Außerhalb eines Feldganzen kann es ein Bedeuten gar nicht geben.'

- 40 In these language games, specific conventional 'rules' apply and the meanings of a lexeme cannot be reduced to one ground meaning, yet should be seen in terms of family resemblance, as 'ein kompliziertes Netz von Ähnlichkeiten, die einander übergreifen und kreuzen' (Wittgenstein 2009, 36 (§66)). The idea of applying 'language games' to understanding *pistis* is embraced by Anthony Thiselton (1980, 409): 'faith in the New Testament is a polymorphous concept, and therefore questions about faith must not be answered "outside a particular language-game".'
- 41 Cf. Langacker 2008, 44: 'the term is broadly interpreted as indicating any kind of conception or realm of experience.'
- 42 The polysemy of *pistis* is widely recognized. See e.g. Thiselton 1977, 94: 'It seems likely, to my mind, that *pistis*, faith, has this polymorphous character, especially in Paul. (...) To try to overcome this so-called ambiguity by offering a generalizing definition is to invite misunderstanding about what "faith" means'; Matlock 2000, 6: "'Polysemy" should be considered a normal and indispensable feature of language, and not an anomaly to be avoided if possible'; Wright 2008, 482: 'the New Testament idea of "faith", which is more polymorphous than many readers, I think, give it credit for'; Schumacher 2012, 299 (cf. p. 225): 'Zunächst einmal wurde deutlich, dass Paulus das Nomen und auch die übrigen Formen des Stammes  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau$ - keineswegs in einer einheitlichen Weise gebraucht, sondern er bedient sich der verschiedenen Verwendungsmöglichkeiten, mit denen dieser Wortstamm im griechischen Sprachgebrauch verwendet werden konnte.'
- 43 Langacker 2008, 44. Cf. Taylor 2002, 439.

be indicative of prototypicality, yet this rule is not applicable when dealing with the fragmentary material from antiquity.<sup>44</sup> Rather than looking for the centrality or precise relationships between senses, my aim is to recognize the relevant semantic domain(s) in which a given instance of Paul's *pistis* language participates.<sup>45</sup> When necessary, however, I explore the relevance of different domains, all highlighted in one passage. In the dense passage *Romans* 3.21–31, for example, the main domain elicited is that of justice and law. However, the manner in which those who have faith in Christ partake in the revealed 'righteousness of God' can be understood as a process of imitating Christ's faithfulness by an internal 'law of faith'. Hence, the domain of ethics and imitation comes into play as well (see §3.4.2–3 and §6.4.5 below). Likewise, the example of Abraham's *pistis* in *Romans* 4 is best understood by a combination of cognitive and relational domains, since it is Abraham's mental trust beyond what can be seen and his relational faithfulness as a partner in God's covenant that both play a part in Paul's reasoning (see §4.4.1 below).

Whereas 'domain' is the term for these contexts favoured by Ronald Langacker, there is affinity to the notion of 'frame' from the discipline of frame semantics, developed in the 1970s and 1980s by Charles Fillmore. More than 'domains', the term 'frames' emphasizes the importance of specific real-world situations and experiences to which the lexemes in the domain refer in different ways.<sup>46</sup> Such real-world situations are often culture-specific.<sup>47</sup> Thus, in the present study, knowledge of the postulated frames two millennia ago is essential for making sense of any text from that period: for example, knowledge of the frame of 'benefaction' in which *pistis* plays an important part (see

44 Cf. the methodological considerations in Rademaker 2005, 35 (a study of the meaning of *σφροσύνη*) and Peels 2014, 21 (a study of the meaning of *ἔσιος*).

45 See also Langacker 2008, 44: 'We should not expect to arrive at any exhaustive list of the domains in a matrix or any unique way to divide an expression's content among them—how many domains we recognize, and which ones, depends on our purpose and to some extent is arbitrary. The important thing is to recognize the diverse and multifaceted nature of the conceptual content an expression evokes.'

46 See Fillmore 1982, 111: '[W]ords represent categorizations of experience, and each of these categories is underlain by a motivating situation occurring against a background of knowledge and experience.' Fillmore defines a frame as follows (1982, 44; 2006, 373): 'any system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits; when one of the things in such a structure is introduced into a text, or into a conversation, all of the others are automatically made available.'

47 See Joosten 2013, 6: 'Different cultures structure the "real world" in different ways, so that words of identical meaning may nevertheless be connoted differently. This amounts to an influence of language on thought.'

chapter 7). Moreover, while ‘domain’ suggests a more descriptive or objective context in which author and audience participate, a ‘frame’ leaves room for the author to manipulate his message by making use of or leaving out expected indicators of a specific frame. In this book, both terms are mostly used interchangeably, although I have a preference for ‘domain’ as it better accommodates abstract notions such as ‘justice’ or ‘epistemology’.<sup>48</sup>

To sum up, the notion of a ‘semantic domain’ is particularly useful for an investigation into a word’s meaning, and its usefulness is slowly gaining ground within biblical studies as well.<sup>49</sup> Dictionaries focused on biblical texts are increasingly indebted to semantic domain approaches, such as Louw and Nida’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (1988) but also more recently Delgado Jara’s *Diccionario griego-español del Nuevo Testamento* (2014).<sup>50</sup> Ultimately, though, the current study is not concerned with words per se but with ideas expressed in specific texts. The map of a semantic domain shows what words refer to similar events, cultural phenomena, or intellectual topoi, yet it is not ultimately determinative for the meaning of the words participating in the domain. Two words of the same domain—such as ‘faith’ (πίστις) and ‘opinion’ (δόξα), which both partake in the semantic domain of ‘knowledge’—may be juxtaposed by one author yet aligned by another.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, more than linguistic tools, a literary or interpretative approach is required. In the next section, I discuss this move from

48 Lakoff prefers to speak of ‘idealized cognitive models (ICM)’. On the difference between these three terms, Langacker (2008, 46–47) writes: ‘Domain has the greatest generality, since neither frame nor ICM applies very well to basic domains (e.g. time or color space). A frame may be roughly comparable to a nonbasic domain. If the words idealized and model are taken seriously, idealized cognitive model has the narrowest range of application. It would not, for example, apply to the ongoing discourse or the physical circumstances of the speech event.’

49 See e.g. Danker 1982 (on the ‘semantic field’ of ‘benefaction’ in epigraphical material), Fitzgerald 2001 (on ‘reconciliation’, describing a domain as a ‘linkage group’). For a recent overview, see Howe & Green 2014, and more specifically on frame semantics and the Hebrew Bible Shead 2011, who lists some more examples at 26, n. 32.

50 Louw & Nida 1988; Delgado Jara 2014. For an analysis of the treatment of *pistis* and *pisteuō* in these and some other dictionaries and an exposition on the method of the DGENT, see Muñoz Gallarte 2017. Muñoz Gallarte is right to emphasize the importance of contextual markers to selecting a particular sense, still, his reconstruction of such senses based on New Testament texts alone leaves the rich resource of contemporary pagan sources unexploited and appears to be a rather circular process.

51 See e.g. Van Wolde & Rezetko 2011, 19: ‘The fact that words belong to the same semantic field, does not imply that they express the same or an interconnected meaning. On the contrary, words that figure in one semantic field construct events—that are referentially related—in different ways. In other words, a semantic domain is the collection of words that refer to an event or to events that are related in reality or in the thought of reality, yet

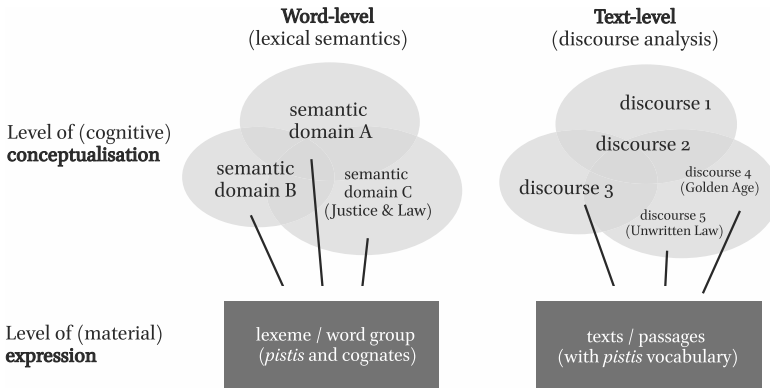


FIGURE 1 From semantic domains to discourses

semantics of *pistis* to discourses of *pistis*, as schematically depicted in figure 1.<sup>52</sup> By means of an example, I filled in part of the schema with the domain and discourses of chapter 3: '*Pistis, Dikaiosynē, and Nomos*'.

### 1.3 Paul: How Discourse Analysis Helps to Overcome Canonomania and Parallelomania

The main methodological presumption behind my research is that knowledge of contemporary pagan semantic, cultural, and philosophical conceptions is helpful in better understanding Paul's *pistis* language. Still, the leap from non-Jewish texts to the Pauline letters is not a self-evident one inside or outside biblical scholarship. Obviously, the results based on the sources I discuss will have to demonstrate their own worth in the following chapters. But it seems fitting to dedicate a few paragraphs to this issue of contextualizing Paul at the beginning. In answering these questions, 'discourse' will be introduced as the equivalent of semantic domains on the level of textual corpora.

#### 1.3.1 Previous Research: Contrasting Jewish Faith and Greek Faith

The discussion whether extra-biblical usage of any Greek word from the New Testament is useful for comparison can be traced back to at least the debates

---

the way these words conceptualize this event or these events can be completely different. The use of the notion of parallelism in biblical scholarship bears the risk of mixing sense with reference.'

52 I have not found any thorough discussion of how these methods may be combined, so this 'move' is mostly based on my own research experiences.



of Hebraists versus Purists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While the Hebraists argued for a specific Jewish dialect of Greek, the purists emphasized parallels with classical Greek and/or regarded the New Testament writings as *sui generis* due to divine inspiration. By now, and with the help of Adolf Deissmann's extensive survey of documentary papyri of the period (1897), the language itself is broadly accepted as being very much embedded in the semantic, morphological, and syntagmatic developments within Koine Greek (even if Hebraisms and Semitic influences can obviously be discerned).<sup>53</sup> Following the cognitive linguistic considerations I set out (§1.2.2), I can even argue that the mere usage of Greek elicits real-world frames particular to Greek language users: hence the focus expressed in the title on 'the Graeco-Roman World'.<sup>54</sup>

A similar increase in scholarly interest in the 'Greekness' of the New Testament can be noticed on the level of texts.<sup>55</sup> The name of Wettstein is bound up with the early phase of this interest, as he combined his text critical work with assembling in a second apparatus a large collection of pagan parallel passages to each New Testament text. In the past century, similar efforts were undertaken in projects such as the *Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*, leading to studies such as the *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament* (1995) and the eventual publication of volumes of the *Neuer Wettstein* (1996; 2001; 2008; 2013). More and more, the focus shifted from 'the search for isolated parallel detail to more coherent observation and interpretation'.<sup>56</sup> Numerous more in-depth studies appeared evolving from the 'Hellenistic Moral Philosophy and Early Christianity Section' of the Society of Biblical Literature, advanced by scholars such as Hans Dieter Betz and Abraham Malherbe. It is in this tradition that the present work also intends to contribute, and the specific methodological tool I would propose as helpful to achieve a 'more coherent observation' is discourse analysis. First, however, it is helpful to see whether these scholarly developments have had any impact on research into the meaning of *pistis*.

---

53 See e.g. the overview of the problem in Horsley 2013 and cf. the article on the problematic construal of a 'Jewish Greek' in the same work: Hartman 2013. On Paul's language as compared to later Atticizing Greek, cf. Judge 2008a, 71: 'Fathers of the Greek church in the fourth century, notably John Chrysostom, wrote in the style of 800 years before. These classicisers were well aware that Paul did not use the Attic diction now essential to the educated man. They had lost sight of the fact that Paul was writing in the form of the language current amongst educated people in his day.'

54 See Joosten 2013, 7: 'The use of a Greek word brings Greek thought into the associative background (the "frame" in terms of cognitive linguistics) of a biblical passage.'

55 See, for the developments in the scholarly interest in 'parallels' from the sixteenth century up to the beginning of the twenty first, White & Fitzgerald 2003, 15–27.

56 Fischel 1977, xxvi, quoted through White & Fitzgerald 2003, 27.

When it comes to the past fifty years of *pistis* studies, non-Jewish source material is often neglected or even outright rejected, an omission not ameliorated by the academic segregation of classical-philological and biblical-theological departments. Eduard Lohse, for instance, states:

In its understanding of faith, early Christianity did not build on Hellenistic conceptions and terminology, but rather tied in with speech patterns from the Old Testament and Judaism.<sup>57</sup>

Such a reserved attitude towards a Hellenistic contribution to Pauline *pistis* is not exceptional and fits the more general reflex of a non-negligible portion of biblical scholarship to create a ‘safe space’ of Judaic comparative material to guard Christianity’s incommensurability against suspect ‘Greek’ influences.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, most research that has been undertaken into the meaning of faith in Paul focuses mostly on the Jewish background of the word, that is, if they focus on anything besides Paul’s own writings. Often enough, early Christian usage of *pistis* is seen as a specific, unique, Christian innovation.<sup>59</sup>

Especially regarding the supposed ‘religious’ meaning of *pistis* in early Christian thought, there is scholarly debate about whether to attribute this to Greek or rather Jewish influences (in particular the Septuagint translation

---

57 Lohse 1977, 151 (translation my own): ‘Das frühe Christentum hat in seinem Verständnis des Glaubens nicht an hellenistische Vorstellungen und Begrifflichkeit angeknüpft, sondern die durch das Alte Testament und das Judentum vorgegebene Redeweise aufgenommen.’

58 See the analysis of this apologetic agenda in Smith 1990, and more recently in Kloppenborg 2017, 392–395. Cf. Stowers 1994, 328: ‘Jewish and Christian ideology has made Paul and other Jews into ghosts walking through their world without belonging to or being touched by their “pagan environment”’.

59 See e.g. the famous statement by Hermann Cremer as the opening sentences of his preface to the *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* (Cremer & Urwick 1886, vi): ‘Lexical works upon New Testament Greek have hitherto lacked a thorough appreciation of what Schleiermacher calls “the language-moulding power of Christianity”. A language so highly elaborated and widely used as was Greek having been chosen as the organ of the Spirit of Christ, it necessarily followed that as Christianity fulfilled the aspirations of truth, the expressions of that language received a new meaning, and terms hackneyed and worn out by the current misuse of daily talk received a new impress and a fresh power.’ Cf. also Hatch 1917, 66, who focuses on the influence of mystery cults: ‘Thus in the Pauline idea of faith Hebraic and Hellenistic elements are commingled in such a way that a novel result is produced—a contribution to the philosophy of religion whose significance it is impossible to overestimate.’ And, on the gospel of John, cf. the general thesis of Jensen 2004.

of words derived from the root *ʾmn* (אמן) with the root *πιστ*.<sup>60</sup> A milestone in this regard has been Rudolf Bultmann's contribution on *pistis* and cognates to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.<sup>61</sup> Bultmann argued, following Reitzenstein, that whereas in classical, pre-Hellenistic Greek, *pistis* was not a 'religious term', in the Hellenistic period, under influence of the vocabulary of ancient mystery cults, it began to indicate an volitional obedience to a particular deity. Eventually, *pistis* became a catchphrase (German: *Schlagwort*) of religious propaganda for Jews and pagans alike.<sup>62</sup>

Bultmann's position met strong resistance in Dieter Lührmann, who intended to safeguard the unique character of Christian faith from the idea that it is 'a common phenomenological religious category'.<sup>63</sup> Instead, Lührmann argues that the Septuagint translation of the words derived from the root *aman* (אמן) with *pistis* and cognates was not at all conditioned by 'a religious use of language common to both stems'.<sup>64</sup> Rather, according to Lührmann, *pistis*, *pisteuō*, and cognates are 'Bedeutungslehnwörter', adopting their meaning from the

60 See e.g. Binder 1968, 30 ('Zu den Aussagen des Paulus über die *pistis* können vom griechischen Sprachbereich aus keine Verbindungslinien gezogen werden'); Friedrich 1982, 94 ('In der griechischen Welt spielt Glaube für die Charakterisierung des religiösen Verhältnisses des Menschen zu Gott keine Rolle'). And cf. the article on *pistis* in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Vorster 1974, 628): 'Ob schon der Hellenismus *πιστις* und *πιστεύειν* unabhängig von der jüdisch-christlichen Mission als religiöse Termini verwendet (so Bultmann), ist umstritten; sicher ist dagegen, das der klassische griechische Sprachgebrauch zur Entstehung des biblischen G.-Verständnisses nichts beigetragen hat. Die Bildungen vom Stamm *πιστ-* haben im klassischen Griechisch keine religiöse Bedeutung. Wenn der Wortstamm trotzdem zum Träger des G.-Verständnis werden könnte, so ist dafür die griechische Übersetzung des Alten Testaments (Septuaginta) verantwortlich; denn sie gibt den hebräischen Wortstamm *aman*, in dem sich das G.-Verständnis verdichtet hat, mit *πιστεύειν* wieder.'

61 Bultmann 1968, 174–182, 197–228. Bultmann's (for the NT) and Weisser's (for the OT) treatment of faith language in the TWNT/TDNT is for instance repeated in a lengthy summary by Rodney Needham, in a work that was influential in its turn (Needham 1972, 44–50): see §2.2.1 below. Bultmann's position on the cognitive-psychological nature of faith is discussed in more detail in chapter 5 below (§5.2.1–2); for his view on Philo's use of *pistis* see §4.3.4 below.

62 See Bultmann 1968, 179 ('The words in *pist-* did not become religious terms in classical Greek. (...) [I]n no sense is *pistis* used for the true religious relationship to God or for the basic religious attitude of man'), and on mystery cults 181–182; cf. Reitzenstein 1920, 10, 94–96. Reitzenstein's thesis is discussed in chapter 8 (§8.3).

63 Lührmann 1973, 19: 'daß "Glaube" nicht einfach eine allgemein-religionsphänomenologische Kategorie ist, sondern exklusiv der uns prägenden christlichen Sprachtradition angehört.'

64 Lührmann 1973, 21: 'einem beiden Stämmen gemeinsamen religiösen Sprachgebrauch'. Elaborating on this, he states (at 21): 'Im Alten Testament kann mit אמן das Verhältnis des Menschen zu Gott bezeichnet werden; eine solche Verwendung von *πιστ-* fehlt

words they are meant to represent.<sup>65</sup> Hence, Lührmann argues that pagan ‘religious’ usage attested by Bultmann’s examples is due to the influence of Christian usage, not the other way around.

Lührmann, in turn, was rebutted by Gerhard Barth, Axel von Dobbeler, Gerd Schunack, and Dennis Lindsay. A first major survey of the use of *pistis* as a denotation of the relationship between God and men in Graeco-Roman sources was undertaken by Barth (1982), arguing against Lührmann, and taking up some of Bultmann’s proof texts. Barth’s survey is helpful in showing the breadth of pagan usage, including in contexts we would deem ‘religious’. Unlike the present study, however, his approach is far from synchronic, covering material dating from the fifth century BC (Aeschylus, Herodotus) onwards, and, as he himself grants, the overview is far from exhaustive.<sup>66</sup> Von Dobbeler (1987) expanded Barth’s collection of sources and concludes that, as the range of senses in classical Greek includes both ‘dogmatic faith’ and ‘trust in God’, Lührmann’s thesis must be rejected.<sup>67</sup> Schunack (1999), in turn, foregrounded faith in oracles in both classical and Hellenistic-Roman times as an important non-Jewish context and thus rejected both Bultmann’s emphasis on religious propaganda and Lührmann’s scepticism of Graeco-Roman origins.<sup>68</sup>

A fourth extensive overview of the discussion of the religious use of *pistis* in classical, that is pre-Hellenistic, Greek is given by Lindsay (1993).<sup>69</sup> His sur-

---

im zeitgenössischen Griechisch.’ Lührmann rightly rejects many proof texts offered by Bultmann (1968, 181–182) because of their later date, as from the third century onwards Christian influence cannot be ruled out.

65 Lührmann 1973, 24. He points at Philo, as the first author who uses πίστις vis-à-vis pagans ‘zur Bezeichnung dessen, was das Spezifikum des Judentums ist’ (32), that is, the use of πίστις as a fundamental attitude towards God.

66 Barth 1982, 112: ‘Ich konnte dabei freilich schon aus zeitlichen Gründen nicht die ganze Breite des hellenistischen Schrifttums berücksichtigen. Hier bleibt eine Aufgabe, die in Zukunft doch einmal angepackt werden sollte.’ Cf. p. 126.

67 See Von Dobbeler 1987, 284–298 for the entire discussion, 295 for this conclusion. Von Dobbeler is careful to explain that the attestation of such senses does not so much explain the origin of Paul’s usage, but rather the interpretation of Paul’s usage by his pagan audience.

68 Schunack 1999, for his engagement with Bultmann, Lührmann, Von Dobbeler, and Barth, see 296–298. Schunack summarizes the Graeco-Roman idea of faith as having the following characteristics (at 312): 1) it is a personal, historical commitment to the divine, 2) it presupposes divine engagements with human affairs, 3) it implies a division between mortals and immortals whose transgression equals hubris, and hence 4) it requires the interpretation of divine intent: faith is ‘ein hermeneutisches Produkt lebensgeschichtlicher Interpretation’. Schunack’s interpretation is taken up at various points below (see §2.3.6 and §8.3.1).

69 Lindsay 1993, 1–3, 7–19.

vey is meant to show that ‘there is a clear precedent in classical Greek for the use of the πιστ- word group in the religious sense of trusting and relying upon God’s promises.’<sup>70</sup> Yet, even though Lindsay takes position against Lührmann as regards the forerunners of religious *pistis* usage in classical Greek, his emphasis on the influence of the Septuagint follows a similar track and his conclusion in terms of a ‘Biblical faith versus Greek faith’ suggests similar concerns.<sup>71</sup> In fact, in a 2017 contribution, Lindsay concludes by affirmatively quoting Lührmann’s thesis that ‘the horizon of understanding of early Christian faith language lies in the internal language use of the Jewish tradition, not in the confrontation with the pagan environment.’<sup>72</sup> Thus, even though the existence of a ‘religious usage’ of *pistis* in pagan Greek is now undisputed,<sup>73</sup> the underlying assumption remains persistent: there are two types of faith, of Hebrew and Greek origin (and indeed this was argued in these terms by Martin Buber, on which see §5.2.1 below), and Paul’s usage is located somewhere on this axis.

In what sense is this work—yet another work on early Christian *pistis*—different? A first remark on this discussion from this study’s perspective is that, before we can answer the question whether the term was understood to be ‘religious’ to non-Jewish people, we should consider whether and how ‘religion’ is applicable to the first-century Mediterranean world (see chapter 2, esp. §§2.2.1–2). And, second, rather than assuming from the start that Paul’s usage is always or predominantly a ‘religious usage’ (in the loose sense of relating to the divine), it would be more precise to look into the use of *pistis* vocabulary in diverse semantic domains in which the meaning is established by the semantic markers in its environment.<sup>74</sup> Third, as I explained, the approach of this book is not diachronic like these studies are, tracing the influence from

70 Lindsay 1993, 18.

71 Lindsay upholds the idea that pagan *pistis* is more cognitive than the biblical variant: see §5.2.2 below and see §4.3.4 on Lindsay’s (and my own) position on Philo’s *pistis* usage.

72 Lindsay 2017, 205: ‘Der Verstehenshorizont für das frühchristliche Reden von “Glaube” liegt also in der internen Sprache der Jüdischen Tradition, nicht in der Auseinandersetzung mit der heidnischen Umwelt.’

73 See e.g. Brandenburger 1988, 168: ‘Mit Sicherheit wurde im klassischen Griechentum sowie im Hellenismus πίστις/πιστεύειν *auch* in religiösen Zusammenhängen verwendet.’ Brandenburger, however, is not convinced that this is the main horizon of understanding for early Christian *pistis* usage (see p. 169), as it offers no parallel for ‘exklusiv das von dieser Gruppierung propagierte Gottes—bzw. Christusverhältnis als Weg zum Heil.’ Here, the question is, however, whether Paul indeed uses *pistis* in this manner: see §7.4.1 below.

74 Cf. the critique of distinguishing between ‘religious’ and ‘profane’ usage of *pistis* by Michael Wolter (2017, 352): ‘Diese Unterscheidung basiert jedoch auf einer ganz ana-

classical Greek or from the Septuagint onwards, but largely synchronic in its set-up. I focus on the early imperial Roman era, so that we may come closer to understanding the Greek spoken and written at the time roughly contemporary with the Pauline movement.<sup>75</sup> Lührmann's idea of 'Bedeutungslehnworte' (indicating that the Septuagint translation determines the semantics of early Christian *pistis*) is not without support in present-day scholarship.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, from a linguistic perspective, any recontextualization implies a reconstruction of meaning. Thus, even though this biblical discourse may have been a factor to consider in Paul's language use—and the studies mentioned indeed contributed to establishing this much—it is unlikely that it was the main determinant of the sense that Paul made to his contemporary pagan audience. And in that respect, this study fills in some of the gaps.

Most problematic, however, is the assumption underlying many of the publications I mentioned that 'Jewish' and 'pagan' language use can be so easily distinguished and disentangled.<sup>77</sup> The Septuagint, for one, did not come into being in a secluded, Hellenism-free environment and the same counts even more obviously for Philo's and Josephus's works. The Greek version of Sirach (second century BC) is shown to make 'extended narrative use' of the Homeric theme of 'the learned yet tricky traveller', a usage confirmed by a shared

---

chronistischen Sichtweise, die den Texten von außen übergestülpt wird.' And also in the same volume Friedrich Reiterer (2017, 138): 'Da es sich zeigt, dass in gar manchem Beleg profane und religiöse Dimensionen des Redens, des Denkens und des Lebens fließend ineinander übergehen, trifft die moderne Dichotomie dieser beiden Bereiche nicht zu.'

75 As will be made clear in the following chapters, the use of *pistis* as an attitude towards the divine is well attested in non-Jewish and non-Christian Graeco-Roman sources from this period: see esp. §6.3.5 on *pistis* and the ideal of 'imitation of the divine', and §7.3.1 on the Roman cult of Fides. And see Morgan 2015, chapter 4, 'Pistis and Fides in Graeco-Roman Religiosity', 123–175.

76 See for instance Tov 1999, 90, quoted with approval and applied to the meaning of *pistis* in Paul by Kathy Ehrensperger (2013, 164): 'if a certain Greek word represents a given Hebrew word in most of its occurrences, it has become almost by implication a mere symbol for that Hebrew word in the translation.' To be sure, as will become evident in the remainder of this book, I am not unsympathetic to Ehrenspergers *pointe* here: that 'faithfulness', 'loyalty', and 'trust' (instead of 'believing' or 'holding for true or real') are fundamental to the meaning of early Christian *pistis* (see her p. 166), though I am more critical of her anti-imperialistic interpretation (see my §7.2.3 below).

77 Cf. for this assumption e.g. the research question posed in Hebert 1955, 373: 'whether the word "faith", as St Paul uses it, carries a Hebrew rather than a Greek meaning.' These neat categories received ground-breaking criticism in Hengel 1974. On the considerable overlap in meaning between the Hebrew *enumah* word group and the Greek *pistis* word group in the Septuagint, see Ueberschaer 2017, esp. at 103.

vocabulary.<sup>78</sup> The book of Wisdom (first century BC) is demonstrated to be in dialogue with Hellenistic philosophy as regards its presentation of how divine justice is active within the cosmos.<sup>79</sup> Decades later, the Pauline communities of the first century AD to which our main sources are addressed formed speech communities in which people from a diversity of cultural, social-economical, and ‘religious’ backgrounds were represented. When we take this extensive literary and social interaction across supposed cultural barriers into consideration, the dichotomy which was often postulated is rendered void, and what stands out is the necessity of taking a wider range of comparative material into account.

Fortunately, there is more and more awareness among those concerned with early and specifically Pauline Christianity that a Graeco-Roman perspective on Paul’s writings—or even a ‘Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism divide’—should be set firmly on the scholarly agenda.<sup>80</sup> That said, when it comes to the study of *pistis* in Paul, even the more recent studies which include pagan sources offer either discussions of a very limited amount of texts or include many brief references to a range of pagan parallels without discussing and contextualizing their specific contributions to a discourse.<sup>81</sup> The first category includes, for instance, Nijay Gupta (2020b: *Paul and the Language*

---

78 Aitken 2019, citation from p. 29. See also the earlier works of McDonald (2000; 2003) on Mark’s and Luke’s usage of Homeric epic.

79 Atkins 2021.

80 The phrase between quotation marks is the title of an edited volume: Engberg-Pedersen 2001. See also the practical remark by Timothy Carter (2009, 105): ‘and any light that can be cast on the meaning of Paul’s language in its Graeco-Roman context is preferable to merely projecting twenty-first century assumptions onto the apostle’. And see for instance in the introduction of the volume *Paul’s Jewish Matrix* (Donfried 2011, 48): ‘By stressing the Jewishness of Paul one must not deny the validity of the Greco-Roman context for Paul’s apostolic activity’ as one who, ‘interacts with the pagan culture in partnership.’

81 An exception to these characterizations is Teresa Morgan (2015, 11–12); differences between our approaches are discussed in the next section (§1.4.1) and between our conclusions in §9.1 below. The recent edited volume *Glaube* (Frey, Schliesser & Ueberschaer 2017) acknowledges the renewed attention for pagan comparative material (referring to Morgan 2015, Strecker 2005, and Schumacher 2012 at p. xx, n. 36 and 37) and offers a balanced approach by including four articles on Hellenistic-Roman contexts. There are two potentially relevant studies which are as yet unpublished and/or unaccessible: Bernhard Cueto’s dissertation (2012) and John W. Taylor’s dissertation (2004a). The general thrust of the latter may be discernable in Taylor 2004b, on which, see below (§3.4.4). On the importance of a more detailed contextualization of parallel texts, cf. Thom 2007, 100: ‘[T]he New Wettstein is not a sufficient tool by itself; it needs to be complemented by detailed analyses of the various Hellenistic texts in which the textual integrity and complexity of the latter is preserved.’

of Faith), who discusses an interesting choice of parallels to show that trust was an important virtue in the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>82</sup> To the second belongs, among others, Thomas Schumacher (2012: *Der Begriff "pistis" im paulinischen Sprachgebrauch: Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von christlicher und profan-griechischer Semantik*), who judges pagan semantics absolutely relevant yet is highly concise in his discussion of primary sources, with footnotes including references to dozens of passages each.<sup>83</sup> The present study contributes by giving ample space to primary sources in order to establish not merely parallels but rather a detailed map of Graeco-Roman discourses wherein these 'parallels' partake, a map on which Paul's *pistis* language may subsequently be traced. This map consists mainly of pagan sources, due to the language and the period under investigation, yet it includes Philo's works, *Wisdom*, *Sirach*, and other 'Hellenistic-Jewish' material as well.

The question remains, however, how to make careful use of parallels. Just as the perspective and method of some of the studies I referred to in the previous subsection may amount to a form of 'canomania', whereby the language of the Bible is fenced off from its pagan cultural environment, the opposite accusation of 'parallelomania' is more likely to be considered as applicable to the present work. This latter term was made famous by Samuel Sandmel's employment in a 1961 lecture. Sandmel criticized the scholarly tendency to overestimate and exaggerate parallels between early rabbinic literature, Philo, Qumran, and the New Testament. He defined parallelomania as 'that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction.'<sup>84</sup> In their

82 Gupta 2020b, 40–46: Gupta discusses instances of *pistis* language in Dionysius of Halicarnassus's *Roman Antiquities*, Plutarch's *Amatorius*, Dio Chrysostom's *On Trust* and *On Distrust*, and some examples from personal letters preserved on papyrus. Cf. for this category also Hagen Pifer 2019a, whose study refrains from any comparisons with contemporary pagan literature (with the exception of some sources mentioned by others such as, at p. 49, Plutarch, Epictetus, and Philo following Abraham Malherbe's discussion).

83 Schumacher 2012. Cf. p. 196, where he agrees with Christian Strecker (2005, 228), who stated: 'Eine isolationistische Betrachtungsweise wäre schließlich auch in Anbetracht der vielfältigen Verzahnungen zwischen jüdischen und griechischen Lebenswelten im Hellenismus im Allgemeinen sowie bei Paulus im Speziellen wenig sinnvoll.' For his treatment of pagan sources, see 199–232, with as his conclusion 'dass in den Paulinischen Texten der profan-griechische Sprachgebrauch noch an vielen Stellen deutlich greifbar ist, und zwar sowohl was die Wechselseitigkeit betrifft als auch hinsichtlich der unterschiedlichen Verwendungsmöglichkeiten.' Schumacher's view on the semantic difference between Latin *fides* and Greek *pistis* is discussed in chapter 7 below (see esp. §7.2.2).

84 Sandmel 1962, 1.



overview of the *status quaestionis* of comparative research in New Testament studies, White and Fitzgerald argue that

parallels alone are not enough. The topoi and other philosophical conventions that one regularly finds among the Hellenistic moralists and in Paul (as well as other NT writers) are more than mere clichés. They, too, were products of socially constructed communities of meaning. There is a need for more nuanced treatment of social-historical as well as archaeological-cultural data in order to provide contextual grounding and correlation for the parallels. (White & Fitzgerald 2003, 38)

An approach informed by discourse analysis may offer just such a ‘more nuanced treatment’, as I argue in the next subsection.

### 1.3.2 *Discourse Analysis and Paul's Faith Language*

To start with some more basic hermeneutical considerations concerning author, text, and audience, for Paul (and other Christ preachers) to make use of the concept of ‘faith’ in a missionary context, it must have resonated in some way with this mostly pagan public. The contributions made to the field of hermeneutics by what is known as ‘reader response criticism’ are valuable to overcome a too narrow emphasis on the author, including the question of Paul’s education and social environment.<sup>85</sup> In addition, cognitive linguistics has taught us that meaning is derived from shared conceptualizations of the world outside within speech communities: rather than speaking of ‘author’s intent’ on the one hand and ‘reader response’ on the other hand, the subject under investigation is their shared understanding of the texts at hand as reflected by (a reconstruction of) the elicited semantic frames.

Granted, even if Paul and his audience share a semantic universe, Paul’s ideas may have differed considerably from the prevalent views of contemporary pagan authors. And obviously, these views do not function as a fixed limit on what Paul may have said. Especially as Paul also draws from his more particular Jewish inheritance and identity, he may well have been misunderstood either partly or wholly by a largely pagan public that may have had different ‘frames’ elicited by the word group *pistis*. It is therefore good to realize that when it comes to semantic change, such developments take time, and Paul’s (genuine) letters offer insights into the earliest phases of

---

85 Cf. Bruce 1982, 171: ‘the exegete’s task is to determine what the writers meant and what the persons addressed understood.’

Christian movements, a period in which ingroup language was not yet firmly established.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, it is a good hermeneutical principle to trust the communicative strength of an author as comprising a certain level of intelligibility for his intended (and actual) audience, an audience which may have included more than a select, fully initiated ingroup. Therefore, I think the existence of a shared 'horizon of expectations' between Paul and his intended and actual audience is a justifiable starting point.<sup>87</sup> Such a horizon of expectations is further defined in this work as consisting of knowledge of particular 'discourses' in which the texts in question participate.

Discourse gained its specific critical-methodological meaning from Michel Foucault's works (1969, 1971) where it denotes a shift in focus from the face-value message of a text to the thought structures and presuppositions behind it. A discourse is thought of as a normative, integrated set of ideas to which individual texts relate in a variety of ways, shaping the meaning of the discourse by reframing the elements according to their purposes.<sup>88</sup> In Foucault's approach, discourses function as strongholds in which knowledge and power are closely linked, and the analyst's aim is to unmask them if not tear them down. In my application of the term, however, I am not so much interested in the critical deconstruction of discourses of power as in the manner in which an individual authors like Paul creatively reconfigure current sets of ideas, thus shedding light on their own distinctive message.<sup>89</sup> By distinguishing and contextualizing the different 'voices' that participate in a given discourse, we can

---

86 Cf. Morgan 2015, 502: 'Community-specific concepts and praxeis of *pistis/fides* can evolve in any community (and, I argued, some emerge within the writings of the New Testament), but evolutions are likely to be gradual and incremental rather than sudden and comprehensive.'

87 This term was popularized by Hans Robert Jauss (in German: 'Erwartungshorizont'), building on Gadamer's hermeneutical idea of a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer 1960, 289). See Jauss & Benzinger 1970, 18–19: 'The reconstruction of the horizon of expectations, on the basis of which a work in the past was created and received, enables us to find the questions to which the text originally answered and thereby cover how the reader of that day viewed and understood the work. (...) Whenever the writer of a work is unknown, his intent not recorded, or his relationship to sources and models only indirectly accessible, the philological question of how the text is "properly" to be understood, that is according to its intention and its time, can best be answered if the text is considered in contrast to the background of the works which the author could expect his contemporary public to know either explicitly or implicitly.'

88 See for general overviews of discourse analysis Fairclough 1995; Gee & Handford 2011.

89 Hence, it is also distinct from discourse analyses of single texts, whereby the structure, texture, and internal cohesion is explored. Pioneering works in this regard in biblical studies are Guthrie 1993 on *Hebrews* and Reed 1997 on *Philippians*. And see for an overview of the method/discipline Reed & Porter 1999 and Guthrie 2001.

create a ‘map’ on which a particular contribution can be understood in its convergence and divergence from other contributions. So even if Paul may partake in the same discourse, his contribution may be more aligned with, say, Plutarch than Lucretius. Only after a shared set of ideas and topics, a discourse, is established can the divergences come to the fore between the participants to this discourse.<sup>90</sup> As a method, discourse analysis thus upholds the originality of the author’s contribution to a given discourse as it understands intertextual relationships not as one-to-one influences but instead in terms of diffuse network-relationships.

The combination of a semantic domain approach and discourse analysis is not a self-evident one, yet there are interesting methodological similarities.<sup>91</sup> We saw that in cognitive linguistics, the meaning of a word is thought of in terms of participation in diverse semantic domains stored in the mind. Hence, in lexicography, an important dictum is that ‘you shall know a word by the company it keeps’.<sup>92</sup> With the rise of computational databases of written texts, also within classics and New Testament scholarship, large corpora can be searched for frequently co-occurring lexemes, providing an opportunity for quantitative data on word association.<sup>93</sup> This is semantically relevant, as information about a lexeme’s ‘association ratio’ provides ‘a powerful set of suggestions to the lexicographer for what needs to be accounted for in choosing a set of semantic tags’.<sup>94</sup> A similar method of mapping frequently co-occurring lexemes, ‘collocation’ is used in a sub-discipline of discourse analysis known as ‘corpus based discourse analysis’.<sup>95</sup> In this field, collocations are not used

---

90 A literary ‘discourse’ is thus the alternative on the level of ideas to a phenomenological ‘pattern’ in the terminology of David Frankfurter, who writes about comparing phenomena of lived religion (2012, 86, italics his): ‘It means little to show that *x* resembles *y*; it means a lot to demonstrate that *x* resembles *y* more than *z* with respect to [pattern *x*], for this strategy admits the multiplicity of potentially comparable data at the same time as the important differences (context, history, social world) that prevent mere “parallelo-mania”’. In the method put forward by Adam Wright (2016), the notion of a shared ‘topic’ functions similar to my notion of discourse. Wright, however, seems to think in terms of conscious allusions to specific texts (such as Paul in *Romans* 7 alluding to Plato’s *Phaedo*) and unlike Wright, the present study values lexical collocations more, both as a means to trace discourses and as a means to substantiate the convergences found.

91 Cf. Schol-Wetter 2014, 32 on cognitive linguistics: ‘The links with discourse analysis, especially regarding the decisive stamp culture puts on language and meaning, are obvious.’

92 Famously expressed by J.R. Firth (1957, 11), cited by i.a. Church & Hanks 1990, 22.

93 Cf. Thornbury 2010, 283: ‘Corpus evidence matched against data concerning the mental processing of texts may help reveal how patterns of text correlate with the way mental schemata evolve during comprehension and interaction.’

94 Church & Hanks 1990, 28.

95 For ‘collocation’ and various subcategories, see Flowerdew 2011.

to retrieve different senses of a word, yet they serve to distinguish discourses: ‘when two words frequently collocate, there is evidence that the discourses surrounding them are particularly powerful (...) Collocates can therefore act as triggers, suggesting unconscious associations which are ways that discourses can be maintained.’<sup>96</sup> An important step is therefore to ‘obtain concordances of the collocates and look for patterns within the context’ which serves ‘to uncover dominant discourses surrounding the subject’.<sup>97</sup> The notions of ‘co-occurrence’ or ‘collocation’ thus serve to draw together lexical (semantic) and literary (discourse) approaches.<sup>98</sup> The interest of the current study is in uncovering relevant discourses in corpora as well, making heuristic use of co-occurring lexemes without offering a detailed quantitative overview.

The notion of ‘discourse’ is fruitful for intertextual comparison as it bypasses the idea of specific literary dependency while preserving the intellectual originality of the author in making use of another’s ideas, which was, after all, what Sandmel was concerned about. A currently popular reply to the accusation of parallelomania is the formulation of whole lists of criteria for testing suggested parallels or, as Richard Hays prefers to call them, ‘echoes’.<sup>99</sup> These lists, including criteria such as ‘availability’, ‘recurrence’, and ‘historical plausibility’, could in principle also be applied to extra-biblical sources, even if Hays himself seems sceptical.<sup>100</sup> The level of a ‘discourse’, however, helps to overcome parallelomania by reconstructing a larger subject of discussion. Influence through a discourse is not thought of as a one-way street of one author to another; instead, a discourse mediates shared notions and functions as a diffuse network. We need not establish a probable source for an idea if it

96 Baker 2006, 114. Cf. also Thornbury 2010, 273 (citing Stubbs 2001a, 120): ‘textual “flow” is achieved through the recurrence not just of individual words or their derivatives but of “lexico-semantic units”, including collocations and other formulaic lexical combinations, thereby creating “a relatively unexplored mechanism of text cohesion”’

97 Baker 2006, 120.

98 As ‘collocation’ is often taken to refer only to co-occurrence in close vicinity (within the span of a few words) I prefer to use the term co-occurrence throughout the current work.

99 Hays 1989, 29–32 for the criteria. In Hays’s footsteps, many have sought to critique, adapt, or supplement his criteria and division of types of echoes. See i.a. Thompson 1991, 30–36 (adaptation to reception of Jesus’s teachings in Paul); Porter 1997, 2006 (highly critical on Hays); Collins 2010, 127–129 (refinement of criteria); Shaw 2013 (offering an overview of the discussion so far); Lucas 2014 (evaluating Porter’s and Hays’s disagreement).

100 Cf. Berkley’s refinement of Collins’s adaptation of the criteria (2000, 60–65) in his argument for ‘echoes of Aristotle in Rom 2.14–15’ (on his interpretation, see §3.4.2 below). An application of the criteria to intertextuality of Ancient Near Eastern literature and the Old Testament is provided by Christopher Hays (2008, 35–41).

was part of a well-known discourse, well known, that is, to at least a certain layer of society.

In other words, Paul need not have read a specific work to pick up on a current network of ideas, debates, or narratives.<sup>101</sup> Of course, when it comes to Paul's undisputed writings, we are dealing not with literary or fictive treatises but with actual letters addressing specific situations in the communal lives of his addressees over the time span of a little less than a decade. Thus, (a reconstruction of) the underlying concerns of each letter must weigh heavily in interpretation. At the same time, these letters were written by the same author after spending over a decade developing his distinct message in dialogue with a web of contemporary discourses, which accounts for a certain coherence, as attested by recurring words and themes.<sup>102</sup> According to the author of *Acts*, Paul had the reputation among the Athenian Epicureans and Stoics of being a 'seed-picker' or 'pseudo-intellectual' (*Acts* 17.18: *σπερμολόγος*).<sup>103</sup> It is only after recognizing these 'seeds' he picked up that we can comprehend the new (contra-)narrative he constructed, or, to stick to the metaphor, the new 'multi-seed bread' he baked.<sup>104</sup>

Thus, the one introductory question remaining is how likely it is that Paul actually 'picked up on' specific, often philosophical or intellectual discourses I encountered surveying contemporary *pistis* language. Christoph Heilig offers a thorough contribution to methodologically strengthen the academic business of intertextual comparison by applying Bayes's theorem of probability:

---

101 Anders Klostergaard Petersen (2017a) arrives at a similar methodological verdict from a different angle: as there is a convergent development from archaic to axial forms of religion in the period under scrutiny, the Judaism/Hellenism divide pales as both share in this major process. See (at 238): 'Contrary to traditional ways of discussing the relationship, we need not surmise a historical connection in which Platonism came to exert direct influence on Paul (...) the two cultural manifestations may advantageously be understood to exemplify convergent cultural evolution.' See §4.3 below for an illustration of how my approach offers a further substantiation of such convergences via discourse analysis.

102 See also Tomson 2014, 117: '[O]n the one hand, we must read every letter on its own terms and in view of its particular rhetorical situation, but on the other, we may be confronted with recurrent terminology, concepts, and sayings also found in other letters. (...) Such formulae are typical for their "viscosity", for a blend of continuity and variation we may well imagine at home in a milieu of oral delivery and study.'

103 The latter translation I owe to a group presentation of my second-year bachelor students.

104 A pinnacle in the reception history of this passage is Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* (section 64), where the Paul of *Acts* is depicted as a master twister who picks and chooses from his sources, a method followed *en masse* by those whom Erasmus calls 'the children of theology'. (Specifically, he refers to the inscription 'to an unknown god' which, according to Erasmus, read in full 'to the gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa, unknown and strange gods'.)

posterior probability (the strength of an interpretation) is proportional to explanatory potential (that it explains the available evidence or has ‘predictive power’) and (or ‘times’) background probability (that the proposed interpretative frame is credible in itself).<sup>105</sup> My following chapters survey the explanatory potential of the hypothesis that Paul participated in specific cultural discourses that make use of *pistis* language. On the likelihood of Paul participating in such cultural and particularly philosophical discourses (the background probability), I will offer some thoughts now.

#### 1.4 Philosophers: How Philosophical Contextualization Helps to Overcome Anachronistic Conceptions of Faith

In the present, post-Enlightenment times, the notion of ‘faith’ is seen as part and parcel of the Christian religion, and as such, often contrasted with notions of reason, rationality, and to the intellectual enterprise of philosophy. Tertullian’s notorious (and often misunderstood) exclamation on the incompatibility of Jerusalem and Athens also echoes through the history of classical and New Testament scholarship. Despite many reserved evaluations of the usefulness of ancient, pagan philosophy as a relevant context for early Christian thought, however, a case can be made and has been made to the contrary. In particular, the understanding of the ancient situation in terms of a ‘religious-philosophical continuum’ and the phenomenon of ‘popular philosophy’ serve to debunk an anachronistic dichotomy between Paul’s ‘religious’ world view and pagan philosophers’ ‘intellectual’ concerns. This opens the doors to reading Paul’s faith in light of ‘the philosophers’ faith’.

##### 1.4.1 *Previous Research: Paul’s ‘Religious’ Usage of Pistis Set against Pagan Philosophy*

According to a great number of classicists, ancient philosophers, church historians, and biblical scholars, the books of the New Testament take a highly

---

105 For his explanation of Bayes’s theorem and its use for literary-historical exegesis, see Heilig 2015, 27–28. Heilig uses the theorem in this work to critically review the hypothesis that Paul’s letters carry anti-imperial ideology. He also critiques Hays’s criteria for being unprecise and for overemphasizing background plausibility at the cost of explanatory potential (in Hays’s terms ‘satisfaction’ and ‘volume’): see 40–43.

critical stance when it comes to pagan philosophy.<sup>106</sup> Did Paul not condemn ‘human wisdom’ in *1 Corinthians* and ‘philosophy’ explicitly in *Colossians*?<sup>107</sup> Was his performance among the philosophers in Athens, as depicted in *Acts* 17, not one of the least successful?<sup>108</sup> According to some, Paul seems to have given rise to an anti-intellectual, anti-philosophical cultural revolution: ‘the impact of Christianity on the Greek intellectual world was like an asteroid hitting the earth.’<sup>109</sup> Others strictly distinguish between later, patristic syntheses with philosophy and Paul’s own Plato-free and ‘philosophically naïve language and thought’.<sup>110</sup> The scepticism of a ‘philosophical Paul’ within New Testament studies may be attributed to the turn away from the ‘systemic theological’ understanding of the apostle in the footsteps of E.P. Sanders (1977) and the focus on a more ‘Jewish’ and ‘apocalyptic’ reading, as Troels Engberg-Pedersen (2022) argues. Even in present-day, sympathetic philosophical read-

---

106 For an overview of some of these criticisms, see Stead 1994, 96–97. Stead does not object to these reasonings, but instead refers to interpersonal differences among authors: ‘In some Christians there is no doubt that this objection takes the form of an irrational repulsion, which after all contains elements of honest simplicity. (...) But more reflective characters will wish for a clearer understanding of what happened before they pass judgement.’ While his analysis of philosophy in Christian antiquity apparently begins with the apologists and church fathers, his conception of early Christian faith is rather fideistic: ‘an attitude of belief or trust displayed in the face of discouraging circumstances or in the absence of natural, reassuring knowledge’ (p. 110), for which he i.a. refers to *Hebrews* 11, *Romans* 4 (on which, see §7.4.1 *infra*) and *2 Corinthians* 5:7 (on which, see §4.5.3 *infra*).

107 On one of these texts (1 Cor 1.18–25), see §5.4.2 below. For an example of such an interpretation of this passage, see e.g. Armstrong & Markus 1960, 136: ‘The abrogation of philosophy as a gateway to saving truth had been stated in the strongest terms by St. Paul in the contrast he drew between the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God, and the foolishness of God which is wiser than men, through which it has pleased God to save those who believe (1 Cor 1.18–25).’ Armstrong and Markus present Paul’s views on philosophy as two different positions (the one quoted and the more positive one based on *Acts* 17) that would only gradually be reconciled in Christian thought. And for *Colossians*, cf. Judge 2008b, 413: ‘philosophy must normally have been the preserve of a scholarly elite. (...) Paul’s own training was almost certainly not in philosophy (...) Paul’s sole use of the term *philosophia* [in Col 2.8] is pejorative.’

108 See e.g. Adams 1992, 146: ‘the Paul of Acts does not pursue his mission to the Athenians, for the simple reason that he was not a philosopher.’

109 Matson 2012, 6.

110 See Heath 2013, 243 discussing the Platonic topos of ‘becoming like God’, quoted in full in §6.4.5 below.

ings of Paul's thought, he is styled as the anti-philosopher who turned the tables of Platonic metaphysics or ontotheology.<sup>111</sup>

In studies concerning or discussing Paul's faith language, the influence of this sceptical attitude towards finding anything highly or even remotely philosophical in the New Testament is evident. Even if the usefulness of reading Paul's letters in light of Graeco-Roman discourses is acknowledged, when it comes to Paul's faith language being likened to philosophical usage of *pistis*, the amount of academic eyebrow raising increases. In Adolf Bonhöffer's *Epiktet und das Neue Testament* (1911), the *pistis* language used by this second-century Stoic philosopher is seen to indicate the virtue of 'faithfulness' and is differentiated by the author from its Christian usage as 'belief'.<sup>112</sup> William Hatch, who argues in favour of reading Pauline *pistis* in light of Hellenistic religion (in particular mystery religions), stresses decidedly that 'neither the philosophers nor the teachers of morals made any use of faith as a principle of religion or a source of goodness.'<sup>113</sup>

Also in more recent scholarship on *pistis* in Paul, philosophical literature is often implicitly or explicitly left out of what is considered relevant contextual material. Teresa Morgan aims for a recontextualisation of the development of early Christian *pistis* within Graeco-Roman cultural contexts, while remaining unconvinced of the relative importance of philosophical thought for understanding early Christian literature:

It is sometimes argued that the evolution of Christian *pistis/fides* owes much to Greek philosophy. There are, however, reasons to doubt the strength of the connection, at least in the New Testament. As we shall see, *pistis* language is predominantly used in the New Testament of interpersonal relationships and community formation. Rhetorical, legal, and even administrative meanings play a part, but there are few if any passages where 'high' philosophical ideas can plausibly be seen as forming even part of the background to New Testament *pistis* language. The philosophical tradition in which *pistis* is most discussed, moreover, is Platon-

111 See e.g. Badiou 2003, 108: 'the truth event repudiates philosophical Truth (...) Paul is an antiphilosophical theoretician of universality.' On this statement, see §3.1 and 3.5 *infra*. On the (lacking) historical validity of such readings, cf. Van Kooten 2017.

112 Bonhöffer 1911, p. 279, n. 4: 'πίστις und πιστεύω kommen hier natürlich nur im Sinne des Glaubens in Betracht, eines Begriffes, der dem stoischen Rationalismus gänzlich fremd ist.' Cf. p. 313 on *pistis* in Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.22.30 and *Acts* 4.32.

113 Hatch 1917, 83.



ism, and Platonist ideas are not among those most readily detected in New Testament texts. (Morgan 2015, 151)<sup>114</sup>

The present work does not differentiate beforehand between “high” philosophical ideas’ and popular thought.<sup>115</sup> As most extant sources from our period originated in the schooled upper class of society, the distinction between intellectual thought of the elite and widely shared popular notions is hard to pin down.<sup>116</sup> Morgan acknowledges ‘that Platonist influence may be detectable in a small number of passages (none of which feature *pistis* language)’ and leaves some room for the idea that Paul was ‘acquainted with at least some Stoic ideas’, in particular the Stoic idea of a divine-human city or community.<sup>117</sup> Overall, however, she favours those ideas that she expects were shared across the empire and across social layers, in line with her earlier work on ‘popular morality’, and hence she leaves the majority of specific discourses presented in the current study largely unexplored.<sup>118</sup> In this regard, this work aims to enrich the palette of meaning even further.

The present study, informed by discourse analyses, does not differentiate a priori between sources that circulated in ‘high philosophical’ and more popular milieus. As we will see, however, the occurrence of key terms in the

114 Though cf., for an acknowledgement of recent scholarly developments and the suggestion that Paul may have ‘picked up some philosophical ideas’, Morgan 2020, 154.

115 Another difference in our set-up is that Morgan is interested in chronology and in reconstructing how meaning developed (between authors but also between Paul’s earlier and later letters). This is reflected in Morgan’s chapters, which are organized alternatively around a delineation of the sources (for instance, chapter 5: ‘Pistis in the Septuagint’) or around semantic themes (such as chapter 11: ‘Relationality and Interiority in Pistis and Fides’). For different emphases in the interpretation of sources, see the short ‘conversations’ with this work throughout the following chapters. I also reflect on the main differences in outcome in my final chapter.

116 When compared to everyday letters as found in extant papyri, Paul’s letters are similar as regards their formal opening and closing statements and specific addressees, yet Paul’s letter bodies stand out as being ‘far more elaborate, including complex and highly developed arguments which are much closer to the literary letters of the orators and philosophers’ (so Mitchell 2006, 182).

117 Morgan 2015, 151, n. 113 and 492 respectively. On the Stoic divine-human community, cf. also Morgan 2017a, 286–296.

118 See, on popular morality, Morgan 2007, though cf. in particular chapter 11 on the exchange between popular morality and high philosophy (274–299). A similar concern was voiced in Seifrid 2018, 248, n. 17 (‘The question might be raised as to whether a *l’histoire des mentalités* approach may focus too narrowly on common social interactions and not fully take into account Hellenistic philosophical usage, which may well have been known to common people’) and at p. 250 (‘Would the Greek philosophical tradition have been entirely alien to the first Christians?’).

semantic map of *pistis* will often lead us in the direction of authors whose work may be characterized as philosophical or even ‘highly’ so. The explanatory potential of the discourses attested in these works for understanding Paul’s ideas is then left to speak for itself. Yet this inclusion of ‘high’ philosophical material may account for a greater openness to recognizing not only Paul’s *relational* but also his *cognitive* and *persuasive* use of the *pistis* lexicon (esp. in chapter 4 and 5).

#### 1.4.2 *Philosophical Contextualization and Paul’s Faith Language*

For the most part, then, the question of the relevance of philosophical contexts for understanding Paul’s thought need not be solved in advance. The inclusion or exclusion of philosophical literature as comparative material is a decision that will be based on discourse analysis, specifically on collocation of key terms and a qualitative weighing of convergence in discourse.<sup>119</sup> Hence, I will not repeat arguments here concerning the structural similarities between early Christian movements and post-Hellenistic philosophical schools.<sup>120</sup> Neither will I delve into Paul’s education, familiarization with philosophy, or (self-)portrayal as a philosopher.<sup>121</sup> Nevertheless, it may be helpful to note two main insights from twenty-first century scholarship on the

119 James Barr’s matter-of-fact acceptance of convergences between Paul and philosophical thought is refreshing (Barr 1994, 57): ‘Jewish thinkers who wrote in Greek expressed their Jewish thoughts not only in Greek words but in the Greek thought-forms that were so very customary to them. If, therefore, our researches were to make it seem that Paul, or other NT authority, was substantially dependent on categories of Greek popular philosophy for his thoughts and arguments, we would not be troubled by this; it would count simply as a reality of the situation.’

120 On early Christianity as (compared to) a philosophical school see Judge 1960 and 1961; the largely affirmative response by Malherbe 1977, 45–57; Meeks 1983, 81–84; Stowers 2001; Alexander 2001; Löhr 2010; Van Kooten 2010a; Eshleman 2012. And cf. *Acts* 19.9 for an early portrayal of Paul teaching and arguing within the setting of a ‘school’. An interesting ancient (though second century) witness to such similarities is Galen, who refers to ‘the school of Moses and Christ’ and remarks that some of the Christians ‘have attained to such a degree of severe self-control and to such earnestness in their desire for righteousness, that they do not fall short of those who are philosophers in truth.’ See Ibn Abi Usaibiah’s record from Galen’s *Summary of Platonic dialogues* (the Greek is now lost), translation Sprengling 1917, 96. I elaborate in §5.3.3 below on dogmatic tendencies in post-Hellenistic schools, as one element that is shared among Christian and philosophical movements of the period.

121 Historically, the question of Paul’s education is not quite settled, yet we may safely say that he probably received some kind of literary and rhetorical training in Tarsus and/or Jerusalem, and that he was probably perceived as a popular philosopher, even if it is less likely that he received a formal education in philosophy. Cf. Blumenfeld 2001, 18–21; Vegge 2005; Judge 2008b (at 415: ‘Paul must then have seemed to come closest to the

cultural-intellectual climate of the Mediterranean in the period under discussion, in order to explain why the convergences between philosophical literature and the Pauline epistles in the following chapters have a certain historical plausibility.

The first insight is that in antiquity religion and philosophy were configured differently and did not represent two separate phenomena as in modern times.<sup>122</sup> From a present-day, Western, post-Enlightenment perspective, the enterprise of an ancient philosophy school would look suspiciously religious:

At least, many basic elements of western religion—a voluntary system of belief concerning ultimate things, especially the divine, matched by a regimen of practice ordering the life of the disciple, based in the study of authoritative written texts, and promoting clear ethical norms—(...) were to be found in ancient philosophia. (Mason 2009, 163)

Modern conceptions of ‘religion’ thus seem a pretty good match for what the ancients would consider to be philosophy, whereas they would hardly fit the ancient cultic practices embedded in polis life and family traditions.<sup>123</sup>

Besides this structural correspondence between ancient philosophy and what we now consider ‘religious’ practices, scholarship into Hellenistic-Roman

---

public lecturers, or sophists, who toured the Greek cities, offering a mixture of popular philosophy and good advice on religion and life in general.’); Lietaert Peerbolte 2008, esp. at 274. For how Paul’s balancing of preaching activities with having a means of support fit in the contemporary discussion on philosophers and their livelihood, see Hock 1980, 52–59.

122 For a historical overview of scholarship on ancient religion and philosophy and the recent development ‘toward a convergence in which the mutually constructive engagement of ancient philosophy and religion is recognised’ (at 3), see Klostergaard Petersen & Van Kooten 2017a, 1–3. The problem of how we may speak of ‘religion’ in antiquity is addressed in §2.2, and in chapter 2 I furthermore propose to include the philosophical as one of three types of ancient religion. On the increasing ‘religious’ characteristics of philosophy, see also §5.3.3 below.

123 On ‘polis religion’, see §2.2.2 below. This modern perspective on religion is already evident from the language and terminology we use (and cannot completely circumvent). The term ‘pagan’, for instance, falls short for its anachronistic, derogatory connotations as it was devised by fourth-century Christians. Besides, it suggests that the non-Jewish people inhabiting the Graeco-Roman world were much more unified in their cultic practices or religious convictions than they were in reality. And unlike the alternative ‘gentile’ which denotes non-Jews ethnically, ‘pagan’ implies a deliberate personal commitment to non-Jewish or non-Christian gods. Yet, neither of these words denotes the combination of family-relations and divine obligations that would accurately reflect the situation in the ancient world. Cf. Rives 2010, 242–243; Fredriksen 2015, 175, n. 1, 176–177.

philosophy describes a surge in philosophical interest in 'divine matters' in the period under scrutiny.<sup>124</sup> Anachronistic and narrow expectations of ancient philosophy as pure, rational, even academic inquiry have difficulty accounting for this development: did philosophy turn irrational?<sup>125</sup> Instead, as Peter Van Nuffelen argues,

the early imperial interest in religion does not signify a loss of rationality but is, in fact, embedded in a discourse that explains the rationality of religion. A philosopher can draw on religion without forsaking rationalism, because traditional religion is not a different kind of knowledge from philosophy itself. (Van Nuffelen 2011, 237)

While Van Nuffelen is careful to speak of a philosophical interest in religion, and of philosophy and religion's shared conception of true knowledge, he does not state that philosophy and religion as such become increasingly intertwined. Some, however, would even go so far as to speak of a 'philosophicalization' of civic religion in the early Roman empire under influence of the 'philosophical *Koinē*' spoken among the elite.<sup>126</sup>

Vice versa, philosophy is seen as becoming more and more connected to religious traditions, in thought and practice. Rainer Hirsch-Luipold speaks of a 'religious rootedness of early imperial philosophy, not merely in the sense of speculative theology, but in the sense of lived religious tradition as integral part of the philosophical literature of the early empire.'<sup>127</sup> As a consequence

---

124 On the relationship between philosophy and religion in antiquity, see i.a. Brunt 1989; Most 2003; Boys-Stones 2009 and 2016; Hirsch-Luipold 2009; Van Nuffelen 2011; Athanassiadi & Macris 2013; Benitez & Tarrant 2015; Klostergaard Petersen & Van Kooten 2017b.

125 There is an increasing awareness that such judgements need to be re-evaluated. See e.g. Lauwers 2015, 36: 'many studies of ancient philosophy in the Roman Empire reinforce a normative image that is partly a projection of our modern conception. (...) if we really want to know all the diverse faces of philosophy in the Roman Empire, we also have to take into account the remarkable dynamism with which the authority of the field of philosophy is appropriated in other domains that modern interpreters generally do not associate with philosophical pursuits.'

126 Athanassiadi & Macris 2013, 54: 'En effet, à partir du moment où les cerveaux de l'élite romaine, dont une des fonctions était la gestion du culte, se trouvaient exposés à la *koinē* philosophique qui commençait à s'élaborer après la dissolution des Écoles, leur adhésion à une conception du religieux selon laquelle rite et théologie, faire et croire forment une indissoluble unité n'était plus qu'une question de temps.'

127 Hirsch-Luipold 2009, 128: 'Je mehr die religiöse Verwurzelung frühkaiserzeitlicher Philosophie nicht nur im Sinne spekulativer Theologie, sondern im Sinne gelebter religiöser Tradition als integraler Bestandteil der philosophischen Literatur in der frühen Kaiserzeit

of this rapprochement, he suggests that the writings of the New Testament are drawn near to this sphere of ‘contemporary religious-philosophical literature.’<sup>128</sup> Christoph Jedan regards the Stoics as an excellent example of a school at the centre of the religious-philosophical continuum.<sup>129</sup> In order to avoid the suggestion of two antagonistic poles, he advises to use the term ‘theo-philosophy’ instead, ‘as a term to identify the extended centre of overlap between philosophy and religion.’<sup>130</sup> Similarly, Rick Benitez and Harold Tarrant state that ‘Platonic philosophy is thoroughly welded to the frame of religion, from epistemology and metaphysics to ethics and psychology. (...) His [Plato’s] is a religious philosophy in which the attainment of philosophical perfection is a religious goal.’<sup>131</sup> These authors review ‘the supposed opposition between philosophy and religion’ from the sixth century BC until the second AD and ‘question the very distinction it presupposes’, concluding that ‘the philosophy–religion dichotomy has acquired some of its plausibility from scholars who first misunderstand the nature of religion, and, second, draw their concept of ancient philosophy too narrowly.’<sup>132</sup>

In light of this academic reappraisal of the ancient philosophical landscape as interconnected with religious concerns and practices, it makes perfect sense to understand the Pauline letters as partaking in the religious-philosophical discourses of his time. More specifically, when it comes to his *pistis* language, an even stronger case for a religious-philosophical contextualization can be made based on Paul’s own description of his movement. He significantly calls it ‘a reasonable type of worship’ (*logikē latreia*) characterised by a renewed kind of thinking in accordance with the ‘measure of *pistis*’ (Rom 12.1–3). This text is explored in more detail in the next chapter (esp. in §2.4), which sets the stage for the chapters that follow.

---

wahrgenommen wird, um so näher rückt die neutestamentliche Literatur an den Bereich der zeitgenössischen religiös-philosophischen Literatur heran.’

128 See for the translated citation the previous footnote. Hirsch-Luipold’s estimation is supported by others: cf. Dihle 2009, 18–19: ‘Wesen und Aufgabe der Philosophie in der griechisch-römischen Umwelt ließ das werdende Christentum in den Augen der Zeitgenossen von Anfang an als—gute oder schlechte—Philosophie, als Anweisung zu einem rechten, ja über den physischen Tod hinausführenden Leben erscheinen.’ And cf. George Karamanolis’s argument that ‘theology was a central part of ancient philosophy’ and when comparing Hellenistic-Roman philosophy to early Christian thought, ‘the two sides share a largely common horizon of questions and a similar conceptual apparatus’ (Karamanolis 2014, at 17 and 8 respectively).

129 Jedan 2017, 162. Cf. his monograph on religion and Stoic ethics, Jedan 2009.

130 Jedan 2017, 162.

131 Benitez & Tarrant 2015, 218.

132 Benitez & Tarrant 2015, 211, 222.

The second important insight from contemporary scholarship is that Hellenistic-Roman philosophy was a broad and widely disseminated movement in itself, without easily disentangleable ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ teachings. The increasing interest in philosophical ideas and training among educated inhabitants of the empire led to an increasing number of professional speakers, teachers, and writers who made philosophical ideas and ideals accessible to a wide range of people. A term that is increasingly used to denote this phenomenon and the literature it produced is ‘popular philosophy’.<sup>133</sup> Among classicists, there is a growing awareness that philosophy in the early imperial period was not confined to the ‘villas of the elite’:

Cicero’s letters and his speeches show that some acquaintance with philosophical ideas and some interest in their real-world application was, in fact, widespread; Varro’s satires, like Horace’s later, show that it was at least plausible to suggest that conversation about ideas was not limited to the villas of the elite, that there perhaps really were philosophers like the personae of Varro and Horace—on the street, trying to improve the lives, if not save the souls, of anyone who could be compelled to listen. (Williams & Volk 2015, 61)

Over the past decades, ground-breaking work on the implications of the concept of popular philosophy for New Testament research has been done by Abraham Malherbe. He further describes the phenomenon thus:

The term ‘popular’ is serviceable to apply to philosophers whose teachings were intellectually accessible as well to a wide swath of society. Their philosophy was not conceptually complex or technical by way of formal argumentation; indeed, they were not interested in sustained or systematic exposition in or for itself. They aimed at the moral formation of people, to whom they advanced the proposition that human beings can live morally and virtuously only if they live rationally, and the rational life, they held, was the province of philosophy. (Malherbe 2010, 278–279)<sup>134</sup>

---

133 Within the field of New Testament studies, this concept was pioneered by Abraham Malherbe (1989) and developed as a interpretative tool by Johan Thom (2012).

134 Cf. the description by Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé in *Brill’s New Pauly* (2007): ‘Popular philosophy aimed primarily to be moral philosophy, to criticize the habits of contemporary people and to encourage them to think; they were supposed to change their behaviour and become more virtuous. Accordingly, the proposed principles were presented in an appealing manner with the goal of captivating the audience.’

Building on this general picture, Johan Thom further refined the tenets of popular philosophy as having an exegetical focus, having an eclectic character vis-à-vis the original schools, a primary focus on the individual, an emphasis on psychagogy or moral-spiritual guidance, and, by effect, the popularization of philosophical ideas.<sup>135</sup> As for its areas of interest, apart from (or perhaps rather as part of) their moral program, popular philosophers also taught about cosmological subjects and divine-human relations.<sup>136</sup> A helpful present-day illustration of the popularization of philosophical concepts is the widely shared knowledge of the notion of a ‘subconscious’, which is familiar to a majority of people without the accompanying knowledge that its popularization is mostly due to Sigmund Freud, let alone having read his works in which he later abandons the term in favour of the more precise ‘pre-conscious’ and ‘unconscious’.<sup>137</sup> This way, we can easily imagine a majority of people in antiquity having heard of ‘morally indifferent things’ (*adiaphora*) without knowing that it was of Stoic origin or that there was a difference of opinion amongst Stoics as to which indifferents were to be preferred and for what reasons. These broader concepts and ideas are, in the words of Edwin Judge, ‘the apparatus of thought for educated people’.<sup>138</sup>

Taken together, the characteristics of popular philosophy could be applied to the performance and letters of Paul without exception, and it is not surprising to find his name among listed examples of popular philosophers, such as in this list by Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé:

Bion of Borysthenes, Teles, C. Musonius Rufus, Seneca, Epictetus, Dion Chrysostom, Plutarchus, Maximus of Tyre, Libanius, but also (...) Christians such as Paul of Tarsus and the Christian apostles, as well as Tertullianus. (Goulet-Cazé 2007)

Thus, if Paul may indeed be counted among these ‘popular philosophers’, there is no reason why we would need to disqualify in advance the writings of other individuals in this list as possible relevant comparative material.

This observation is not only important when it comes to the scope; the concept of popular philosophy also strengthens the adequacy of discourse

---

135 Thom 2012, 281–284.

136 Thom (2012) discusses the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, Cleanthes’s *Hymn to Zeus*, and the Aristotelean treatise *On the Cosmos* to demonstrate this wide area of interest out of diverse scholastic backgrounds.

137 I owe this comparison to Deming 2016, 48, who uses it to illustrate the wide spectrum of possible influence of Stoicism on Paul.

138 Judge 2008c, 676.

analysis as a method to compare these authors on the level of concepts, ideas, and narratives. The notion of ‘discourse’ bears some similarity to the notion of the ‘topos’, which, loosely defined, amounts to the rhetorical or educational treatment of a particular, often moral, subject, a device well known to ‘popular philosophers’. ‘Topos’ gained ground as a descriptive notion over the past decades in literary research including that of classicists and biblical scholars. Even though the term gained an unfortunate connotation of a literary cliché and was tied up with certain fixed ideas of form in some of its more influential treatments, a helpful proposal by Thom is that underlying the diverse usages of ‘topoi’ is the idea of an ‘ordered cognitive space’, which invokes the notions of ‘semantic domains’ and ‘frames’ from cognitive linguistics we discussed above (§1.2.2).<sup>139</sup> His description of the ‘moral or philosophical topos’ (one of three subtypes he distinguishes) is perhaps more reminiscent of what we have, up until now, labelled ‘discourse’:

The topical landscape forms a intricate network of relationships. When we speak of the form of a topos, we should in the first place think of its internal semantic structure and its interconnectedness with other topoi. The textual realization of a topos, on the other hand, may differ widely depending on the rhetorical requirements of the context. (Thom 2003, 569)

This abstract, cognitive understanding of topos, evidenced by examples such as the topos of ‘justice’, ‘education and training’, ‘patronage’, ‘progress in virtue’, and ‘piety and the gods’, functions very much like what I am inclined to call a ‘discourse’. Yet, even though I use both terms interchangeably in the following chapters, I have a small preference for ‘discourse’. Apart from the unfortunate connotations I already mentioned, ‘discourse’ better captures the notion of a broad cultural conversation to which specific texts contribute and bear witness.

All in all, it is no wonder that in the academic field of Pauline studies, there is an increasing awareness of the necessity to pay attention to Paul’s philosophical contexts.<sup>140</sup> This work partakes in this wider movement by examining the

---

139 Thom 2003, 566. Thom offers an overview of the use of this notion in New Testament scholarship and in ancient sources, before offering his contribution. An influential article in New Testament scholarship that tries to describe the topos as a specific literary form is Bradley 1953.

140 See for an overview of scholarly contributions and tendencies in this domain Malherbe 1992; Sanders 2009; Runia 2011.



full breadth of cultural discourses in which *pistis* language figures, including those that may be seen as typically philosophical, in the hope that this furthers the academic study of Pauline *pistis*, which has also taken off over the past decades. Naturally, apart from all the similarities and continuities I pinpointed in this subsection, numerous discontinuities and differences can be distinguished between Paul and pagan philosophers. Instead of seeing these as evidence of a Greek-Jewish divide or of the *sui generis* status of the apostle, I would propose that most of these differences are best understood in terms of divergences between contributors to the same discourse. In the following chapters, most of the effort has gone into establishing discourses in which *pistis* plays a part and reading passages from Paul's letters as contributions to these discourses. The question regarding Paul's particular contribution, singularity, and originality is explored in the concluding chapter.

### 1.5 The Route Travelled: Scope, Terminology, Method, and Outline

This study takes a specific group of lexemes as its starting point: *pistis* and *apistia* (nouns), *pistos* and *apistos* (adjectives), *pisteuō* and *apisteō* (verbs), *pisteuōn* (participles), together with their derivatives and some other composite lexemes based on this stem (such as *axiopistos*, 'credible'). For convenience's sake, throughout this study, I will use the substantive *pistis* (as in *pistis* language, *pistis* vocabulary) as an umbrella term to refer to all cognate words from the same root (incl. verbs, adjectives, participles, negatives). If I wish to denote a more specific usage, this will be explicitly marked.

These words are related in their usage and partake in the same semantic domains. Yet not every sense can be as easily addressed by each part of speech.<sup>141</sup> The verbs in their active voice express an action, often the act of (dis)trusting, but sometimes also 'acting (un)faithfully'. Often, this verbal action is transitive: it explicitly requires or implicitly assumes an object of trust, faith, conviction, or loyalty (either in the dative case or preceded by a preposition). The noun, on the other hand, whose usage is remarkably frequent in Paul's letters, is a more abstract and static depiction of this same action/attitude of trust or trustworthiness. This need not imply, as has been argued, that wherever the noun is used together with the verb, both need to

<sup>141</sup> Both nouns and verbs are included in the same entry of Louw and Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, yet not all senses distinguished here can be expressed with the verb: the verb *pisteuō*, for instance, cannot express the sense of 'proof'.

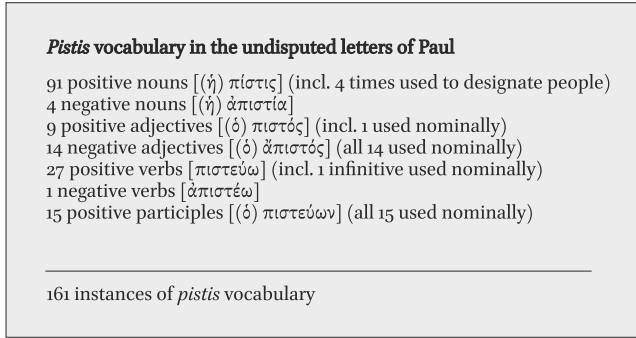


FIGURE 2 *Pistis* vocabulary in the undisputed letters of Paul

indicate the same transitive action.<sup>142</sup> An author can make creative usage of the multivalence of a lexeme.<sup>143</sup> Similarly, the adjective *pistos* expresses the virtue of faithfulness in its unmarked, prototypical usage, yet ‘believing’ cannot be completely ruled out if the contextual markers indicate so.<sup>144</sup> What stands out in figure 2 is the large frequency of *pistis* terms used as nominal designations; this usage is discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

Although these words share the same root, they need not represent the exact same concept at any given instance, as this depends on the manner in which they are used syntagmatically, the semantic domain in which they participate, and the discourses involved. At the same time, different word groups may refer to the same concept, wherefore the inclusion of *fides* and cognate terms is justified based on their conceptual correspondence (see §1.2.1). Of course, there are more Greek and Latin lexemes which at times indicate similar concepts of trust, conviction, and faithfulness. Yet, all these terms have

<sup>142</sup> See Matlock 2000, 15: ‘πιστεύω in Rom 4.3 and 5 (along with other contextual factors, no doubt) unfailingly selects the sense “faith, trust” for πίστις in Rom 4.5 and 9.4b. Matlock, on the other hand, is absolutely right to emphasize that a combination of verb or participle and noun need not indicate different senses either (opposing the opposite position of Campbell 1997, 715–716, and n. 8, who advocates the ‘faithfulness of Christ’ interpretation. On the *pistis Christou* debate, see chapter 6.

<sup>143</sup> Philo, for instance, plays with Abraham’s ‘trust’ in God (expressed by the verb) and his embodiment of the virtue of ‘faithfulness’ (expressed by the noun): see Philo, *On the Migration of Abraham* 43–44 and *On the Virtues* 216, discussed in §4.3.4 below.

<sup>144</sup> Still, I do not think that this is the case in *Galatians* 3.9 (σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ), which should be rendered ‘with faithful Abraham’: see §7.4.2 below. On the considerable semantic overlap of these parts of speech, see also Arzt-Grabner 2017, who argues on the basis of documentary papyri that all indicate a similar trusting attitude (at 241: ‘eine vertrauensvolle Haltung’).

their own connotations and elicit their own variety of frames and discourses, and thus a certain limitation of the scope of this survey was necessary. My choice is to map the senses of *pistis* and *fides* vocabulary and look into the related discourses, not the vocabulary of the concept of trust and all discourses involved in the diverse semantic domains related to each lexeme.

In this study, I often translate *pistis* as, for instance, ‘trust’, ‘trustworthiness’, ‘persuasion’, ‘loyalty’, and their adjectival and verbal cognates.<sup>145</sup> Yet I chose to use the word ‘faith’ in my title, in most headings, and at many other places as a translation of the least marked usage. Admittedly, there are good reasons for abandoning this all-too-familiar and all-too-Christian term, which is, remarkable enough, often avoided in translations of pagan sources of the period.<sup>146</sup> More than the Dutch and German equivalents of ‘geloof’ and ‘Glaube’, however, the English ‘faith’ implies relational trust and cognitive conviction at the same time and is related (in etymology and usage) to terms denoting relational commitment like ‘good faith’ and ‘faithfulness’. While some of the original versatility of the Greek and Latin terms in question may have been lost to us, it is precisely the familiarity of this translation which helps to convey the familiarity of this concept to our modern ears: we are speaking of a single word group that was and is fundamental for our cultural self-understanding.

Now, with these lexemes as a starting point, I began my research by tracing their usage in two specific authors, Epictetus and Plutarch, with the aid of the online database of ancient Greek texts, the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG). This provided a preliminary idea of often co-occurring lexemes that may form a semantic domain, a hypothesis that I reviewed by means of the proximity search option in the TLG and, for their Latin equivalents, the Library of Latin Texts (LLT).

As a scope for these searches I eventually included all authors who wrote in Greek or Latin in the period of the first century BC until the second century

145 Louw & Nida (1988, 377) argue that ‘it would be wrong to select a term which would mean merely ‘reliance’ or ‘dependency’ or even ‘confidence’, for there should also be a significant measure of ‘belief’, since real trust, confidence and reliance can only be placed in someone who is believed to have the qualities attributed to such a person.’ This seems to be a non sequitur, for precisely because the terms ‘reliance’ or ‘confidence’ presuppose ‘belief’, they perfectly reflect the sense of *pistis*, whereas to render it as ‘belief’ means the omission of important relational overtones.

146 Cf. Kloppenborg 2017, 407–408: ‘Thus we speak of (...) “grace”, “church”, and “faith”—terms that can be traced back to the Greek vocabulary of our sources, but which in English (and I take it, in Italian and German) no longer have the wide lexical range that χάρις, ἐκκλησία, and πίστις have in Greek. That is, these English terms, instead of connecting the discourse of Christianity to other realms of contemporary culture, serve to isolate it.’

AD, a period for which I use the label 'Hellenistic-Roman'. These demarcations in time span are naturally artificially drawn and not strict boundaries in practice, yet a few things may be said in their defence. Whereas three centuries is an admittedly long period of time for a study that is synchronic in set-up, it is a period that is considered reasonably coherent as regards philosophical thought traditions, as evidenced by publications that offer an overview of ancient philosophical traditions. The two volumes by Long and Sedley (1987a; 1987b) on the Hellenistic philosophers range from the death of Aristotle until the battle of Actium (322 BC–31 BC), yet as Michael Frede remarks in his epilogue to *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (1999), this era may well be extended until the end of the second century.<sup>147</sup> The latter work, instead, was 'based on the assumption that Hellenistic philosophy came to an end by about 100 BC', an assumption based on a revival of Aristotelianism, the new direction of Platonism set in by Antiochus of Ascalon, and the reorientation of Stoicism under the leadership of Posidonius, developments at the start of the first century BC whose effects shaped the philosophical landscape of the early empire well into the second century.<sup>148</sup> Two more recently published collections of post-Hellenistic philosophy also take an earlier date as their starting point: Boys-Stones (2017) on Middle-Platonism (from 80 BC until 250 AD) and Inwood (2022) on later Stoicism (from 155 BC until 200 AD).<sup>149</sup> Together, these discussions on the history of philosophy provide enough ground for positing a certain continuity in the intellectual-philosophical thought of the first century BC until the second century AD.

---

147 See Frede 1999, 772: 'There is no reason to suppose that philosophy has so little autonomy that its development is tied closely to political history. And closer consideration of the reasons one might, or does, give for thinking that Hellenistic philosophy comes to an end around 30 BC shows them to be inadequate. Indeed, pursuing them rather leads one to a date towards the end of the second century BC.'

148 See Frede 1999, 772–782, cited from 772.

149 Boys-Stones takes the sack of Athens by Sulla and his troops in 86 BC as his temporal starting point for 'post-Hellenistic philosophy' and for 'Middle Platonism' in particular, as this was not only an important event in the war between Rome against Mithridates VI of Pontus and his Greek allies; it also set a philosophical diaspora in motion, with representatives of the main schools moving to other cities: a story of exile but also of 'liberation and renewal' (p. 1). Inwood (at 2–4) also considers the fall of Athens (86 BC) as a valid starting point for his demarcation of later Stoic thought, besides the battle of Actium (31 BC) and the start of the first century BC, yet opts for an even earlier date: the year in which Athens sent three leading philosophers on a diplomatic mission to Rome, including the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon, the last living student of the earlier influential leader Chrysippus, and the Academic Carneades, whose criticisms of Stoic teachings would heavily influence the school's future direction under the leadership of Antipater of Tarsus and his successors.

Seeing as during these three centuries major political and historical shifts may well have impacted *pistis* discourses, I have paid specific attention to the question of discourse stability or development, for example with the succession crisis in the year of the four emperors (79 AD), discussed in §7.3.5. From the third century onwards, moreover, there is an increase in early-Christian participation in contemporary cultural discourses which complicates using even later sources to contextualize Paul's thought. Still, I occasionally included some particularly relevant texts from this later period in my discussion (such as the Corpus Hermeticum, the Sibylline Oracles and Porphyry's works), to illustrate the continuation of or developments within older discourses. Older texts (in particular by Plato or Aristotle) were also included when they were found to be important interlocutors in the discourses of the Hellenistic-Roman period. In addition to literary texts, non-literary materials (such as coins or inscriptions) were taken into consideration when they proved helpful for understanding a specific frame or discourse.<sup>150</sup> The wide spectrum and large number of sources I ended up discussing in this work necessitated a delimited contextualization of each author, source and passage. Hence, imprecisions may be noted by specialists, yet the richness and scope of the material testifies to the variety of domains in which *pistis/fides* vocabulary partakes.

My next step was to connect these domains to relevant discourses. For instance, in texts in which 'faith' co-occurs with terms such as 'justice' and 'law', questions that are frequently discussed have to do with the conditions for a just society, the perfect embodiment of justice, or the scope and effectiveness of laws in procuring faithful and just citizens. Particular discourses in relation to these questions and this domain are the mythical Golden Age of Cronus, as well as the philosophical idea of an unwritten law. This process initially amounted to twelve separate domains with one or more corresponding discourses, a number that gradually boiled down to seven domains, discussed in the subsequent seven chapters of this book.<sup>151</sup>

---

150 Helpful resources in this regard have been the Electronic Archive of Greek and Latin Epigraphy, Attic Inscriptions Online, and the online catalogue of coins OCRE.

151 This number and the delineation of discourses in general admittedly involves subjective considerations. Cf. Fairclough 1995, 212: 'the identification of configurations of genres and discourses in a text is obviously an interpretative exercise which depends upon the analyst's experience of and sensitivity to relevant orders of discourse, as well as the analyst's interpretative and strategic biases.' And see also Smith 1990, 51: 'In the case of the study of religion, as in any disciplined inquiry, comparison, in its strongest form, brings differences together within the space of the scholar's mind for the scholar's own intellectual reasons.'

This domain matrix (or ‘discourse landscape’) was then used to map passages from Paul’s undisputed letters which contain *pistis* vocabulary. Admittedly, in view of the similarities between (post-)Hellenistic philosophy and early Christianity all letters attributed to the apostle Paul may be considered part of the ‘Pauline school’.<sup>152</sup> Still, I chose to focus mainly on the undisputed letters, with some illustrative excursions to so-called ‘deutero-Pauline’ epistles, because a focus on ‘Paul-proper’ ensures a higher level of coherence in his contribution to contemporary discourses, and for more practical reasons as well, because it offers a clear, manageable demarcation.<sup>153</sup> As the matrix consists of partly overlapping domains, some passages can be understood from more than one angle. Some cited texts return in different chapters, and as regards others, discussion about the relevant frame and discourse will undoubtedly ensue.<sup>154</sup> Yet apart from the particular contextualizations and interpretations of Pauline texts that I offer at the end of each chapter, my overall aim is to demonstrate the multifariousness of the lexeme and the variety of contexts that determine its sense in Graeco-Roman sources in general and in Paul’s letters in particular.

Eventually, I was able to link important debates in scholarly literature about the nature of ‘faith’ to these domains/chapters. For instance, in popular and scholarly discussions on rationality of faith (‘is it mere belief?’) its epistemic value is often in question, and this relates to the domain of knowledge, opinion, and faith (chapter 4). Specialized theological concerns, such as the meaning of Paul’s ‘justification by faith’, belong at the domain of justice, law, and faith (chapter 3), while anti-imperial interpretations of Paul’s language are discussed in combination with discourses on relationships of power (chapter 7). Still, even though a lot of lines are drawn to and from a variety of present-day historical, classical, and theological discussions, the bulk of each chapter is devoted to an elaborate discussion of the ancient source material.<sup>155</sup>

Naturally, this movement (from key terms, to domains, to Graeco-Roman discourses, to Pauline texts, to scholarly debates) went both ways or, rather,

152 Cf. for an overview of the ‘school hypothesis’ MacDonald 2014, 263–266.

153 For my thoughts on *pistis* (and the construction of gender) in de Pastoral epistles, see Sierksma-Agteres 2019.

154 Cf. Hay 2006, 75: ‘The apostle’s references to faith often appear to have more than one layer of meaning, which adds to the richness of his statements and to the challenges facing exegetes.’ And cf. for a different position Moo 1996, 225 (arguing for the traditional interpretation of *pistis Christou* in Rom 3,22): ‘Moreover, *pistis* in Paul almost always means “faith”; very strong contextual features must be present if any other meaning is to be adopted.’

155 Cf. the astute remark in Glucker 1988, 42: ‘In the eighteenth century, when the floodgates of secondary literature had not yet been opened, and scholars could still read and reread their ancient texts with the proper attention.’

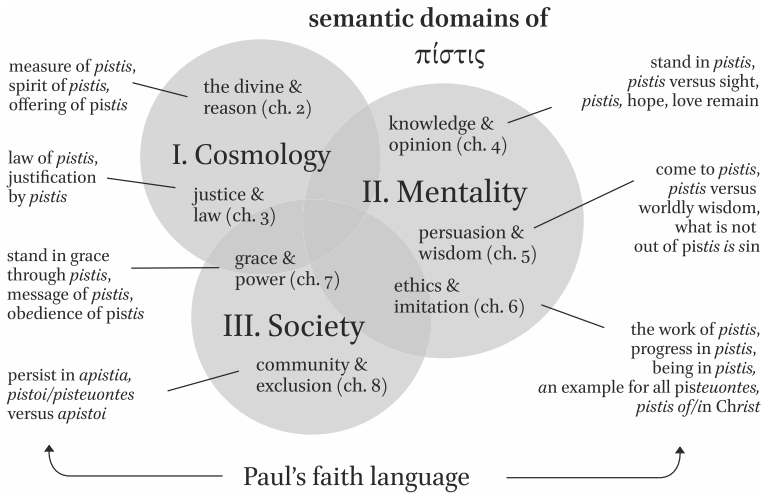


FIGURE 3 Semantic domains of *pistis* and Paul's faith language

followed a more chaotic pattern. A modern commentary, for instance, could prompt a question about a co-occurrence of terms which I had not yet come up with and which could be added to a particular domain after a fruitful TLG search, leading to the addition of another (sub-)discourse.

The end result is written down in the following seven chapters whereby each chapter consists of three main sections. After a short introduction (§x.1), it starts with crucial questions in modern discourse and scholarly literature (§x.2), which is followed by a presentation and analysis of the semantic domain in Graeco-Roman sources, focused on specific discourses (§x.3), a discussion of passages from Paul's letters in light of this semantic domain and these Graeco-Roman discourses (§x.4), and a short concluding section (§x.5). These seven subsequent chapters represent seven semantic domains. Figure 3 gives an impression of what type of Pauline phrases are discussed within the context of which domains/chapters.

These seven chapters can also be organized into three parts which represent umbrella domains. Part one is about the meta-level of 'cosmology', where *pistis* is used at a more abstract level in discourses pertaining to questions about superhuman powers, anthropological defects, and means of salvation. Part two concerns the micro-level of 'mentality', where *pistis* can be located in the mind as a cognitive, ethical, educational, relational, and transformational disposition. The discourses within this umbrella domain pertain to the question how to think and act in accordance with *pistis* and how to connect to the cosmological narrative of *pistis*. Part three on 'society' deals with the macro-level of societal structures and the meso-level of group dynamics, where *pistis*

stands for mutual trust, loyalty to leaders, or the collective identity marker of an ingroup. Here the discourses pertain to the question how to relate to the 'other' inside or outside the sphere of *pistis*.

The general argument of this book is that this multifariousness of semantic domains offers a more precise understanding of each instance of Paul's *pistis* language, yet also explains his overall preference for this word group that proves so versatile. By mapping the cognitive and cultural networks elicited by *pistis* and its cognates among Paul's pagan contemporaries, we gain a clearer view on how Paul's language of faith interacted in different ways with the ancient world of thought. In the concluding chapter, I have summarized the particular contributions Paul made to each of the discourses, displaying not only the integrative but also the innovative power of the *pistis* vocabulary. Hopefully, at some points along the way, this process also offers fresh perspectives on what 'faith' is all about in the present.





**PART 1**

*A Pistis Cosmology*





# Pistis, Theos, and Logos: Faith as the Standard of Philosophical Religion

## 2.1 Disentangling Modern and Ancient Semantics of Faith

Before we set off on this chapter's journey into how we can understand the semantics of Pauline *pistis* within the ancient discourses concerning religion, let us first briefly review some tenets of the present-day semantics of faith and religion. In modern Western discourse, the notions of 'faith' and 'belief' are firmly grounded in the religious realm. Indeed, they are often used as an equivalent of 'religion'. 'Believing' has become the defining characteristic of religious people, setting them off against 'unbelievers'.<sup>1</sup> Remarkably, however, 'faith' and 'religion' can also be used antithetically. Usually this occurs in a self-defining discourse to express the unique grace-based or undogmatic status of Christianity in opposition either to other religions or to tendencies within Christianity itself, which are then, according to this reasoning, legalistically, anthropologically, or dogmatically qualified. Twentieth-century protestant theologians such as Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Emil Brunner are particularly famous for such self-definitions.<sup>2</sup> Yet in their footsteps, many rejections of religion in favour of 'faith' have been published both in New Testament scholarship and in more widely read genres.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, 'faith' and 'belief' are sometimes contrasted in present-day discourses. As belief language can be used to indicate 'having trust in' but also

---

1 For an analysis of this type of language in ancient pagan sources, see §8.3.1 below.

2 See e.g. Barth 2004, 302 ('If man tries to grasp at truth of himself, he (...) does not believe. (...) If he did, he would let God Himself intercede for God: but in religion he ventures to grasp at God'); Bonhoeffer 1959, 73 ('my suspicion and horror of religiosity are greater than ever'); Brunner 1946, 258 ('The Christian faith, faith in the God revealed in Jesus Christ, is not "one of the religions of the world"')

3 For NT scholarship on Paul, see e.g. Martyn's commentary on *Galatians*, Martyn 1998, 37: 'that ruling polarity is rather the cosmic antinomy of God's apocalyptic act in Christ versus religion, and thus the gospel versus religious tradition' (cf. on the role of faith p. 252). For popular publications, see e.g., out of many published and unpublished options, Duncan 2011, 112: 'Outside of faith, Christianity becomes just another ceremonial, religious exercise.' Similarly, the non-dogmatic core identity of Christianity can also be dubbed 'faith': see e.g. Rollins 2015, with the subtitle 'The Disappearance of Religion and the Discovery of Faith'.

as merely 'holding for true', in Christian discourse belief can be downplayed in favour of faith. Faith is then interpreted as a much less superficial, more relationally defined religious mode of trust and surrender.<sup>4</sup> In such discourses, former church members are encouraged to find 'faith beyond belief', indicating a more fluid spiritual worldview which is not 'exclusionist, ethnocentric, judgmental, and triumphalist'.<sup>5</sup>

Although 'faith' and 'belief' are not solely used in religious contexts, the dominance of this semantic field heavily influences its connotations in different contexts. For example, by using slogans such as 'Believe in America' (Mitt Romney, 2012) and 'A future to believe in' (Bernie Sanders, 2015), American presidential candidates appeal to the transcendental potential expressed by these terms. Similarly, religious groups exploit the ambiguity of the concept to present their identity in more general, appealing terms to outsiders while maintaining their religious identity for insiders. For instance, since 2013 the Dutch political party ChristenUnie ('Union of Christians') has used the catchphrase 'Geef geloof een stem', which can be translated as either 'Vote for belief' or 'Give faith a voice'.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the non-religious usage of faith/believing has had a profound impact on present-day conceptions of religious faith. Phrases such as 'make-believe' emphasize at best the imaginative and creative, as in Sony's 2009 brand message 'make.believe', and at worst the unreal and fake. Moreover, belief language is prevalent in everyday epistemological statements expressing a lack of certainty: 'I believe I left my wallet at home.' In Dutch and German, the verbs *gelooven* and *glauben* are used to express a similar uncertainty.<sup>7</sup> Overall, the language of faith and belief is often used antithetically to objective truth, with religion consequently being expelled to the realm of cognitive uncertainty. Manuela Giordano-Zecharya argues that whereas 'in non-religious settings, the context selects one of these senses', in religious settings 'the three meanings [of "holding for true", "having trust in" and "having an uncertain opinion about"] short-circuit, as it were, resulting in an ambiguous semantic conflation'.<sup>8</sup> In *Believing: A Historical Perspective*, Wilfred Smith

4 See for instance Payleitner 2012, entitled 'From belief to faith', esp. 215–216.

5 Johnston 2012, 278.

6 See ChristenUnie 2013. Other examples from the Dutch context include the slogans of the Evangelical Broadcasting Company (EO), 'hearing, seeing, believing' (horen, zien, geloven), and of the student work of The Navigators, 'Believe/Belief in your college days' (Geloof in je studententijd).

7 Nevertheless, the somewhat archaic Dutch verb that is etymologically related, *believen*, expresses the attitude of pleasing or even loving someone.

8 Giordano-Zecharya 2005, 330–331.

argues that the meaning of belief language shifted over the centuries. Whereas the Latin *credere* conveyed a sense of allegiance, trust, and loyalty well into the high Middle Ages, the present usage of ‘believing’ reflects meanings that used to be expressed by verbs like *opinari*.<sup>9</sup> Thus, over the course of time, religious belief came to be thought of as the holding of an uncertain epistemic opinion concerning the existence and nature of the divine.<sup>10</sup> Belief, and by association also faith, was reduced to a cognitive and, moreover, insecure state of mind.

Because of the dominance of these epistemological meanings, and the close association of ‘belief’ with everything ‘religious’, the concept of belief is susceptible to anti-religious criticism.<sup>11</sup> For if ‘believing’ is reduced to ‘holding an epistemic opinion’, religious belief can be judged by epistemological standards of probability. Failing these standards, persistent belief leads to the accusation of it being blind. Faith in God is thought of as an analogously ill-founded, irrational type of trust. In the words of the (in)famous spokesperson for New Atheism Richard Dawkins: ‘Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence.’<sup>12</sup> It is not surprising that a similar scepticism vis-à-vis faith and belief surfaces in present-day interreligious analyses, where representatives of non-Christian traditions emphasize the non-faith based nature of their specific way of life: not belief, but action is the core business of being Jewish; Hindus do not believe, they know.<sup>13</sup> One question that I want to consider here is whether such responses would have made sense to a first-century ‘proto-Christian’.

9 Smith 1998, 41. Cf. McKaughan 2013, 107: ‘The uses we make of belief-related language have changed: formerly it was used to express a far broader array of thoughts, feelings, and practices than the much more restricted use it has come to have in contemporary epistemology.’

10 This historical shift in meaning explains and justifies why in recent Bible translations, the occurrence of ‘believe’ and the Dutch ‘geloven’ is greatly reduced as compared to the *King James Version* and the Dutch *Statenvertaling*: see Sanders 2014, 270.

11 Cf. e.g. Bartz 2010, entitled *Critical Thinking: The Antidote For Faith*; Stenger & Barker 2012, entitled *God and the Folly of Faith: The Incompatibility of Science and Religion*.

12 Dawkins 1992.

13 There are numerous academic and popular accounts of how Judaism differs from Christianity because it requires orthodoxy instead of orthopraxy. In an apologetic context, it was developed by for instance Moses Mendelssohn in the eighteenth century, on which, see Batnitzky 2011, 20. Cf. Betz 1988, 202: “Glaube” (πιστεύειν, πίστις) ist ein christlicher Begriff, der das *proprium Christianum* ausdrückt, im Gegensatz zum “Tun” (ποιεῖν), das zutreffend beschreibt, worum es in der Ethik eines Juden geht.’ On Hinduism and faith, cf. e.g. the website The New Yoga: ‘Strictly speaking, Hinduism is not a “faith” at all—for faith is only needed where direct knowing (*jnanas/gnosis*) is lacking.’

All these examples from the popular sphere have been chosen somewhat at random, yet together they offer a sketch of the present-day semantics and discourses of faith and belief and thereby alert us to the presuppositions that shape our understanding of ancient *pistis*, and Pauline *pistis* in particular. The questions are similarly pressing as regards the period under scrutiny here. Was 'faith' considered to be a religious concept by Paul's first audience? Was it considered to be a reasonable concept?

Such research questions are by their nature faced with difficult problems of categorization. For although these questions seem pretty straight-forward, they presuppose an understanding of what was considered to be 'religious' or 'reasonable' in a time and culture in which these domains as such did not exist, or in which they were at the very least differently configured. While Paul has often been praised or denounced as 'the co-founder of Christianity', the consensus in academic circles is that he was a Jew and stayed a Jew, and never considered himself as moving from one 'religion' to another. What does this imply for *pistis*, then, the word that is so dominantly present in the message and movement he helped spread throughout the nations? By using faith language, to what extent did Paul deviate from or conform to pagan expectations of how the divine is to be approached?

According to some, Paul profoundly reshaped the concept of religion, Jewish and pagan alike, by taking *pistis* as his core concept to illustrate how humans and gods should interact. For instance, it is claimed that it was Paul who 'changed religious history' and instigated a 'paradigm shift' by placing the notion of faith at religion's centre.<sup>14</sup> In an article that questions the validity of taking faith as the essence of religion in the US Supreme Court's decisions, Bernadette Brooten reasons as follows:

The apostle Paul exemplified the early Christian paradigm shift in conceptualizing religion as belief. (...) In placing belief in Christ at the centre of human existence, Paul altered the Judaism into which he had been born, which had law as its centre. Paul's move was an unusual one since in his world few, if any, would have thought of belief as the central characteristic of religion. (...) Paul's theology signals a paradigm shift within ancient religious history in its placement of faith as central and sacred space, seasonal religious festivals, and many other religious practices as peripheral. (Brooten 1994, 475)

---

14 Brooten 1994, 472 and 475 respectively.

Brooten thus sharply distinguishes between Paul's concept of religion and that of both Judaism(s) and paganism(s) of his day, to which the law and proper cultic practice was paramount, and locates the discrepancy in the introduction of Pauline belief/faith.<sup>15</sup> While her general concern is undoubtedly valid, this sweeping argument is in need of some refinement. Was Paul indeed responsible for a religious novelty or even a paradigm shift by juxtaposing faith to law or cultic religious practice? What exactly is Paul's position on cultic practice, in both its Jewish and pagan varieties?

To address these more general, yet highly relevant issues, this chapter begins with an overview of categories in the ancient world that we would now call 'religious' and the modernistic pitfalls involved (§2.2). In the section devoted to scholarly discussions, we will see that when it comes to ancient religion, scholarship tends to overemphasize the difference between modern and ancient conceptions of religion (§2.2.1) or between Christian and pagan forms of religion (§2.2.2). More specifically, either the variety of forms in pagan religion is stressed and contrasted with the normative, dogmatic, and unified structure of Christianity, or emphasis is placed on the influence of the polis and cultic practice in pagan religion, thereby neglecting the level of ideas, teaching and philosophy, crucial to the developing Christian movement. Both supposedly major differences are in need of refinement. Similarly, when it comes to conceptualizing faith in antiquity, we will see that scholarly discourse tends to presuppose its overly cognitive character. Consequently, given the cultic character of Greek and Roman religion, it is debatable whether the ancients even believed in their gods (§2.2.3). Alternatively, the pagan type of cognition is sometimes described in scholarship as some sort of empirical knowledge to be distinguished from the Christian type of unreasonable belief (§2.2.4). By contrast, I argue for the existence of different kinds of ancient pagan religion to which the early Christian movement was no exception when it comes to its variety of cognition.

Based on the preference for categories formulated by the 'ancients' themselves, I choose to make use of the ancient division of the *theologia tripartita* to distinguish between different ancient religious manifestations: the mythical, the civic, and the philosophical (introduced in §2.2.5). This division, with its different configurations by different authors, is the central topic of the section in which I focus on pagan sources that partake in the *tripartita*-discourse (§2.3). In the introductory chapter, we have already seen that, from the perspective of a first-century pagan, early Christianity was probably understood

---

15 This faith, she argues (Brooten 1994, 478), should nevertheless not be thought of as merely an individual affair, yet as driven by a concern for communal well-being.



as some kind of religious-philosophical movement (see §1.4.2). This preliminary hypothesis will be further strengthened and specified in this chapter by analysing how Paul makes use of the discourse of the *theologia tripartita* to define his own movement (§2.4). It will be made clear that while he criticizes and allegorizes civic and mythical religion, he defines the Jesus movement as particularly rational or philosophical in nature. In the end, the centrality of *pistis* in the Pauline project can, I will argue, be understood on a general level as a means to identify this movement as reasonable and philosophical vis-à-vis other types of religious manifestations in his environment. In other words, *pistis* language is used by Paul to present the Christ-movement as a reasonable-philosophical type of religion. In this way, the present chapter lays the foundation for the subsequent chapters which contextualize *pistis* language within specific philosophical-religious discourses.

## 2.2 The Problem of Approaching Religion and Faith in the Ancient World

What are the main tenets in present-day scholarly reconstructions of religion and faith in the ancient Mediterranean? I will consider construals of faith specifically a bit later (§2.2.3 and §2.2.4), but I want to begin by focusing on ancient religion. The first basic question when studying ancient religion is whether such a modern term is adequate or useful (§2.2.1), and if it is, the second question concerns how it was configured in antiquity (§2.2.2).

### 2.2.1 *Can We Speak of 'Religion' in Classical Antiquity?*

Within the field of religious studies, the search for a universal definition of religion has long been considered a problematic exercise. Attempts to capture the essence of religion, such as it being concerned with 'the numinous' (Rudolf Otto) or 'the sacred' (Emil Durkheim), or more recently the functionalistic description of a 'system of symbols' (Clifford Geertz), have been criticized for being either too narrow or too broad, for emphasizing one aspect while failing to name important others. More fundamental critiques of the search for such universal definitions of religion were formulated by Jonathan Z. Smith and Timothy Fitzgerald. Both launched an attack on the supposed existence of a religious sphere. In *Imagining Religion* (1982), Smith argued that it is by our own selection of sources that scholars in fact imagine religion: 'religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study'.<sup>16</sup> Without reference to Smith,

---

16 Smith 1982, xi.

Timothy Fitzgerald argued in *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (1999) that the invention of religion is an ideological process, in the service of individualism, capitalism, and colonialism:

The industry known as religious studies is a kind of generating plant for a value-laden view of the world that claims to identify religions and faiths as an aspect of all societies and that, by so doing, makes possible another separate 'non-religious' conceptual space, a fundamental area of presumed factual objectivity. (Fitzgerald 1999, 9)

Continuing this line of argument, Fitzgerald suggests that we abandon the concept and its scholarly field completely. Even though I would insist that the vagueness and ideological background of a concept does not necessarily warrant such a radical conclusion, both analyses nevertheless reveal the complexities at stake. Exactly how anachronistic is the idea of religion when it comes to antiquity?

Classicists echo concerns similar to those in the broader field of the humanities. Jörg Rüpke, for instance, states that "Religion" is not something to be empirically established; but a concept whose use is itself part of the history of religion.<sup>17</sup> Two influential monographs (Nongbri 2013, Barton and Boyarin 2016) argued more forcefully that the modern concept of religion is anachronistic in the ancient Mediterranean. In *Before Religion* (2013), Brent Nongbri does away with the assumption that religion as a separate sphere of life is a universal phenomenon. In line with early sociologists like Weber and Durkheim, Nongbri argues that 'religion' is a Western, modern invention and that in the pre-modern era, the 'religious' was an integral part of the social domain. However, according to Nongbri, religion being integral to the social domain does not merely mean that it was 'embedded' in cultural, political, and economic ancient practices, a view many scholars would endorse. Instead, Nongbri argues that we should abandon the imprecise terminology of 'religion' and look instead for 'better ways of talking about how humans and gods interacted in antiquity'.<sup>18</sup> More specifically, he suggests that we ought to distinguish between 'descriptive and redescriptive usages of "religion"'.<sup>19</sup> While

---

17 Rüpke 2001, 12: "Religion" ist nicht etwas empirisch Feststellbares, sondern ein Begriff, dessen Verwendung selbst Teil der Religionsgeschichte ist.'

18 Nongbri 2008, 456.

19 Nongbri (2015, 7) equates the category 'emic' to 'descriptive' usage and 'etic' to 'redescriptive' usage.

scholars may use the term to ‘redescribe’ ancient phenomena, the ancients meant something wholly different when ‘describing’ something as *religio*.

Although this distinction is methodologically sound in my view, modern redescrptions can overlook important ancient descriptive accounts of phenomena that deal with divine-human interactions separately, though not necessarily in the same *religio*-vocabulary. In fact, the existence of these ancient analyses suggests that the ancients too could think of ‘religion’ as a separate sphere, worthy of intellectual reflection. I will discuss one of these ancient descriptions, the *theologia tripartita*, in the next main section. Unlike many redescrptions of ancient religion, this ancient descriptive model includes supposedly ‘modern’ features, such as a more dogmatic, philosophical approach to the gods. In fact, to consider Paul in light of the social practice of philosophical schools is what Nongbri recommends; yet in order to do so, he believes that we need to bracket ‘religion’:

If, following Judge, we momentarily set aside religion when approaching the data of Paul’s letters, we can devote more attention to finding and describing other possible analogues for groups of Jesus’s followers in the ancient textual and material remains. Refining Judge’s observation that some meetings of Jesus’s followers would have appeared to be meetings of ‘scholastic communities’, much illuminating work has been carried out specifically on Paul’s letters and the literature of the various philosophical schools. (Nongbri 2015, 22–23)

By excluding philosophy from his general idea of what ‘religion’ encompasses, Nongbri seems to fall short of his own modernistic mind-set. As this chapter and book as a whole will continue to argue, we do not need to set ‘religion’ aside, but rather to think about it in a less modernistic manner, to understand the usefulness of comparing Paul with philosophical schools, not merely as regards practice, but also as regards ideas.

Following in Smith’s and Fitzgerald’s footsteps, Carlin Barton and Daniel Boyarin made a more radical proposal to disregard ‘religion’ when it comes to studying antiquity in *Imagine no Religion* (2016). Barton and Boyarin propose to abandon the usage of the term ‘religion’ altogether. The subtitle, ‘How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities’, shows their overall concern: our ‘religion’ is a modern third-order category, whereas at least before Cicero, *religio* and related Greek terms like *thrēskeia* designate as a second-order concept the proper way of dealing with the sacred, that is, respectful but not too scrupulous. This distinction, grounded in Karl Popper’s ‘three worlds’ of phenomena, concepts, and theories, seems to correspond to Nongbri’s descriptive

(or conceptual) and redescriptive (or theorizing) level. No matter how valid and important Barton's and Boyarin's concern is, the somewhat obvious but fundamental point of critique is that while there may be differences in what constitutes 'religion' in antiquity and modernity, to abandon the term does not help to clarify these distinctions. We need some sort of redescriptive vocabulary and definitional clarity in order to perform meaningful analyses of the ancient world.<sup>20</sup> And again, as this chapter will insist, already in the Republican era the human-divine sphere was conceptualized in ancient sources by distinguishing between several 'religious' spheres: the *theologia tripartita* provides us with a useful first-order discourse that comes closer to the modern concept of religion than these authors would like to admit.

In addition to all these deconstructionist or sceptical approaches to the study of ancient religion, Giovanni Casadio stands out for defending the idea 'that *religio* is not only a notion defining a separate sphere of the Roman view of the world but also a term with the value of an independent category, on a par with the economic or political categories.'<sup>21</sup> Casadio argues that the meaning of *religio* was at first mainly 'scruple' or 'reverence', from which developed a second main sense of 'religious observances'. Eventually, 'in the atmosphere of cosmopolitanism created by the enlargement of the Roman imperium to the east and south of the Mediterranean Sea, and under the influence of the Greek enlightenment, *religio* became religion', that is to say, 'religion as a separate sphere of human activity' (308). According to Casadio, this development set in by late-Republic authors such as Lucretius, Cicero, Caesar, and Varro. Casadio's main criterion for finding such a 'modern' understanding of religion among ancient authors seems to be these authors' comparison of different religious traditions: there was awareness that different nations had their own *religio*.<sup>22</sup> 'The usage of *religio/religiones* as a classificatory—not only descriptive—term' (322) makes it into an analytical tool to understand and categorize what is Roman and what is alien. It became 'a generalization, abstracted, of something in which other people are involved'.<sup>23</sup>

20 Nongbri acknowledges this. See e.g. Nongbri 2008, 452: 'religion is an entirely acceptable redescriptive category, even for ancient or non-Western societies. It should, however, always be clear in such discussions that religion is indeed "our" category.'

21 Casadio 2010, 310.

22 Cf. e.g. Casadio 2010, 322: 'The formulation *aliae religiones* (paralleled by *aliena religio*, meaning "a religion different from mine") is particularly noteworthy, because in this case the term means undoubtedly "other religions" (or "another religion", if *religiones* has to be interpreted as the complex of religious practices), which attests incontrovertibly to the notion of religion as a category.'

23 Smith 1962, 22, as quoted by Casadio 2010, 318, n. 62.

If we compare this abstract, self-aware, and comparative but ancient analyses of religion, as Casadio describes them, to the categories of descriptive and redescriptive, first order and second order, emic and etic, it becomes apparent that these categories are in need of some refinement. From within the level of emic ancient discourse emerged a level of abstract, critical, and comparative reflection upon the religious practices of groups of people. This is the type of ancient analytical reflection that is highly relevant for our understanding of the divine-human sphere in antiquity. This is the category to which the topos of the *theologia tripartita* belongs, the Graeco-Roman discourse discussed in this chapter (esp. in §2.3).

In his brief treatment of the *tripartita* as Varro's 'sophisticated theory of religion', however, Casadio focuses solely on whether it corresponds 'to a conscious usage of the word *religio*, in a sense approaching that which we use today?' (312) His answer, that it does, is in itself not substantiated very convincingly. Yet, considering that Casadio knows what the theory encompasses (that is to say, a threefold categorization of approaches to the divine as represented by poets, philosophers, and legislators), it is all the more striking that he restricts the meaning of *religio* to cult and explicitly excludes philosophy from this 'life compartment':

for Varro (as for his contemporaries) facts of cult were considered as pertaining to a definite field, that of *religio*, regulated by its own laws which were different from those of other life compartments like philosophy or economy. (Casadio 2010, 313)

Thus, by taking the vocabulary of *religio* as his entry point into ancient religion, Casadio not only fails to pay attention to a more comprehensive 'theory of religion' which includes cult, but also to mythical-narrative and philosophical-dogmatic aspects.

All things considered, we need to be wary of improper and anachronistic applications of modern conceptions in our quest for ancient religion. This is not a controversial claim in itself. If and when we speak of ancient 'religion', the usage of the term ought to be qualified and clarified. But we ought to consider that at least since the days of the early empire, there has been a self-conscious reflection upon the religious as a category. Hence, the conceptualization of religion is in itself not a modern invention, even if since the Enlightenment it has been increasingly cast as a separate sphere and universal human category. The best way to avoid anachronistic redescriptions of ancient religion, then, is to actively engage with these ancient, first-order, self-reflective discourses, of which the *theologia tripartita* is an important example.

Before we come to that, however, it is important to delve a little deeper into scholarly evaluations of ancient religion. As we will see, it is precisely in an effort to avoid modernistic preconceptions, such as the importance of belief, that scholars tend to overemphasize antique ‘oddities’, such as the importance of ritual and *polis*-cult or the lack of unity and normativity. At the same time, other modernistic biases remain unnoticed, such as the assumption that there are distinct fields of philosophy and religion. It is to these persistent contrasts that I will now turn.

### 2.2.2 *The Quest for Ancient Religion and the Persistent Contrast with Christianity and Philosophy*

In the introduction (section 1.4), I described how in certain strands of research, there is a growing awareness of the interconnectedness and overlap between what we would now consider to be different disciplines and spheres of life: religion and philosophy. Overall, however, in literature on the nature of religion in general and of classical religion in particular, there is a tendency to emphasize certain aspects which, on closer look, all function to enlarge both the gap between religion and philosophy, and the related gap between pagan and Christian religions.<sup>24</sup>

More precisely, in the first place, current models often stress the importance of rituals and practice, instead of ideas and belief, to ancient religion. Such an emphasis on the cultic nature of ancient religion in its turn often serves to highlight the novelty of the early Christian approach to the divine. They furthermore tend to maintain that ancient religion did not know normativity, dogmatism, and unification, as this was supposedly only introduced by Christianity.<sup>25</sup> Thirdly, they focus primarily on the publicly and locally regulated cults, whereby private and supralocal religious phenomena such as popular philosophy are presented as peripheral at best (or not proper religion at all). I will address these issues here by briefly discussing some main currents, theories, and works in this area.

From his social-historical perspective on early Christianity, Edwin A. Judge (the author we already encountered as one of Nongbri’s inspirational sources) wrote a short article entitled ‘Was Christianity a Religion?’ (2008d). Judge’s thesis is that it was Christianity that instigated the modern understanding of

24 This is also observed by Runar Thorsteinsson (2010c, 141): ‘Modern scholarship is too much affected by an *a priori* distinction between philosophy and theology/religion that was totally alien to the ancients.’

25 The emergence of dogmatism in Hellenistic philosophical schools is addressed more fully in §5.3.3 *infra*.

religion as a system that embodies the ‘quest for the ideal life’. Consequently, he warns against equating early Christianity with the many ancient ‘religions’:

Thus any talk of Christianity in antiquity as one of a series of ‘religions’ is only possible through an historical muddle. Either it converts the ancient ‘religions’ (in the obsolete sense) into modern-style questing phenomena like Christianity, or it converts ancient Christianity into a ritually observant practice as though it belonged to some established culture as its sacred anchor. (Judge 2008d, 404)<sup>26</sup>

Judge distinguishes between religion as a ‘quest for the ideal life’ and religion as ‘the practise of sacred rites and observances.’<sup>27</sup> Both modern Christianity and its ancient variant appear to fall into Judge’s first category. However, early Christianity was not, he contends, one religion among others. Commenting on a Pauline text that I will discuss in detail below (the beginning of *Romans* 12, see §2.4.2, §2.4.4 and §2.4.5), Judge claims that Paul ‘anticipates the re-categorization of terms that is to come. He is not however classifying Christianity as a “religion.”’<sup>28</sup> When it comes to a ‘quest for the ideal life’, there is excellent comparative material among the philosophical schools of the period. Whether or not early Christianity is a religion is therefore a matter of where the boundaries of ancient religion are drawn. The necessary change of perspective, I would argue, is not to view early Christianity as something altogether different from ancient religiosity, but rather to include philosophical approaches to the divine in the concept of ancient religiosity.

The more general problem with this urge to unmask modern, Christianizing preconceptions, like the centrality of ‘questing’ or belief, is that we tend to lose sight of the embeddedness of early Christianity in pagan, classical culture. On the one hand, we need to take into account that ‘religion’ or ‘faith’ as such may have meant something different to ancient ears; on the other hand, it is clear that the early Christian message came across at least to some extent. My thesis is that the early Christian movement was not so terribly, incomparably different, particularly if we take into account how ancient religion included not only the level of local practice and ritual, but also the level of ideas, philosophy,

---

26 Cf. at 408: “[R]eligion” has only been projected onto the rest of the world on the strength of a singular cultural tradition.’ Cf. for a similar description of ancient and modern religion: Judge 2008e, 599–600.

27 Cf. Judge 2008e, 599. He denotes the latter type as ‘religion in an “obsolete” sense’, quoting the Macquane Dictionary, but adds: ‘But this is not obsolete at all.’

28 Judge 2008e, 607.

universality, normativity, and ethics. As we already saw, however, this philosophical approach to the divine is often downplayed in scholarly discourse, while the cultic, civic, or political nature of ancient religion is emphasized.

How did this focus on religion-as-cult come about? Of fundamental importance in this regard is the work of Sourvinou-Inwood, who coined the term 'polis religion' in an article first published in 1990 to describe the foremost cultural setting in which all religious activity was 'anchored, legitimized, and mediated' and which 'embraces, contains and mediates all religious discourse—with the uncertain and ambiguous exception of some sectarian discourse'.<sup>29</sup> The polis model presents us with a major integrating factor in lived religious experience in antiquity. Even in the early phase of the Roman principate, this regulating function of local civic powers appears to have been invariably present. Previously, the scholarly paradigm seems to have been that the disintegration of local political bodies in the empire led to a blossoming of 'personal belief' in private religious bodies such as mystery cults, popular philosophy, and voluntary associations (*thiasoi* and *collegia*).<sup>30</sup> In the last decades, however, this view has been fine-tuned, based on *inter alia* epigraphical findings. Private groups appear to have been integrated in the public religious sphere, creating a diverse mixture of polis religion and religion-as-a-choice.<sup>31</sup>

While there is much to praise in the perspective of ancient religion as polis religion, Sourvinou-Inwood's encompassing statements about the entanglement of religion in the polis-structures have been criticized for offering too narrow an approach to religion. The polis model risks neglecting religious manifestations both in the private sphere and in the supralocal sphere, such as magic, myth, mystery religions, and, particularly relevant to our interest here, philosophy.<sup>32</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood's description of such phenomena as 'sectarian discourse' suggests their marginal place and limited importance in her model. Nevertheless, others have stressed that Sourvinou-Inwood does by

29 Sourvinou-Inwood 1990, at 297 and 302 respectively. Cf. Rives's summary (Rives 2010, 269): 'there was no religious identity separate from political or civic identity'.

30 See e.g. North 1992, 178, who speaks of a 'development from religion as embedded in the city-state to religion as a choice of differentiated groups offering different qualities of religious doctrine, different experiences, insights, or just different myths and stories'.

31 Harland 2006, see p. 48 for the main conclusion.

32 See i.a. Woolf 1997, 76 ('If the origins of religious innovation most often came from the world of "private religion", any perspective that marginalises non-public cult is bound to be handicapped in accounting for change'); Kindt 2012, 22 ('Religious Beliefs and Practises that do not conform to the polis-model (those practises not administered by the polis and not representing the social-political order of the polis) are frequently seen as being by definition not religion proper').



no means exclude the Panhellenic dimension of Greek religion, but rather that she focuses solely on the question of organization and control: whereas religious ideas travelled freely across city walls and territories, it was the *polis* that ultimately decided which ideas to include in public religious practice.<sup>33</sup> To this, I might reply that, ultimately, describing religion in a certain period is not merely a matter of pinpointing this locus of power and control—just as we would not do justice to any phase of Christianity by focusing only on church policy and politics, ritual, and orthodoxy.<sup>34</sup>

We must thus be wary of the limits of this polis religion model in its capacity to evaluate the sum total of religious experience in antiquity.<sup>35</sup> Fortunately, different approaches to ancient religiosity gain traction, with studies that focus on more cognitive aspects such as divinization, theology, and individual and everyday beliefs.<sup>36</sup> In line with this more comprehensive approach, the present study aims to enrich our understanding of what constituted and shaped ancient religion by drawing on an ancient model of religious discourse: the *theologia tripartita* (see §2.2.5 on the *tripartita* in scholarly literature and section 2.3 for the discussion of primary sources). In this model, not only the civic or cultic aspects, but also the poetic or mythical and the philosophical or ‘dogmatic’ contributions, are taken seriously.

Approaches that aim to do justice to the complexity of the ancient religious landscape, however, may feel reluctant to describe it in terms of ‘religion’. In the fifth chapter of his book *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins* (2009), Steve Mason aims to free ancient religion from a modernistic straightjacket: ‘I am proposing that we misunderstand also the ancient homeland of Judaism and Christianity when we impose the modern category of religion upon it’ (160). According to Mason, not only is this category ‘modern’, it is also a

---

33 See Parker 2011, 58–59.

34 Sourvinou-Inwood (1990, 302) makes this comparison herself, although she adds a caveat: ‘In a religion without a canonical body of belief, without revelation, without scriptural texts (...), without a divinely anointed clergy claiming special knowledge or authority, without a church, it was the ordered community, the *polis*, which assumed the role played in Christianity by the Church—to use one misleading comparison (for all metaphors derived from Christianity are inevitably misleading).’

35 Cf. also Harrison 2015a, 167: ‘An alternative criticism of the polis religion model, as articulated by Sourvinou-Inwood, would be not so much that it excludes as that it marginalizes certain aspects of religious experience, prioritizing one possible organizing framework over and above all others; or that by bundling everything within a single ‘supreme category’, it does not do justice to the texture and variety of religious activity.’

36 See e.g. Harrison 2000; Eidinow, Kindt & Osborne 2016; Petrovic & Petrovic 2016; Driediger-Murphy & Eidinow 2019. A balanced overview of ancient religion in its various shapes (including a chapter on ‘Philosophy’) is offered by Eidinow & Kindt 2015.

typically Western term that developed under the influence of Christianity.<sup>37</sup> Mason distinguishes at least six ancient categories that participate in the phenomenon that we have come to know as ‘religion’: nations with ancestral traditions, stories, and laws; a national cult; philosophy; familial traditions; voluntary associations; astrology and magic.<sup>38</sup> In doing so, Mason rightly emphasizes that the variety of forms in which religious behaviour and thought was ‘lived’ should always be taken into account. Yet, the question remains whether no such category existed at all in the minds of the ancients. Did they not conceptualize an overarching unity? And was this unity, this comprehensive idea of a ‘religion’ that involves stories, cult, magic, philosophy, and community only brought into being by Christianity?

The argument that Christianity caused this process of unification by its invention of something called ‘paganism’ has been advanced by many scholars.<sup>39</sup> In *The Matter of the Gods* (2008), Clifford Ando argues that Roman ‘religion’ as a totalizing system developed only due to the long opposition to the religion of the Christians and thus ‘eventually occluded all other meanings of *religio*’ (3), whereas in the first century, it merely denoted ‘the sum total of current cult practice’ (2).<sup>40</sup> Restricting the landscape of first-century religion to cult practice is, however, unnecessarily narrow. Perhaps more to the point here, Peter Van Nuffelen’s analysis of philosophical thought on religion (*Rethinking the Gods*, 2011) has shown that ‘already the Post-Hellenistic concept of religion can be shown to be unified and normative’, at least as regards the opinions voiced in intellectual and philosophical material.<sup>41</sup> He distinguishes two discourses, one about ‘ancient wisdom’ and one about ‘cosmic hierarchy’, that both presuppose the existence of authority and order.<sup>42</sup> The existence of these discourses implies that authoritative and totalizing aspects of religion were no invention of or response to Christianity; rather, they were already present in contemporary philosophical reflection on religion.

37 Mason 2009, 165.

38 Mason 2009, 161–165.

39 Van Nuffelen (2011, 234, n. 8) refers to North 1992; Beard, North & Price 1998; Feeney 1998, 23–25; Price 1999.

40 Pace Hans Dieter Betz (1991, 319), according to whom this eventual development of *religio* into a general concept already took place in antiquity: ‘In short, the final comprehensive term “religion” gradually emerged as a result of the confluence of Greek and Roman philosophical ideas.’

41 Van Nuffelen 2011, 234. See on the philosophical turn to ‘dogmatism’ also my §5.3.3 *infra*.

42 Respectively, these discourses pertain to traditions with ancient roots and to the religious-political structure of the metaphysical realm, reflected in society, see Van Nuffelen 2011, in particular at 235.

A question that remains as regards Van Nuffelen's own approach is whether his own use of the term 'religion' as the object of both critical and appreciative philosophical thought does not preclude the appreciation of this philosophical thought as one of the manifestations of ancient religion. His conclusion about how philosophers conceptualized religion is neatly captured in the phrase that religion is an 'image of truth': it contains truth, but philosophical training is necessary to uncover it.<sup>43</sup> At least from a modern, anthropological perspective, we might ask whether such philosophical reflection is not part of the self-critical apparatus of religion itself. Indeed, even from an ancient point of view, such reflection can be considered a proper religious source of knowledge, as I argue in this chapter. Looking forward, it might even be worth asking whether Paul was not conceived of as offering such critical, even 'philosophical', reflection upon Jewish 'religion'—yet few would consider his writings non-religious. All in all, the lines between religion and philosophy are not so easily drawn.

An even stronger separation of religion from philosophy can be found in Tim Whitmarsh's overview of the history of atheism in classical antiquity, *Battling the Gods* (2016). I will offer a more detailed treatment of Whitmarsh's main theses in my final chapter on *apistia* (see §8.2.1), but for now it is relevant to mention how in his work 'religion' is embraced as a full-fledged ancient phenomenon, whereas philosophy is regarded as something quite distinct and even oppositional. Whitmarsh follows Nongbri in rejecting the academic fondness for the model of embedded religion or polis religion, as this model suggests that religion was an unproblematic and indistinguishable part of ancient community-life.<sup>44</sup> Yet whereas Nongbri questions the existence of 'ancient religion' as such, Whitmarsh requires this notion in order to be able to speak of 'atheists' in Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic times. At the same time, as many of his candidates for atheism were philosophers, his whole project presumes a clear distinction between ancient religion and ancient philosophy. Moreover, Whitmarsh sets off Christianity in its early forms from polytheistic religious

---

43 Van Nuffelen 2011, 233–234: 'For the authors studied in this book, religion is thus fundamentally ambivalent: it contains truth but not in a pure form. An elaborate effort of interpretation is needed, which is to be guided by philosophical acumen and insight. Religion and philosophical truth are consequently not simply equated. They are closely related: it is, for example, never pretended that religion contains a different kind of knowledge than the one found in philosophy (...) But one cannot access the truth in religion without proper philosophical training and without full awareness of the hermeneutical difficulties involved: the truth in religion is not there for all to see.' Cf. also his research questions on p. 14, which also presuppose two concepts.

44 Whitmarsh 2016, 9, and 246, n. 7.

practice (which was still embedded and focused on cult) by its alleged intolerance, social control, and us-versus-them approach.

In this chapter, these binaries between ancient religion and philosophy, and between pagan and early Christian religious discourses, will be called into question. Instead, I will show how Pauline thought participated in a philosophical-religious discourse on the proper interaction with the divine.

### 2.2.3 *The Quest for Ancient Faith and the Persistent Contrast with Cult*

The notion of faith is often caught up in these evaluations of religion in antiquity. The argument by anthropologist Rodney Needham in the 1970s has proven influential, particularly his thesis that the notions of faith and belief are useless when it comes to describing ancient or non-Western religion, because they are on the one hand heavily moulded by Christianity and the West, and on the other hand lacking a consistent definition.<sup>45</sup> This view has developed into something of a creed or orthodoxy,<sup>46</sup> with the Western prevalence of belief sometimes even being ascribed specifically to Paul or the first apostles. In the words of Simon Price, “Belief” as a religious term is profoundly Christian in its implications; it was forged out of the experience which the Apostles and Saint Paul had of the Risen Lord.<sup>47</sup> In *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (2013), N.T. Wright also emphasizes the uniqueness of the early Christian centrality of belief: ‘whereas indeed for Christians, starting with Paul, “belief,” and in particular belief about who “God” really was, took central stage, this had never been the case for the Greeks and the Romans’ (276). On both sides of the scholarly divide between classicists and theologians, then, the uniqueness of the two supposedly easily distinguishable wholes of paganism and Christianity is maintained with ‘belief’ as the main discriminator.<sup>48</sup>

While some scholars merely emphasize the ritualistic nature of ancient religion in contrast to the cognitive or confessional nature of the Christian variant, others deny the existence of a pagan belief in the gods altogether.<sup>49</sup>

45 Needham 1972, 14–39, on the nature of the problem: 44–50, on the Christian influences: 64–135. For the implicit contradiction between both arguments, cf. King 2003, 277.

46 So Versnel 2011, 539 and 541, following Harrison 2000, 18.

47 Price 1984, 11.

48 In *Greek Religion*, which offers an overview of classical Greek religion, Jan Bremmer places the emergence of belief or *pistis* in one God in the age of Hellenism, but also points to the decisive influence of Judaism and Christianity (Bremmer 1999, 4): ‘It was only in Hellenistic times that faith in one God, *pistis*, became possible (...) only after the birth of Judaism and Christianity do we find conversions.’ Cf. chapter VII, ‘Transformations’.

49 For the latter position, cf. Giordano-Zecharya 2005; Scheid 2005.

The proposal of the influential model of polis religion was also motivated by a rejection of the priority of belief over ritual practice.<sup>50</sup> The Greek plurality of beliefs or the absence of faith is even celebrated as if it represents some sort of relativistic enlightenment. As Sourvinou-Inwood, one of the founders of the polis-model, expressed: ‘the Greeks did not delude themselves that their religion incarnated the divine will.’<sup>51</sup> This hostility towards faith and presenting its rejection as a relevant category for understanding Greek or Roman religion is striking. Even if we discount myths as evidence of firm conceptualization of the gods in lived religion on account of their changeability, it makes one wonder how a pagan ritual could have been performed without any corresponding religious beliefs.<sup>52</sup> In the context of the New Testament, we might also ask how Paul’s message of faith could have appealed to any non-Jew.

In the past two decades or so, however, the tide seems to have turned among classicists, and faith is again on the agenda as an important category for understanding ancient religion. This is at least what Thomas Harrison observed in his 2015 review article on old and new approaches to Greek religion:

Where once ‘belief’ was a dirty word in the study of Greek religion, dismissed as ‘epiphenomenological noise’ or shrunk to a small sample of texts, there now seems no lack of books forthcoming on belief, theology, even faith. (Harrison 2015a, 170)<sup>53</sup>

Harrison himself seems to have contributed to this shift, seeing that in the introduction to his monograph on religion in Herodotus (2000) he expressed his intention to reclaim ‘belief’ as applicable to the study of religion in all societies, as long as we do not limit its meaning to ‘belief in key dogmas.’<sup>54</sup> In a contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion* (2015), he offers further suggestions on how to refine the notion of belief in order to make it a more fruitful category for research: distinguishing between low-intensity and

---

50 E.g. Rives 2010, 271.

51 Sourvinou-Inwood 1990, 303.

52 Cf. Parker 2011, 2: ‘Yet surely even a ritual is performed in the belief that there is some purpose in doing so.’

53 Harrison refers for the small number of texts to Price 1999, 6. The quote is from Gagné 2013, 6, who in fact agrees with the trend Harrison describes: ‘No longer reduced to function or structure, dismissed as epiphenomenological noise, or treated as an ancillary to doctrinal theology, the substance of religious belief has come to receive much more sustained attention from scholars in the humanities and social sciences, and it is returning with some force in the study of Greek religion.’

54 Harrison 2000, 22: ‘Rather than dismissing “belief” then, we need to reclaim it.’

high-intensity beliefs, between more literal and more figurative beliefs, and exploring how specific beliefs function in different contexts. Most helpful for my purposes, however, is the paragraph in which Harrison explores meanings of belief different from the predominant propositional type: belief as spiritual commitment, as trust, as disposition.<sup>55</sup>

Focusing on Roman instead of Greek religion, Charles King (2003) made a similar defence of 'belief' as a relevant phenomenon for approaching ancient religion. He argues that rather than shying away from the all-too-Christian notion of belief, either out of the fear of Christianizing pagans or of diminishing Christian uniqueness, 'belief' ought to be judged on its own merits. If we define it more loosely (and less Christian), King argues, as 'a conviction that an individual (or group of individuals) holds independently of the need for empirical support' (178), then, 'it will be made clear that 'the term "belief" is appropriate and useful for describing some aspects of the Roman religious experience, particularly in regard to Roman prayer' (177). There are some drawbacks to King's approach, as I will discuss momentarily. For now, it suffices to say that just like Harrison, King represents a tendency amongst classicists to find room for religious beliefs alongside religious practices.

More recently, Robert Parker devoted the first chapter of his *On Greek Religion* (2011) to the question, 'Why believe without revelation?' (1–39). Parker follows a 'neo-Fontanellean' approach in acknowledging that in ancient Greek religion there existed at least 'a single bedrock belief in the existence of the gods and the efficacy of the cultic system', which also explains the occasional public action against influential public figures such as philosophers.<sup>56</sup> H. S. Versnel also devoted an appendix of his magnum opus *Coping with the Gods* (2011) to belief, more specifically to the question 'Did the Greeks believe in their gods?' (539–559). Versnel opposes the unnecessarily cautious tendency to refrain from using belief-vocabulary to describe Greek religious life, purely because it is supposedly corrupted by modern, Christian notions. He follows Harrison (his earlier work: 2000) and King in advocating a more nuanced view of Greek religion comprising both ritual and belief. And he furthermore unmasks the fallacy that equates not having a word in your language for a specific phenomenon to not knowing the concept: even if the Greeks did not have a word denoting what we would nowadays express with belief language, they may well have had all kinds of religious and non-religious beliefs. Finally,

---

55 Harrison 2015b.

56 Parker 2011, 37.

Jacob L. Mackey's *Religion and Cult* (2022) confirms the findings of these studies from the perspective of cognitive theory and argues that 'shared belief' played a fundamental role in ancient cultic acts.

In spite of these studies that include faith or belief as an important category in approaching ancient religion, this insight has not yet become universally accepted.<sup>57</sup> In general, though, we may nevertheless conclude that in spite of some important exceptions, the notion of 'belief' has made a comeback in classical scholarship.

#### 2.2.4 *The Quest for Ancient Faith and the Persistent Contrast with Reason*

This newly arisen optimism about the importance of belief within ancient religion is a welcome correction to earlier approaches. Nevertheless, its effects are not yet omnipresent, and what this ancient faith and belief consists of is an entirely different matter. We just saw how 'belief' can be used to denote the cognitive dimension of religion as opposed to ritual practice. This, however, already colours 'belief' as a markedly intellectual activity excluding trust and loyalty from the foregrounded senses. Precisely what cognitive activity are we talking about?

In a great many scholarly contributions, of which I discuss some examples in this subsection, 'belief' turns out to be defined by its lack of proof. It is common to contrast belief with other cognitive approaches such as knowing, reflecting, or doubting. Furthermore, while granting that Romans and Greeks 'believed' certain things, such as the possibility of divine intervention, many scholars choose to maintain a schism between pluralistic pagan beliefs and dogmatic Christian belief. I argue in this subsection that such a presupposed and obviously modernistic or 'Enlightened' distinction is not helpful. I do so

---

57 Cf. for instance Jörg Rüpke's *Pantheon* (2016, English translation 2018), one of the outcomes of the larger Lived Ancient Religion project undertaken at the University of Erfurt. This project presents itself as developing a new paradigm 'questioning "cults" and "polis religion"' and takes a somewhat more individualist and situationalist approach that aims to include the day-to-day religious experiences. Given this approach, it is all the more striking that the phenomenon of faith or belief, which would at face value fit this more individual paradigm, is completely absent from *Pantheon*. Moreover, in spite of Rüpke's earlier work on the *theologia tripartita* (see §2.3.1 below), this broad ancient conceptualization of religion has not found its way into this new overview. In fact, because of the attention it devotes to religious action and experiences, the entire level of ideas, philosophy, myths, and narratives seems to be left out.

by critically reviewing some other scholarly contributions to the debate and by having a closer look at some of the authors and works already mentioned.<sup>58</sup>

In his book on *Literature and Religion at Rome*, Denis Feeney devotes an entire chapter to 'belief' (1998, 12–46). The phenomenon, however, is deemed highly peripheral to Roman religion. He emphasizes that we should not be looking for a 'discrete core of belief lurking somewhere at the heart of any religious system' (13): such a Christianizing interpretation of Roman religion does not do justice to the dynamically changing polytheistic system, in which 'the criteria of truth and belief remain variable because they are radically contextual' (46). He distinguishes between diffuse Roman religious discourses and the importance of 'a kernel of agreed and revealed belief' (46) to later Christianity. The contrast seems to lack precision and nuance when it comes to the importance of such a common creed to lived Christianity, but the main difficulty here is Feeney's narrow conception of belief. Feeney does not define 'belief', but the types of belief he refers to in his chapter, even though they are derived from various genres and discourses, are all highly propositional. They all seem to belong to the more or less epistemic category of having a belief in a certain doctrine or thesis. This raises questions about the extent to which this author's research design is moulded by modern semantics of faith. It may be relevant to ask whether such propositional faith can be found in our sources on Roman religion, but the result may indeed be that this phenomenon is peripheral. If on the other hand we start by asking what 'faith' and 'belief' (*fides*, *credere*, etc.) as regards the divine would mean to an ancient Roman, a more detailed picture of the same phenomenon might very well emerge.

Above, I mentioned Charles King's definition of belief as 'a conviction that an individual (or group of individuals) holds independently of the need for empirical support'.<sup>59</sup> Here also, we have a starting point that is drenched in the modernist dichotomy between belief and knowledge. While King maintains that belief is a shared characteristic of pagan and Christian religions, he rephrases the contrast in terms of 'how beliefs can be organized':

It is within their mutually incompatible frameworks for the organization of beliefs that fundamental distinctions between the nature of Roman Paganism and Christianity can be seen. (King 2003, 277)

---

58 As the study of ancient Greek and Roman religion is a well-developed discipline, the literature I review is not meant to offer an exhaustive overview, but rather serves to illustrate how faith and belief are generally understood in relation to early (or modern) Christianity.

59 King 2003, 178.



More specifically, King argues that monotheistic religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are ‘monothetic in intent’: there is a shared characteristic that defines membership by including some and excluding others. This characteristic is a set of correct beliefs, or as it is more commonly known, ‘orthodoxy’. Adversely, Roman religion is polythetic and allows ‘the coexistence of multiple overlapping sets of variant beliefs’ (282).<sup>60</sup> The type of unity it upholds resembles the Wittgensteinian family resemblance: there are a number of characteristics (or beliefs) typical for a given family (or a religious sect), yet not one of them is essential for determining membership. King explains that one belief may have more ‘cue validity’ (a term borrowed from Eleanor Rosch) than another: the characteristic of the ability to fly, for instance, counts for most birds, whereas having webbed feet has a lower cue validity.<sup>61</sup>

King’s model is highly versatile for explaining and describing configurations of beliefs in different religious environments. But rather than supporting his thesis of ‘fundamental distinctions between the nature of Roman Paganism and Christianity’, the model seems to turn these distinctions into gradual differences. King uses the example of ‘Christ is Lord’ as a Christian belief of the highest cue validity and puts forward two slightly differing conceptions of the afterlife to exemplify Roman religion. However, one could just as easily take the Roman belief ‘the gods provide’ as a central Roman belief, a characteristic belief that at least in theory excluded Epicureans. Likewise, afterlife conceptions were (and are) highly diverse in Christian circles as well, lacking ‘an orthodox mandate for uniformity’ (291), at least in the days of Paul. All in all, the model that King develops to demonstrate the essential contrast between ‘Paganism’ and ‘Christianity’ only serves to underline their shared investment in clusters of belief with different cue validity.

In a study I discussed briefly in the previous subsection, Clifford Ando describes Roman religion as based upon knowledge of the senses. Such ‘sensible’ knowledge attests to an empiricist epistemology. Hence, according to Ando, we should not look for faith, but for a larger category of knowledge forms.<sup>62</sup> This sounds like a reasonable analysis; however, it appears to be based on fixed understandings of what knowledge and faith each consist of:

---

60 King makes allowances for philosophy as ‘a partial exception’ by referring to Cicero’s eclecticism (at 284), but fails to take into account the dogmatizing tendency in the philosophical schools of the early empire (see §5.3.3 *infra*).

61 This seems to be a mathematical manner of expressing what is called prototypicality in linguistic terms: see §1.2.2 *supra*.

62 Ando 2008, xvi–xvii.

A religion based on knowledge can always change, for knowledge presupposes error. Faith admits no such challenge. In a peculiar, limited, but important sense, the history of Christianity is the history of doctrine. (Ando 2008, xvii)<sup>63</sup>

These claims betray very specific, and indeed very ‘enlightened’, interpretations of faith and knowledge. Instead, the same point that I have just made regarding the use of the word religion (in §2.2.1) must evidently be applied to the usage of faith as well: we should not presume to know its meaning ‘from without’ and apply it heedlessly to the ancients.

As was just noted, Versnel made valuable contributions to studying ‘belief’ in ancient religion. Yet more problematic, in my view, are his definition of ‘belief’ as ‘to hold a thing for true without being able to prove it’ and his thesis that ‘in scholarly discourse we have no other choice than using etic terminology, which of course we must define before launching it.’<sup>64</sup> To start with the latter, on a basic level this is absolutely true, of course. We cannot escape our own semantics, our own horizon of understanding, or the two thousand years that separate us from the ancients. To describe their views and practices, we can only make use of our own languages and conceptions. We could even supplement this argument with a reference to present-day deconstruction of the use of ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ within religious studies: by using any term in scholarly discourse, it is inevitably turned into an etic one.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, it is no wonder that so many scholars stress the importance of awareness to ancient phenomena that are especially alien to the modern mind. The whole point of the classicist’s enterprise is to peel away the outer layers, the assumptions based on present-day common knowledge, to reach the emic perceptions underlying ancient texts, arts, and practices. In other words, my point here is

63 Cf. Ando 2008, 17, with a ‘proof text’ from Pliny the Younger’s famous epistle (*Letters* 10.96.3): ‘Viewed from a Roman perspective, the Christian’s insistence that their god had once communicated with them directly and yet they did not so much know as merely believe the basic tenets of their faith betrayed not simply a point of philosophical difference, but one of fundamental error.’

64 Versnel 2011, 551, cf. 548.

65 See Von Stuckrad 2010, 162: ‘Emic terms—even those that used to have very strong evaluative connotations—can be turned into etic categories. In fact, this process deconstructs the very distinction between emic and etic. What makes these terms “etic” is the simple fact that scholars use them; thus, calling something “etic” is perhaps not more than a rhetoric device to give an emic term scholarly power and blessing.’ The difference, of course, with the study of ancient religion is that the scholarly and ancient discourse can only influence each other in one direction. Cf. Von Stuckrad 2014, 154.

that we ought to keep the redescriptive, modern abstractions of ancient religion as close as possible to descriptive, first-order ancient conceptualizations.

Likewise, we may very well define ‘to believe’, as Versnel does, as ‘to hold a thing for true without being able to prove it’ and then look for occurrences of such a phenomenon in antiquity.<sup>66</sup> According to Versnel, this is a ‘low-intensity’ meaning of believing, as opposed to the Christian ‘high-intensity’ application, which includes ‘having faith’ or ‘pledge allegiance to’. While this type of research is perfectly valid, however, it fails to take into account the possibility that the definition you start off with is saturated with modern, in this case specifically post-enlightenment assumptions about the indemonstrability and intellectuality of belief. Versnel downplays the risk of an all-too-Christian interpretation of ‘believing’,<sup>67</sup> yet appears to fall prey to an equally biased, all-too-modern inclination. The first question that presents itself is, rather, whether there is a unified ancient concept of ‘to hold a thing for true without being able to prove it’. Is the lack of proof determinative for the meaning of *fides/pistis* in antiquity?

Rather than starting off with a fixed definition and an associated presumed contrast between Christianity and Paganism, this project seeks to understand the meaning of faith from contemporary ancient discourses in which the terms *pistis*, *fides*, and their cognates function. These discourses form the subject matter of the following chapters. The present chapter lays the foundation for what follows, beginning with an ancient discourse about what constitutes religion. And as we will see (§2.3), even in this pagan discourse, *pistis/fides* vocabulary is not absent. Eventually, when attention turns to Paul (in §2.4), we will see how *pistis* has become a pivotal expression in his conceptualization of what religion is and is not about. To get there, however, we must first reconstruct the alternative types of ‘religion’ that were available at that time by familiarizing ourselves with the specific discourse of ‘trifold religion’ or *theologia tripartita*.

### 2.2.5 *The Theologia Tripartita as a First-Order Model for Graeco-Roman Religiosity: an Overview of Scholarly Evaluations*

As I already pointed out, an important description of what we may now label religion in antiquity is the *theologia tripartita*. This categorization was

---

66 According to Versnel (2011, 547), this is the ‘the most general and comprehensive meaning of “to believe”, to be found in modern dictionaries’. On page 552, however, he adopts the more concise, yet still very cognitive meaning of ‘taking as true’.

67 Versnel 2011, 553–554.

recorded by the account of the Roman encyclopaedic author Marcus Terentius Varro, which is in its turn preserved in the commentary on his ideas by Augustine of Hippo. The three 'theologies' Varro speaks of are the 'natural' or 'philosophical', the 'mythical' or 'poetic', and the 'political' or 'civic'. They were appropriated by different authors across the late republic and early empire as three 'approaches to the teaching about gods, to their reception by different audiences, and even as ways of introducing them to humanity'.<sup>68</sup>

This schematic division of three ways to speak about the divine, three *theologiae*, not only offers us a unique model from an ancient perspective, it also provides us with what may well be a more general thought structure underlying Graeco-Roman religiosity in the days of Paul, as my overview in the following section (section 2.3) will demonstrate. By accommodating this versatility of the Graeco-Roman religious landscape, the *theologia tripartita* became an important frame of reference, used either directly or indirectly, across literary genres and throughout the centuries central to this study (from the first century BC until the second century AD). Moreover, as an important intellectual discourse, it can serve academic purposes as a first-order model to which ancient religious practices and movements can be related. In its diverse treatments, the *theologia tripartita* will prove to be fruitful in comparison to Pauline thought and narrative (as will become clear in section 2.4).

In this subsection, I will by means of introduction discuss scholarly work on the *tripartita* in general. Contributions to understanding the application of tripartite theology in specific ancient authors will be addressed in the relevant sections below (see §2.3.1–7). Although the *theologia tripartita* is rather well known among scholars of ancient religion, and regularly referred to as influential or even commonplace in antiquity itself,<sup>69</sup> it is, to my knowledge, used relatively rarely as an instrument to refine our understanding of Graeco-Roman religion.<sup>70</sup> This may be due to the relative obscurity of its explicit proponents. Yet, we cannot rule out that its inconvenience is partly to blame, since it challenges the paradigm that religion as an overarching concept was the product of Christianity or modernity. Moreover, it assigns an important position to philosophical reflection within what we would now call religion. Some exceptions,

68 Klauck 2007, 338, cf. 224: 'three genres of teaching and reflecting about the gods'.

69 Cancik and Cancik-Lindemaier (2001, 44) stress that Scaevola was an 'influential religious authority' and that Varro was 'not an isolated philosopher'. Momigliano (1984, 199) states that '[i]n Varro's time it was commonplace to distinguish three types of theology'.

70 It is more often referred to in passing, as for instance in Ando 2008, 33 (on Dio's twelfth oration).

whose different approaches I briefly discuss now, include Godo Lieberg, James Rives, Hans-Josef Klauck, Jan Assmann, Michael von Albrecht, and John North.

In the seventies, Godo Lieberg published an extensive overview of scholarly work concerning the *theologia tripartita* (1973) that proved foundational for subsequent research. In the preceding decades of research, much effort appears to have been put into establishing one or more sources for the *tripartita*, an effort whose results Lieberg reviews and, for the most part, rejects (see §2.3.1 *infra*). Almost a decade later, he wrote a second contribution consisting of an overview of the ancient texts that show traces of the tripartite theology. In his conclusion, Lieberg divides his material into two groups: a group of texts in which the *tripartita* is an implicit, underlying structure—including works of Epicurus, Philodemus, Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Philo, Cornutus, Lucian, Sextus Empiricus, and several Christian authors—and a group of texts in which there are explicit references to the *tripartita*—which include the works of Scaevola, Varro, Pseudo-Plutarch (following Aetius), Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, Tertullian, and Eusebius.<sup>71</sup> According to Lieberg, the *tripartita* arose in its precise form, ‘as a terminologically precise scheme of thought’, at earliest in Greek doxographical genres (as exemplified by the extant doxography by Aetius) and the latest around the time of Scaevola. He concludes:

The *tripertitio* as such represents a structuring formula that depicts the main outline of religious phenomena, one that is only filled in terms of content by each individual user’s perspective. (Lieberg 1982, 53)<sup>72</sup>

So, rather than offering a strict definition of religion or a list of different images of the gods, the *tripartita* is a versatile model that is mapped onto existing religious phenomena and adapted to suit the particular interest of authors across different genres and times. As a tool it can be adapted to suit a variety of interests.

After Lieberg, the *theologia tripartita* seems to have attracted relatively little scholarly attention. In the present millennium, however, the function of the *theologia tripartita* as an ordering principle is once again gaining traction. Jan

---

71 A TLG and LLT survey of the diverse combinations of the possible terms involved indeed suggests that this list of explicit references is quite exhaustive. I would only add Maximus of Tyre, see §2.3.7 below.

72 ‘Es handelt sich eben bei der *tripertitio* als solcher um ein die Struktur der religiösen Phänomene im Groben abbildendes Denk- und Ordnungsprinzip, das erst durch den Standpunkt des jeweiligen Betrachters inhaltlich ausgefüllt wird.’

Assmann broadens the scope of possibilities of tripartite theology even further and applies Varro's tripartite structure to ancient Near Eastern religions, remarking that it functions as 'a general structure that is perfectly well applicable not only to the Roman and Greek religions that Varro had in mind, but also to ancient Egyptian and Babylonian religions.'<sup>73</sup> In Hans Joseph Klauck's analysis of Dio Chrysostom's *Olympian Oration*, he also draws a line from the *tripartita* as an ordering tool for the ancients in understanding religion in antiquity to the *tripartita* as an ordering tool for us in understanding religion in antiquity:

The *theologia tripartita* served as a convenient tool for summarizing, ordering, and evaluating these general trends. This is a service that it can still provide for us, when we try to understand the multiform and colorful religious world of the first two centuries CE, in which Christianity was born. (Klauck 2007, 352)

In this regard, Klauck refers to James Rives's application of the fourfold scheme found in Dio Chrysostom to Roman religion in general.<sup>74</sup> Rives argues that since Dio did not hesitate to use and even modify the tripartite scheme in a popular lecture, it must have been 'understandable to a fairly broad audience'.<sup>75</sup> He emphasizes the usefulness of the *tripartita* to show the difference between ancient and modern conceptions of religion: instead of the present-day meaning of 'a coherent system of beliefs, practises, and institutions', religion was conceived of radically different 'in terms of multiple "theologies"'.<sup>76</sup> Again, it is the diversity of religious approaches harboured in one model that is brought to the fore, as a typical ancient manner of approaching religion.

The same diversity-accommodating function of the *tripartita*, and its function in keeping those diverse theologies apart, is emphasized by Michael von Albrecht:

The Varronic scheme of the 'tripartite' theology (...) sheds light on the contrast between the pre-Christian and the Christian situation. The pagan assigns different theological or philosophical perspectives to dif-

---

73 Assmann 2004, see 17–20 on the *theologia tripartita*, citation at 17–18.

74 Rives 2007, 21–42, referred to by Klauck (2007, 352, n. 66).

75 Rives 2007, 23.

76 Rives 2007, 42, cf. 23.

ferent areas of existence, which he allows to coexist without attempting to unify them. (Von Albrecht 2009, 23)<sup>77</sup>

A perspicacious remark by the same author imagines the journey of Christianity towards a more totalizing position than any previous religious cult by means of the tripartite theology:

The unique, totalitarian position of Christianity in late ancient Rome can be illustrated by the Varronic scheme: the first step in its ascent to general validity, that it presented itself as philosophy, the last, that it also replaced the state cult. (Von Albrecht 2009, 25)<sup>78</sup>

Von Albrecht thus explains the advance of Christianity in terms of its initial universal self-presentation as a philosophy. Nevertheless, this claim is not substantiated any further, and while the usefulness of the tripartite scheme as a structuring tool has been subsequently recognized by some (and applied by even fewer) scholars, the possible connection to early Christianity is only hinted at. The two steps Von Albrecht distinguishes are of great interest to my purposes in this chapter, as I will also examine the Pauline fashioning of his cult in a tripartite light. By doing so, I take up the gauntlet put down by Klauck in the conclusion of his article on the tripartite theology in Dio Chrysostom, where he sketches some rough similarities between Paul's speech on the Areopagus and *Romans* 1 on the one hand, and the similar sounding critique of Dio on the other. According to Klauck, 'these points alone should be enough to make a comparison with our model in three parts fruitful.'<sup>79</sup> In section 2.4, I will indeed start with *Romans* 1 and from there also look for Paul's more positively phrased alternatives to the types of religious manifestations he criticizes there.

---

77 'Das varronische Schema der 'dreigeteilten' Theologie (...) beleuchtet den Gegensatz zwischen der vorchristlichen und der späteren Situation. Der Heide ordnet verschiedenen Daseinsbereichen unterschiedliche theologische bzw. philosophische Anschauungsformen zu, die er koexistieren lässt, ohne sich um eine Vereinheitlichung zu bemühen.'

78 'Die einzigartige, umfassende Position des Christentums im spätantiken Rom lässt sich vom varronischen Schema her so beleuchten: Ein erster Schritt bei seinem Aufstieg zur allgemeinen Gültigkeit, dass es sich als Philosophie darstellte, der letzte, dass es auch den Staatskult ersetzte.'

79 Klauck 2007, 352. He continues with the disclaimer, 'I would not go so far as to maintain that Paul and Luke had a first-hand acquaintance of the tripartite theology, though this is not completely inconceivable. Yet, they do have some information about basic features of a broader religious discourse that was being carried on in several fields around them.'

One more contribution in the scholarly evaluation of the *tripartita* stands out for its sharp analysis of what the model means for the genealogy of the modern concept of 'religion'. John North asks whether the *tripartita* in fact supported the compartmentalized experience of religion in antiquity, or whether it also functioned to integrate and relate these different domains. In Varro, he finds evidence of the latter, since Varro arguably tried to bring mythical religion, with the help of the philosophical invention of allegory, in line with civic religious practice and belief. North distinguishes between Varro's aim of providing intellectual support for his antiquarian approach to Roman religion and the effect of his presentation of the three theologies:

The effect of his theorizing, together with the structure of his whole work, had the effect of creating for the first time a clear association between the different aspects of what we today think of as 'a religion.' That is, he was postulating an intimate association between the ritual/civic aspect, the reflective/philosophic aspect and the mythical/artistic aspect of the religious activities of contemporary Romans. My conclusion is that we can detect here the first identifiable attempt in the Roman tradition to make such an association and hence to create the possibility of seeing this whole area of life as some kind of unity, which might be analyzed separately from a nonreligious zone. (North 2014, 244)

This important insight returns us to the question whether we can approach the ancient world with a modern conception of 'religion'. If North is right, the *theologia tripartita* not only offers an insiders' perspective that helps us to reconstruct ancient religion (albeit only a particular intellectualistic perspective), it also laid the foundations that ultimately helped construct our modern 'outsiders' perspective on religion as a distinguishable whole.

According to North, however, Varro's revolutionary step of encompassing ideas, stories, and rituals in one concept of religion was not recognized by his contemporaries and was misunderstood until centuries later.<sup>80</sup> Varro's voice turned out to be a voice in the wilderness preparing for later developments. It is indeed good to keep in mind that the *theologia tripartita* remains an intellectual construction of religious life and is as such not a convenient source for lived religion on the streets or in the temples and *insulae* of Rome. This is not an impediment for my argument, however, for it is precisely my aim to position Paul within contemporary intellectual discourses. It would be interesting

---

80 North 2014, 245.



to pursue whether Paul can be seen as in line with the unified construct Varro offers or with different contemporary authors that use the same model to differentiate between proper and improper religious manifestations or justify the existence of diverse, contradicting religious views. First, however, we should form a better-informed opinion about these authors and their appropriations and adaptations of the *theologia tripartita*.<sup>81</sup>

### 2.3 The Theologia Tripartita: Theorizing Religion in Graeco-Roman Discourses

In this section, I will introduce and evaluate the primary attestations to the *theologia tripartita*. We shall see that, as a model, the *theologia tripartita* is both highly comprehensive and inherently self-critical. It is comprehensive since it comprises not only ritual practice but philosophical thought and poetic representation as well. At the same time, in distinguishing three main religious modes, the model immediately raises the self-critical question of how these modes are to be related and prioritized. Different authors chose differently in using it to accommodate disparity or unity. To be able to appreciate the diversity involved, I will now elaborate on representatives of the tradition, focusing on the temporal scope of this research (first century BC—second century AD). The subsections discuss the contributions by Scaevola and Varro (apud Augustine's *City of God*), Plato (who functions as a forerunner), Aetius, Cicero, Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, and Maximus of Tyre respectively. Unlike in the other chapters below, the occurrence of *pistis* language did not determine the selection of primary sources in this section, although it will be shown that in later authors such as Maximus and Plutarch, *pistis* language is used in the context of the *tripartita* discourse.

#### 2.3.1 *Scaevola, Varro, Augustine: Three Types of Gods / Approaches to the Divine / Religious Practices*

Varro's *theologia tripartita* or *tripertita* is known to us by its discussion in Augustine's *City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*), in response to Varro's now lost *Antiquities of Human and Divine Things* (*Antiquitates rerum humanarum et divinarum*).<sup>82</sup> The *theologia tripartita* refers to a threefold typology. As we read

81 As will be shown, North's emphasis on the uniqueness of Varro in this respect will be somewhat relativised by my discussion.

82 On the *theologia tripartita* in Varro, see, in addition to the publications referred to below, Boyancé 1955; Pépin 1958; Dörrie 1986; Geerlings 1990; Lehmann 1997.

in the *City of God*, a theology is ‘an account which is given of the gods’ (*ratio quae de diis explicatur*).<sup>83</sup> The three theologies are identified as the mythical, used by the poets (*mythikēn/theologia fabulosa*); the natural, used by the philosophers (*physikēn/theologia naturalis*);<sup>84</sup> and the civic, used by the people and the lawgivers (*politikēn/theologia civilis*).<sup>85</sup>

According to Augustine, Varro refers back to Quintus Mucius Scaevola, pontifex maximus from 89–82 BC, who spoke of three kinds of gods, as presented to us by philosophers, poets, and statesmen.<sup>86</sup> Scaevola seems to have had a strong opinion about their particular usage in the civic cult, for the poet’s gods are trifling and untrue, the philosophers’ gods are superfluous and unfitting for the state, since they are incorporeal.<sup>87</sup> Apparently, Scaevola found it important to separate the true gods from the untrue ones put forward by poets, yet he was also careful not to shock Roman citizens in discarding all human characteristics, as the philosophers were wont to do with their deities.

In Varro’s work, a similar and rather abstract tripartite scheme is accompanied by a vivid historiography, starting with a strictly aniconic religious climate in the first 170 years since the foundation of Rome.<sup>88</sup> Varro praises this phase of Rome’s religious development, up until the reign of Tarquinius Priscus, as

83 Augustine, *City of God* 6.5: *Deinde illud quale est, quod tria genera theologiae dicit esse, id est rationis quae de diis explicatur, eorumque unum mythicon appellari, alterum physicon, tertium civile.* For the *City of God*, the translation by Marcus Dods (1934) is used with slight revisions when necessary.

84 It is good to distinguish the ancient meaning of this category from the connotations ‘natural theology’ bears in later thought (as referring to the development arguments from nature for the existence of God, on which see §2.4.1 *infra*). In ancient philosophy, physics and ethics were closely related, and the philosopher’s approach to the divine was concerned with the god’s physical and ethical nature.

85 See Augustine, *City of God* 6.12: *tres thelogias, quas Graeci dicunt mythicen physicen politicen, Latine autem dici possunt fabulosa naturalis civilis.*

86 Augustine, *City of God* 4.27: ‘It is recorded that the very learned pontiff Scaevola had distinguished about three kinds of gods—one introduced by the poets, another by the philosophers, another by the statesmen.’

87 Augustine, *City of God* 4.27: ‘The first kind he declares to be trifling, because many unworthy things have been invented by the poets concerning the gods; the second does not suit states, because it contains some things that are superfluous, and some, too, which it would be prejudicial for the people to know. (...) [quoting Scaevola:] “That states have not the true images of the gods; because the true God has neither sex, nor age, nor definite corporeal members.”’

88 Cf. Van Nuffelen 2010, 163: ‘The fundamental characteristic of Varro’s view on the religious past of Rome is the integration of a Greek philosophical view on mankind’s religious development into a standard account of the Roman past.’ The philosophical view Varro followed grossly, according to Van Nuffelen, is that of Posidonius.

purser than the present day. Moreover, he accused the people who introduced divine images of increasing error and diminishing reverence, even if their aim was to diminish fear of the gods.<sup>89</sup> If we understand Varro well enough (for in representing his views Augustine had an agenda of his own), he seems to be somewhat ambivalent about this introduction of images, for elsewhere we learn that he defends the rationale for using images of humans to represent the rational nature of the divine:

Varro, in the first place, commends these interpretations so strongly as to say, that the ancients invented the images, badges, and adornments of the gods (*simulacra deorum et insignia ornatusque*), in order that when those who went to the mysteries of doctrine (*qui adissent doctrinae mysteria*) should direct their minds to them with their bodily eyes (*cum oculis animadvertissent*), they might with their mind see (*animo videre*) the soul of the world, and its parts, that is, the true gods; and also that the meaning which was intended by those who made their images with the human form, seemed to be this—namely, that the mind of mortals (*mortalium animus*), which is in a human body, is very like to the immortal mind (*simillimus est immortalis animi*), just as vessels (*vasa*) might be placed to represent the gods (*causa notandorum deorum*), as, for instance, a wine-vessel (*oenophorum*) might be placed in the temple of Liber, to signify wine, that which is contained being signified by that which contains. Thus by an image which had the human form the rational soul was signified (*ita per simulacrum, quod formam haberet humanam, significari animam rationalem*), because the human form is the vessel, as it were, in which that nature is wont to be contained which they attribute to God, or to the gods (*quod eo velut vase natura ista soleat contineri, cuius naturae deum volunt esse vel deos*). (Augustine, *City of God* 7.5)<sup>90</sup>

While Varro thus defends the usage of sensible images per se as representations of the intelligible divine, he is critical of which images were being used. The identity of the ‘ancients’ remains somewhat vague, though it may be argued that Tarquinius was among them, making this invention nothing other

89 Augustine, *City of God* 4.31: “*Quod si adhuc,*” inquit, “*mansisset, castius dii obseruarentur*” and *qui primi simulacra deorum populis posuerunt, eos ciuitatibus suis et metum dempsisse et errorem addidisse, prudenter existimans deos facile posse in simulacrorum stoliditate contemni.*

90 This metaphor of vessels to explain divine presence in human form is of great interest in understanding a similar imagery in Paul: see §2.4.2 below.

than the introduction of the state cult, of civic religion, based on and aiming to teach people in philosophical doctrine.<sup>91</sup> These ancients, then, who started the 'iconification' of the initial pure religion chose that image which was best suited to represent the gods: the human body as 'vessel' of the rational mind. This same metaphor of the human body as a vase or vessel for the knowledge of God, we will see, is used and adapted by Paul (see §2.4.3 below).

The people Varro deems responsible for eventually sabotaging the ancients' initial aim are the poets: 'People are on the whole more inclined to follow the poets than the natural philosophers in their beliefs concerning the genealogies of the gods.'<sup>92</sup> Not only in genealogies, but also in distinctive age, clothing, ornaments, and relationships, in their perturbed minds, desire, anger, and warfare, the gods were fashioned by the poets 'in the likeness of human feebleness' (*ad similitudinem imbecillitatis humanae*).<sup>93</sup> Hence, it is no wonder that when it comes to his judgement of the variant *theologiae*, the mythical type is deemed the least appropriate because of 'the injustice it does to the nature of the gods by deceitful fables' (*mendacissimis fabulis naturae deorum fieret iniuria*).<sup>94</sup> The poets made the gods in the image of humans including their all too human vices, whereas humans were merely supposed to be the best possible representation of the gods.

Varro's evaluation of the civic and philosophical approach to the gods is even more complicated. He described civic theology as

that which citizens in cities, and especially the priests, ought to know and to administer. From it is to be known what god each one may suitably worship, what sacred rites and sacrifices each one may suitably perform (*quos deos publice sacra et sacrificia colere et facere quemque par sit*). (Augustine, *City of God* 6.5)

---

91 Cf. Van Nuffelen's argument (2011, 32–34) that Tarquinius was an initiate of the Samothracian mysteries, a cult that taught a Platonic ontology, and that his creation of the Capitoline triad can hence be understood as in conformity with Samothracian religion. Cf. p. 31: 'The *antiqui* apparently possessed some form of philosophical knowledge and constructed statues as symbols of metaphysical principles. (...) Indeed, once one has 'approached the mysteries of the doctrine (*doctrina*)', that is, has been taught philosophy, the recognition of philosophical knowledge in cult images becomes a relatively uncomplicated task.'

92 Augustine, *City of God* 4.32.

93 Augustine, *City of God* 4.30.

94 Augustine, *City of God* 6.5.

While his treatise as a whole can be understood as a treatise in which he 'endeavours to prove that the traditional Roman state religion is still viable',<sup>95</sup> there is no doubt that he considered the civic cult flawed in its present form: simulacra, images of the gods, posed a serious threat.<sup>96</sup> The philosophical alternative, which consists of a more rational approach to the nature, whereabouts, and substance of the divine, does not come without its caveats either. For although Varro sees no flaw in this approach per se, if we follow Augustine's rendering of his views, he does not deem it fitting for the masses on the forum.<sup>97</sup> It belongs within the philosophical schools, where, Varro must admit, it is subject to many differences in opinion.<sup>98</sup> Still, whereas civic theology takes up elements from both the other *theologiae*, in the ideal situation, the civic variant ought to be more closely connected to the philosophical, like it was in the days of Tarquinius.<sup>99</sup> All in all, according to Varro, civic theology is seriously flawed, albeit still reminiscent of ancient metaphysical knowledge.<sup>100</sup> It needs the philosophical filter, which, based on the rest of what we can know of Varro's work, consisted *inter alia* of an allegorical reinterpretation of myths about the gods, to become as purified as it once was.<sup>101</sup>

Even though Augustine is writing centuries later, it is of interest to note his strategy in refuting Varro's preference for a purified *theologia civilis*. Augustine argues that it follows from Varro's own reasoning that he in fact unites the

95 Lieberg 1982, 31: 'bemüht ist, die überlieferte römische Staatsreligion als weiterhin tragfähig zu erweisen'.

96 In this he also follows Scaevola, see *City of God* 4.30.

97 Augustine, *City of God* 6.5. Cf. also 6.6: *Ait enim ea, quae scribunt poetae, minus esse quam ut populi sequi debeant; quae autem philosophi, plus quam ut ea uulgum scrutari expediat*. John North (2014, 241) sharply distinguishes here between Augustine's portrayal of Varro's views and Varro's own views. Augustine tries to have him say that philosophical truth was kept from the populace on purpose, whereas Varro saw the philosophical theology as unfit for the public because of the many differences of opinion. Augustine's rendering would then rather accord with (what probably was) Scaevola's position of deliberate deception of the people.

98 Augustine, *City of God* 6.5. Varro's own philosophical allegiance lay with the revived 'Old Academy', since he studied under Antiochus of Ascalon in Athens, and Cicero even turns him into its spokesperson in his *Academica*. On the relation between Antiochus and Varro, cf. Blank 2012.

99 See Augustine, *City of God* 6.6: *e quibus maior societas debet esse nobis cum philosophis quam cum poetis*.

100 Cf. Van Nuffelen 2011, 35, taking a position against the supposed rejection of philosophy by Varro in i.a. Lieberg 1973.

101 This is evidenced by Varro's effort to link specific gods to natural phenomena: see North 2014, 243. Van Nuffelen (2010, 170–174) traces this allegorizing function of philosophy to the teachings of Antiochus of Ascalon.

poetic and the civic, which both present us with similar yet, in Augustine's eyes, obviously false gods.<sup>102</sup> 'But where is the theatre but in the city? Who instituted the theatre but the state?' as he puts it. By referring to these physical manifestations of theologies, of 'ways of speaking about the divine', Augustine demonstrates that the scope of the *tripartita* has broadened from modes of religious speech and teaching to modes of religious practice. Out of the initial knowledge that the philosophers, poets, and lawgivers of old passed on to humanity grew types of religious behaviour: the poetic approach resulted in dramatic performance of myth, the civic approach in laws on rites and festivals. Thus, tripartite theology gained importance as a model to describe what we call religious practice.

This development can even be traced back to Varro himself. Jörg Rüpke argues that the motivation for Varro to devise a threefold model was to give theoretical status to practice, particularly to traditional Roman ritual practice:

The solution required was the development of a theory of these practices that gave theoretical status to practice itself. It was Varro who realized this. The theory of practice is the *theologia civilis*. (...) Thus traditional religious practice was summarized and dignified as an independent form of 'theology', that is to say, a theoretical enterprise. The contingencies of middle-Italian cultic practices were given the same status as Greek and Roman poetry and philosophy of nature. Varro thus legitimated the Roman wish to cling to *mos maiorum*, tradition, within the universalistic framework of Greek philosophy. (Rüpke 2012, 179–180)

We might add that by elevating civic religious practice to the level of theoretical theologies, the other two *theologiae* eventually gained a practical outlook as well, with as their typical material bases the theatre and the (philosophical) school or portico. While Varro indeed seems to have had this typically Roman agenda, the role of Varro in developing a threefold theory about religion, however, is somewhat relativized both by his own reference to Scaevola and by traces of it in earlier Greek authors.

As for Scaevola's own motivation, it is interesting to recall that, according to Varro, he spoke not of three theologies, but of three different types of gods. Even if this is merely a matter of speaking, which is questionable, this amounts to a much more radical division between the *theologiae*. Based on this description, Clifford Ando infers that it leads to the 'insulating of many

---

102 Augustine, *City of God* 6.5–6.6.

kinds of speculation on the part of individuals from interference by the state, because their speculation is not, in effect, about the state (the gods of poetry and philosophy being simply different gods from those of civic cult).<sup>103</sup> Hence, the *tripartita* is an 'ex post facto attempt to account for the divergent forms of religious speculation then flourishing'.<sup>104</sup> Alternatively, John North maintains that while Scaevola kept the theologies apart, Varro's aim was 'to form a theory of the interaction of the three theologies, on which view they would not be in conflict at all, but mutually supportive'.<sup>105</sup> Thus, whereas Varro may have wished to give a theoretical status to ritual practice or to emphasize the theologies' interrelatedness, Scaevola (or whoever first made a threefold division in the gods) may have wished to protect different types of religious manifestations by emphasizing their distinctiveness. These analyses are highly speculative, yet they already show the adaptability of tripartite theology to different purposes in its earliest sources.

### 2.3.2 *Plato: a Philosophical Rather than Poetic Basis for Cultic Religion*

Even though Varro is our most complete early source for the tripartite theology, neither he nor his source Scaevola seem to have been the first to make use of it as a structuring device. Although it was first considered Stoic in origin, with Panaetius and Posidonius as the usual suspects, this oft-repeated attribution is not as clear-cut as some would have it. After an elaborate survey of scholarly evaluations of the *tripartita*, Godo Lieberg concludes that there is no reason to uphold Panaetius as its source and that Posidonius's use of the scheme is conceivable in view of his 'religionshistorische Betrachtungsweise'.<sup>106</sup> It is not warranted, however, to claim an exclusively Stoic origin for the remaining sources, particularly in view of the differences between them.<sup>107</sup> Varro himself also presents it as the outcome of philosophical thought, and does not attribute it to a specific school.<sup>108</sup> In the context of discussing the *tripartita*, Van

103 Ando 2010, 64.

104 Ando 2010, 64.

105 See North 2014, 237. Cf. also his argument (at 237) that Varro 'has moved the whole discussion on to a totally different level' by speaking of discourses about the nature of the gods instead of the different origins of the gods.

106 Lieberg 1973, 106.

107 See Lieberg 1973, 106: 'Die uns vorliegenden expliziten Bezeugungen der *theologia tripartita*, d. h. Scaevola und Varro (nach Tertullian und besonders Augustin) sowie Aetios, Dion Chrysostomos, Plutarch und Eusebios, sind so verschiedenartig, daß sie nicht auf eine gemeinsame, etwa in der alten Stoa lokalisierbare Quelle zurückgeführt werden können.'

108 Augustine, *City of God* 6.5. See Lieberg 1973, 80: 'Die *theologia naturalis* als solche ist nicht auf die Stoiker beschränkt, sondern, wie Varro selbst ausführt, als die Gesamtheit aller philosophischen Reflexion auf dem Gebiet der Religion zu betrachten.'

Nuffelen states that ‘ideas about ancient wisdom came into being in the early first century BC and were immediately found among both Stoics and Platonists’.<sup>109</sup>

In light of this more general philosophical origin, it is useful to devote a bit more space to one of the early authorities in which traces can be found: Plato.<sup>110</sup> Plato’s criticism of poetic and artistic representation in general and of representation of the divine in particular is well known.<sup>111</sup> In accordance with his ontology, poets are only ‘imitators of images of virtue (μιμητὰς εἰδῶλων ἀρετῆς) and of every other subject they deal with but they don’t grasp the truth’: they make an image of what is merely an image of virtue (a single person in particular circumstances).<sup>112</sup> In his ideal state, those passages in which the gods are seen to commit crimes, lie, and cheat; inflict needless suffering; or are disobeyed by humans are to be proscribed.<sup>113</sup> Plato sees a clear convergence between the psychological damage done by poetry (destroying the rational part) and the political damage done by scoundrels (destroying the civilized element).<sup>114</sup>

What is more, this rejection of what we may call ‘mythical theology’ is also often paired in Plato with references to political and philosophical alternatives. Günter Pasorek discerns a forerunner to the *tripartita* discourse in the second and third book of Plato’s *Republic*, where we find the distinction between corruptive poems about the gods and alternative, philosophically inspired stories that promote virtue.<sup>115</sup> Here, so Pasorek argues, Plato’s preference for the latter and his wish to see such a purified theology implemented in *polis*-politics points to the development of ‘political theology’.<sup>116</sup> Pasorek sees this once again confirmed in the *Laws*, where the Athenian stranger critiques

109 Van Nuffelen 2011, 37.

110 See Klauck 2007, 335. Pace Lieberg 1973, 79, who, in response to Van Straaten 1946, 261–262, rejects the thesis that Plato influenced Scaevola in developing the *theologia tripartita*, since Plato did not reject polytheistic civic religion, nor grudgingly accept it, but incorporated it in a hierarchy of divine beings and did not hold the view, like Scaevola, that philosophical knowledge of the gods should be withheld from the people. I do not claim that Scaevola depended on Plato in detail, yet would opt for the likelihood that he participated in the discourse on the primacy and necessity of a philosophical basis to *polis*-religion, which was outlined by Plato.

111 On Plato’s critique of idolatry, see Ando 2008, 27–31.

112 Plato, *Republic* 600e. See also Janaway 1995, 128–129.

113 Plato, *Republic* 380a–b.

114 Plato, *Republic* 605a–c.

115 For a more positive overall evaluation of Plato’s stance towards poetry and literature, cf. Levin 2000.

116 Pasorek 1980, 95.



the sophistic claim that art-based, regionally differing conceptions of the gods underlie *polis*-life and that such religious but also ethical claims merely function to affirm power relations.<sup>117</sup> Instead, Plato seeks to affirm the immaterial priority of justice, ethics, and the gods and hence also the importance of *theologia naturalis*. In the footsteps of Plato, so Pasorek argues, Aristotle affirms the necessity of an unmoved mover causing all movement.<sup>118</sup> Both attempt to replace the poetic with the philosophical as informing and shaping political theology.<sup>119</sup>

That such an ‘emancipating’ effect of philosophical on civic religion was indeed envisioned by Plato is not always acknowledged.<sup>120</sup> Yet it is most evident in texts such as the concrete advice of the Athenian protagonist in the *Laws*. In the ideal city, so he argues, the inhabitants must be among those who follow in the steps of God (716b: τῶν ξυνακολουθησόντων ἐσόμενον τῷ θεῷ) and become like (716c: ὅμοιος) God. This idea of becoming like God, which I will discuss more fully in chapter 6, amounts to the following rule:

to engage in sacrifice and communion with the gods continually, by prayers and offerings and devotions of every kind (ὡς τῷ μὲν ἀγαθῷ θύειν καὶ προσομιλεῖν αἰεὶ τοῖς θεοῖς εὐχαῖς καὶ ἀναθήμασι καὶ ξυμπάσῃ θεραπείᾳ θεῶν), is a thing most noble and good and helpful towards the happy life, and superlatively fitting also, for the good man; but for the wicked, the very opposite. For the wicked man is unclean of soul, whereas the good man is clean (ἀκάθαρτος γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν ὁ γε κακός, καθαρὸς δὲ ὁ ἐναντίος); and from him that is defiled no good man, nor god, can ever rightly receive gifts (δῶρα οὐτ’ ἀνδρ’ ἀγαθὸν οὔτε θεὸν ἔστι ποτὲ τό γε ὀρθὸν δέχσθαι). (Plato, *Laws* 716d–e)

117 Pasorek 1980, 97, referring to Plato, *Laws* 889e–890a.

118 Pasorek 1980, 100–101, arguing that in his turn, Plato is indebted to Xenophanes’s deduction that the highest being must be one, invariable and eternal.

119 Pasorek 1980, 102: ‘Mythos, Nomos und (natur)-philosophische Gotteserkenntnis treten hier zu jenem Dreieck zusammen, wie es später wiederholt Grundriß der Beschäftigung mit dem Religiösen wurde. Das aus den *Nomoi* bereits bekannte Schema wiederholt sich hier in knappster und genialer Skizzierung durch Aristoteles: die Theologie der mythologischen Dichter ist wieder eminent politische Theologie, die naturphilosophische Theologie steht axiologisch darüber, ist jedoch immer wieder zu erneuernder intellektueller *πραγματεία* anheimgestellt.’

120 Cf. e.g. Smith 2002, 297–298: ‘Despite the criticisms of Homeric anthropomorphism and of the immoral depiction of the gods in poetry, it would appear that Plato and the Presocratic philosophers could entertain a sophisticated metaphysical view of the world and its divine causes side by side with a relatively unquestioning view of traditional religious ritual as socially necessary and, in some unspecified way, spiritually effective.’

This passage, introduced by P.A. Meijer as ‘our best source of knowledge on Plato’s spirituality of sacrifice’, connects the value of a sacrifice to the morality of the one sacrificing.<sup>121</sup> It is easy to miss the profound newness of this approach: not the proper performance, but the purity of the soul determines the value of ritual sacrifice. In his ‘historical interpretation’ of the *Laws*, Glenn Morrow emphasizes that instead of scorning Plato for opportunism in his dealings with traditional religion, we ought to be ‘surprised by the extent to which he transforms the spirit, while adhering to the form, of the worship that he finds among his countrymen.’<sup>122</sup> According to Morrow, the passage we just quoted

contains a profound reinterpretation of familiar practices. Worship (...) is not an exchange of services between men and gods (the *do ut des* of primitive ritualism), but a means of assimilating oneself to the god one worships by adopting the orderliness that characterizes the divine nature. (Morrow 1960, 400)<sup>123</sup>

While I would not opt for the evolutionary perspective and accompanying triumphalism (‘primitive ritualism’), Morrow alights on an important theme here. If we put the idea expressed here in terms of the *theologia tripartita*, it seems that normal civic ritual and sacrificial behaviour towards the gods is endorsed but at the same time radically altered in meaning: its content is replaced by the philosophical ideal of *homoiosis theōi*, becoming like God (a topic that is discussed extensively in §6.3.4 below).

Nevertheless, for Plato, it seems doubtful that such a process is reserved for everyone. In the *Theaetetus*, the unrighteous are to live within the safe boundaries of the state, so we learn from another crucial passage on this topos of *homoiosis*:

To escape is to become like God, so far as this is possible (ὁμοίωσις θεῶ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν); and to become like God is to become righteous and holy and wise (...) Therefore by far the best thing for the unrighteous man and the man whose words or deeds are impious (τῶ ἀδικοῦντι καὶ ἀνόσια λέγοντι ἢ πράττοντι) is not to grant that he is clever through knavery (...)

121 Meijer 1981, 247. Meijer, however, explains the combination of becoming like god and sacrificing by referring to the righteousness important to both actions (p. 248) and concludes that ‘Plato, like Socrates, still had a traditional attitude towards the cult’ (p. 249).

122 Morrow 1960, 399.

123 The same passage is approvingly referred to by Erler (2002a, 166).

but such as men should be who are to live safely in a state (ἀλλ' ἄνδρες οἷους δεῖ ἐν πόλει τοὺς σωθησομένους). (Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b–d)

Civic religion thus seems to be what Plato envisioned for the general population. In anticipation of my discussion of Paul, I want to note that there seems to be a difference between Plato and of Paul in the scope of philosophical religion. Whereas Plato explicitly made a civic provision for the 'impious', Paul calls upon a congregation made up of all social and cognitive strata, all of whom are to take part in his 'logical worship' (see §2.4.2 below), and he seems to be less explicit about the fate of others (though perhaps *Romans* 13.1–7 comes closest to offering a wider concept of civic religion: see §3.4.4 below).

The passage of the *Laws*, including the idea of the moral sacrifice, is taken up again by the Neoplatonist Porphyry (3rd century AD) in his treatise on abstaining from animal food. In this context, Porphyry cites both Plato and the work *On Piety* by the Aristotelean Theophrastus (4th century BC). Unfortunately, it is hard to ascertain where his quotes from Theophrastus begin or end, as this work as a whole is lost to us.<sup>124</sup> Porphyry writes, possibly quoting Theophrastus, that 'divinity looks more to the disposition and manners of those that sacrifice (πρὸς τῶν θυόντων ἦθος) than to the multitude of the things which are sacrificed'.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, he notes the following about the sacrifice of an unjust person:

But if he had been persuaded that the Gods have no need of these things, and that they look to the manners (τὸ ἦθος) of those who approach to them, and conceive that a right opinion of them (τὴν ὀρθὴν περὶ αὐτῶν), and of things themselves, is the greatest sacrifice (μεγίστην θυσίαν), how is it possible that he should not have been temperate, holy, and just (σώφρων, καὶ ὅσιος, καὶ δίκαιος)? To the Gods, indeed, the most excellent offering is a pure intellect and an impassive soul (νοῦς καθαρὸς καὶ ψυχὴ ἀπαθής), and also a moderate (τὸ μετρίως) oblation of our own property and of other things.' (Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* 2.60–61)<sup>126</sup>

124 The authorship of Theophrastus is not questioned by Fortenbaugh (2003, 182), but is doubted by Sorabji (1998, 218–219).

125 Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* 2.15, translations of Porphyry's work in this chapter are by Taylor 1823.

126 Sorabji (1998, 219) views these words as Porphyry's and suspects influence from his Christian opponents on the first characterization of a 'pure mind'.

The description of a 'pure intellect and an impassive soul' has also been attributed to Theophrastus. The extent to which Theophrastus rejected sacrifice is debated.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, this reception of Plato's teaching on moral sacrifice shows both the later appropriation of this idea and the manner in which it was further developed: cultic acts were reinterpreted as mental acts, civic theology was rephrased in philosophical terms. In the next main section (§2.4), I will discuss similar philosophical interpretations of civic theology, and the use of similar vocabulary, in the letters of Paul.

To sum up, already in Plato, all three *theologiae* are used to elucidate the view that the philosophical should replace or reform the poetic when it comes to polis religion. Thus, by putting the philosophical foundation and reinterpretation of civic religion on the agenda, Plato adumbrated ideas that would be taken up systematically by the discourse of tripartite theology. Yet, rather than bracketing one *theologia* from the other, the poetic is discarded in favour of the philosophical, which is then used to redefine the political from within.

In the following subsections, when we turn to other sources in which the *tripartita* occurs, I will show how it consistently offers a flexible framework for thinking and arguing about ancient religion, particularly in the constant rearrangement of the different approaches to the divine.

### 2.3.3 *Aetius or Pseudo-Plutarch: the Tripartita as Condensed Doxographical Commonplace*

Another source testifying to the dissemination of the *tripartita* is rather difficult to date and even harder to put into perspective. The reference is found in a doxographical document written somewhere between 100 and 250 AD (probably 150), which has wrongly been attributed to Plutarch.<sup>128</sup> This document is in itself a summary of a more elaborate but no longer extant doxology, originally written by the philosopher Aetius (second century BC). As for its contents, due to the genre there is not much relevant context that offers interesting perspectives. Godo Lieberg also comments in this vein, that this source 'sum-

127 Cf. Meijer 1981, 256: 'So Theophrastus certainly does not mean that the sacrifice of mind and soul should replace the sacrifice of any object whatsoever. That would mean the abolition of sacrificial practice—and there is no question of that!' And cf. Fortenbaugh 2003, 182, who explains the cleanest condition of the soul as 'a proper attitude towards worship, including an abhorrence of animal sacrifice, is important, but so is a proper disposition in regard to one's family and fellow-citizens.'

128 For arguments in favour of this date, see Mansfeld & Runia 1997, 124–125.

marizes the *theologia tripartita* in the most concise and at the same time most general form.<sup>129</sup>

Nevertheless, there is at least a little more to be said here. What is most useful for my purposes in this chapter is the fact that the *tripartita* was apparently the type of concept that was sufficiently well known, and well suited in the generality of its subject matter, to suit the needs of a doxographer and to make it into the later summarized form. Lieberg suspects that the text goes back to an even earlier doxographical tradition.<sup>130</sup> The text reads as follows:

From this the knowledge of a God is conveyed to man; that the sun, the moon, and the rest of the stars, being carried under the earth, rise again in their proper color, magnitude, place, and times. Therefore they who by tradition delivered to us the knowledge and veneration of the Gods did it by these three manner of ways (οἱ τὸν περὶ τῶν θεῶν παραδόντες σεβασμὸν διὰ τριῶν ἐξέθηκαν ἡμῖν εἰδῶν):—first, from nature; secondly, from fables; thirdly, from the testimony given by the laws of commonwealths (πρῶτον μὲν τοῦ φυσικοῦ, δεύτερον δὲ τοῦ μυθικοῦ, τρίτον δὲ τοῦ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐκ τῶν νόμων εἰληφότος). Philosophers taught the natural way; poets, the fabulous; and the political way is received from the constitutions of each commonwealth (διδάσκεται δὲ τὸ μὲν φυσικὸν ὑπὸ τῶν φιλοσόφων, τὸ δὲ μυθικὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητῶν, τὸ δὲ νομικὸν ὑφ' ἐκάστης αἰεὶ πόλεως συνίσταται). (Aetius / Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita Philosophorum* 1.6)<sup>131</sup>

Two things stand out here, despite this passage's brevity and lack of any elaborate context. Firstly, it is how the argument follows from an exposition about the beauty of the design of the cosmos. From this starting point, the different types (εἶδη) of the *tripartita* are presented as traditions brought to men by three authorities. Whereas Varro attributed different historical developments to specific authorities, such as the veneration of gods in human form to the poets, Aetius does not distinguish between the respective roles of the three authorities or judge their relative value. All three follow naturally from the beauty and orderliness of the cosmos, as this summarized account seems to suggest. Secondly, the name given to the third authority, the *theologia civilis*, is described in remarkably divergent terms as 'the testimony of the laws' and

129 Lieberg 1982, 39: 'Was hier vorliegt, faßt die *theologia tripartita* in knappster und zugleich allgemeinsten Form zusammen.'

130 Lieberg 1982, 39: 'Vermutlich ist eine solche Kurzfassung zum ersten Mal von einem älteren hellenistischen Doxographen formuliert worden.'

131 Greek text by Diels 1879, 295, translation Goodwin 1874.

‘the constitution of each city-state whenever’. Unlike philosophers and poets, lawgivers or statesmen are absent from this account. Moreover, the particularity of each *polis*’s particular system of laws is accounted for, or perhaps rather without further ado recounted, as an explanation of how each particular constitution related to the universal cosmos is lacking.

Pseudo-Plutarch, viz. Aetius thus offers an interesting glimpse of what probably were the earliest contours of the *theologia tripartita*. We can summarize these contours as follows: the origin of knowledge of things divine is ultimately one, expressed in the order of the cosmos, yet has been handed down in three traditions of nature, myth and law, whereby the multitude of different systems of laws is specifically attested.

#### 2.3.4 *Cicero: Epicureans, Stoics, and Academics Debating the Merits of the Theologiae*

The tripartite theology discourse is not as evidently present in Cicero’s oeuvre as it is in Varro’s or Aetius’s writings. Cicero never refers to this particular structure explicitly and concisely, but his works show an implicit familiarity. When it comes to Cicero’s familiarity with the theme, Godo Lieberg rightly asks if the establishment of a specific literary dependence, a ‘Mittelquelle’, is necessary, since ‘the *theologia tripartita* shines through clearly in several passages of Cicero’s *De natura deorum*.<sup>132</sup> Besides the *On the Nature of the Gods*, there are some passages in the first of the *Tusculan Disputations* (‘On the contempt of death’) to consider. Both books were written around 45 BC.

In the *Tusculan Disputations* (*Tusculanae disputationes*), we find the concept of an original or innate knowledge of the gods, a concept that will be more fully developed by Dio Chrysostom (see the next subsection). Cicero argues that since every race has a conception of gods, this universal conception is not a human convention but a ‘law of nature (*lex naturae*)’.<sup>133</sup> Following another, rather similar line of argument, he considers the immortality of the soul to be an obvious truth, since so many people live as if it were true. Here, the categories of people believing in the soul’s immortality are of particular interest:

No one would ever have exposed himself to death for his country without good hope of immortality. (...) So far, I am speaking of statesmen, but

<sup>132</sup> Lieberg 1973, 80: ‘die theologia tripartita an mehreren Stellen von Ciceros *De natura deorum* (...) deutlich durchschimmert.’

<sup>133</sup> Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.30. On the Stoic concept of natural law, see §3.3.5 *infra*.

what of poets? Have they no wish to become famous after death? (...) But why stop at the poets? Artists wish to become famous after death. Or why did Phidias insert his likeness on the shield of Minerva, though not allowed to inscribe his name on it? What of our philosophers? Do they not inscribe their names upon the actual books they write about contempt of fame? (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.32–35)

Even though the precise subject is not our concern here, it is interesting to see what particular groups Cicero presents: statesmen, poets, artists, philosophers. These groups are not presented explicitly as bearers of religious knowledge, but the co-occurrence of these groups is striking. Artists may seem the odd ones out, but as we will see with Dio Chrysostom, there is some variation on the tripartite theme, particularly in distinguishing between poets and artists as tradents of mythical theology.

As for the relative merits of the different *theologiae*, Cicero is clearly convinced of the central role philosophy plays in teaching about the gods:

As to philosophy (*philosophia*), the mother of all arts, what else is it except, as Plato held, the gift, or, as I hold, the discovery of the gods (*inventum deorum*)? It instructed us first in the worship of the gods (*ad illorum cultum*), then in the justice of mankind at large (*ad ius hominum*) which is rooted in the social union of the race of men, and next taught us the lessons of temperance and greatness of soul (*ad modestiam magnitudinemque animi*), and this dispersed the darkness from the eyes as it were of the mind (*eademque ab animo tamquam ab oculis caliginem dispulit*) (...) A power able to bring about such a number of important results is to my mind wholly divine (*Prorsus haec divina mihi videtur vis*). (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.64–65)

The descriptions of philosophy as ‘discovery of the gods’ and as a ‘divine power’ are what we moderns would deem highly ‘religious’. Cicero presents philosophy here as the teacher of cultic, social, and ethical goodness. Civic religion is thus dependent on philosophical knowledge. In the direct context, this power of philosophy is compared to that of poetry, which appears to be less well off:

I do not think the gods delight in ambrosia or nectar or Hebe filling the cups, and I do not listen to Homer who says that Ganymede was carried off by the gods for his beauty to serve as cup-bearer to Zeus: there was no just reason why such cruel wrong should be inflicted on Laomedon.

Homer imagined these things and attributed human feelings to the gods: I had rather he had attributed divine feelings to us. (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.65)

With this final inventive reversal, Cicero pinpoints the difference between the *theologia* of poetry and that of philosophy: Homer projected the human onto the divine, but philosophy is able to reflect the divine towards the human. This transformative power of philosophy is precisely what, as we will see, Paul aims at: humans should reflect divine glory and have their minds renewed (see §2.4.3 and 2.4.4 below).

In Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods* (*De natura deorum*), the question of how to gain trustworthy knowledge of the divine plays a more central role. An Epicurean named Gaius Velleius, a Stoic named Quintus Lucilius Balbus, and an Academic named Gaius Cotta discuss the pros and cons of each school's view of the divine. Cicero's own position is ambiguous, for while he explicitly sides with the Academics in the preface, he gives credit both to the Stoic position, via his own persona, and to the Academic one, via the Epicurean Velleius.<sup>134</sup> It has been argued that Cicero himself became more sceptical about the demonstrability of religious views in the period preceding the writing of the *On the Nature of the Gods*.<sup>135</sup> Yet for our purposes, we need not be bothered with the development of Cicero's personal view: the portrayal of the different philosophical traditions as regards their evaluation of different *theologiae* is interesting in itself.

In the dialogue, the first to put forth his arguments is Velleius, who immediately distances himself from both Platonic and Stoic myths:

I am not going to expound to you doctrines that are mere baseless figments of the imagination (*futilis commenticiasque sententias*), such as the artisan deity and worldbuilder of Plato's *Timaeus*, or that old hag of a fortuneteller, the Pronoia—which we may render 'Providence'—of the Stoics; nor yet a world endowed with a mind and senses of its own, a spherical, rotatory god of burning fire; these are the marvels and monstrosities of philosophers who do not reason but dream (*portenta et*

<sup>134</sup> Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.95 (the final sentences of the treatise): 'Here the conversation ended, and we parted, Velleius thinking Cotta's discourse to be the truer (*verior*), while I felt that that of Balbus approximated more nearly to a semblance of the truth (*mihi Balbi ad veritatis similitudinem videretur esse propensior*):'

<sup>135</sup> Momigliano 1984.



*miracula non disserentium philosophorum sed somniantium*). (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.18)

Velleius thus puts the main concern of the following conversation into words: how to determine what sources of knowledge of the divine deserve our trust? The Platonic and Stoic accounts are downgraded to the sphere of made-up stories or dreams, which shows that according to the Epicureans, these specific variants of the philosophical *theologia naturalis* are deemed as worthless as *theologia fabulosa*. In their stead, Velleius calls upon an idea that, according to him, was first expressed by Epicurus, that the notion of the existence of gods is to be based upon ‘the unanimous and abiding consensus of mankind’ (*ad unum omnium firma consensio*).<sup>136</sup> Hence, he rejects the idea that it has been introduced ‘by authority, custom or law’ (*instituto aliquo aut more aut lege*).<sup>137</sup> He refers to Epicurus’s theory of *prolepsis*, ‘a sort of preconceived mental picture of a thing, without which nothing can be understood or investigated or discussed’.<sup>138</sup> Rather than viewing either (the other types of) philosophy, or the polis, or myth as the basis of religious convictions, Velleius opts for a more fundamental notion, which we will encounter again when we discuss Dio Chrysostom’s contribution to the discourse. Of course, the question is what exactly the idea of *prolepsis* proves. As the academic Cotta remarks in book three, ‘the question is not, are there any people who think that the gods exist,—the question is, do the gods exist or do they not?’<sup>139</sup> From an Epicurean point of view, the correct usage of philosophy helps to retrieve these very early and pristine preconceptions of the gods by debunking unhelpful myths developed in later stages and by remedying our religious fears.

In book two, the Stoic representative Balbus defends the truth of myths by appealing to the rationality behind them, once they are interpreted allegorically with the help of some etymologizing. He also stresses the actual worship of mythical figures, which would imply the truth of their divinity. As for myths, he grants that ‘these stories and these beliefs are utterly foolish; they are stuffed with nonsense and absurdity of all sorts’.<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, this is precisely why Balbus deems the role of philosophy in explaining these absurdities fundamental: ‘Do you see therefore how from a true and valuable philosophy of nature (*a physicis*) has been evolved this imaginary and fanciful pantheon

136 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.44.

137 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.44.

138 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.43.

139 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.17.

140 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.70.

(*ad commenticios et fictos deos*)?<sup>141</sup> Keimpe Algra explains that the Stoic fascination for sifting through myths to find truth has everything to do with their belief in natural preconceptions of the divine that were available to the ancients: ‘the preconception of god was thought to be natural, acquired on the basis of ordinary experience, and thus in principle available to anyone, including those who had been responsible for constructing the religious tradition.’<sup>142</sup> According to Balbus in this section, however, the original knowledge of the divine became corrupted as people grew accustomed to the poetic and cultic display of divine dress, relationships, and emotions. Such a corruption is, as Algra points out, not at odds with Stoic providence, both because the gods granted reason itself but not its correct usage and because the only stable knowledge is the *epistēmē* of the Stoic sage.<sup>143</sup> According to the Stoic position, then, both civic and poetic religion should be purified with the help of philosophical *theologia*. Philosophical religion helps to uproot the evils of superstition and erroneous religious convictions so that the original natural philosophy may emerge.

Interestingly, the same demand made by Velleius to abandon conjecture and stick to proof is also made by Cotta in his reply to Balbus. Cotta responds: ‘you combat me with hearsay for your weapon, Balbus, but what I ask of you is proof (*Rumoribus ... mecum pugnas Balbe, ego autem a te rationes require*).’<sup>144</sup> Cotta is convinced that the Stoic attempt to blend the human and the divine, by interpreting myths allegorically, is a dangerous pursuit.<sup>145</sup> He therefore considers the Greek myths a threat to traditional Roman religious practice:

These and other similar fables (*fama*) have been culled from the ancient traditions of Greece; you are aware that we ought to combat them, so that religion may not be undermined (*ne perturbentur religiones*). Your school however not merely do not refute them, but actually confirm them by interpreting their respective meanings. (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.60)

Labelling these traditions ‘Greek’ implies that this manner of approaching the gods is not the proper Roman way. The role of philosophy, according to Cotta,

141 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.70.

142 Algra 2007, 25.

143 Algra 2007, 28, n. 74.

144 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.13.

145 Cf. Frede 2002, 111: ‘The gist of Cotta’s criticism is that the wedding of theology and physics that is typical for the Stoics is detrimental to both religion and natural philosophy.’

is to purify mythical religion by pinpointing its ridiculous excesses. Moreover, cultic religion may suffer under Stoic allegorizing because of the depersonalizing effect this method has on the gods. They are seen as representing virtues and qualities such as intelligence, faith (*fides*), hope, virtue, honour, victory, safety, concord: qualities that are obviously human, so Cotta reasons.<sup>146</sup> The Stoic confluence of philosophy and myth thus amounts to atheism.<sup>147</sup> At the same time, philosophy is in danger of being reduced to the level of poetry: 'These are fables of the poets (*poetarum*), whereas we aim at being philosophers (*philosophi*), who set down facts, not fictions (*rerum auctores, non fabularum*):'<sup>148</sup>

In other words, the Academic and the Stoic positions differ in the way in which they picture the relationship between two *theologiae*: either the philosophical approach is mostly in line with and can explain and purify the mythical (Stoics), or the philosophical approach ought to refrain from polishing myths and instead refute the inadequate and misleading poetical accounts of the gods (Academics). In a sense, however, both hope to strengthen civic religion by using philosophical religion to keep mythical religion in check.

The Academic position regarding philosophical and civic religion, however, is a complicated one, for while Cotta demands proof as a philosopher (and complains that the Stoics do not offer this), as a priest he counts wholeheartedly on the existence of gods.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, he actively defends ancestral traditions, acknowledging that he agrees with the thrust of Balbus's argument, namely 'that I ought to uphold the opinions (*opiniones*) about the immortal gods which have come down to us from our ancestors (*a maioribus accepimus*), and the rites and ceremonies and duties of religion (*sacra caerimonias religionisque*).'<sup>150</sup> He even sees these opinions as crucial for the foundation of the

146 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.61, cf. 3.63: 'the so-called gods are really properties of things, not divine persons at all.' In a similar vein, Plutarch (in *Dialogue on Love* 757B–C) even accused the Stoics of atheism because of their tendency to explain away the mythical gods as abstractions: 'You surely perceive the abyss of atheism that engulfs us if we list each [the Loeb translation includes the word 'several' here, probably by mistake] god (ἕκαστον τῶν θεῶν) on a roster of emotions, functions, and virtues.'

147 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.20: 'you intended to show what the gods are like, but you actually showed them to be non-existent (*nullos esse*).' Cf. at 3.60: 'but such a god is inconceivable!'

148 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.77.

149 See Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.15: 'As yet therefore, Balbus, so far as it depends on you I do not understand the divine existence (*non (...) intellego deos esse*); I believe in it, but the Stoics do not in the least explain it (*quos equidem credo esse, sed nihil docent Stoici*).'

150 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.5.

Roman state.<sup>151</sup> Even though these evidently ‘civic’ opinions are considered essential by the academics, as represented here by Cotta, he refrains from calling them knowledge. The civic and the philosophical approaches are said to represent radically distinct perspectives on the divine.<sup>152</sup> The sole basis for his civic religious opinions, Cotta argues, consists of the authority of ancestral tradition.<sup>153</sup> By contrast, from a philosophical perspective we ought to suspend our judgement on the existence and nature of the gods, given the lack of a rational explanation.

This tension, vividly dubbed ‘brain-balkanization’ by Paul Veyne, was in its turn subjected to Stoic polemic, as we shall see in the discussion of the social-religious usage of *pistis* in chapter 8 (see §8.3.4).<sup>154</sup> As with Scaevola, the *tripartita* may well have served to explain this complex Academic position, as Clifford Ando argued. In distinguishing three or more distinct manners of dealing with the gods, any conflicting views can be more easily accommodated.<sup>155</sup> As a result, Ando maintains that Roman understandings such as presented in the *theologia tripartita* ‘may have encouraged or simply allowed comparative study of religious practice.’<sup>156</sup> The *tripartita* as a structure implicitly woven into the discussions in Cicero’s *On the Nature of the Gods* thus testifies to an increasing awareness of the existence of a separate and inter-culturally diverse sphere of religion. As I will argue below (§2.4.2), such an awareness of the religious and how this may be approached and understood

---

151 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.5.

152 Adversely, the Stoics thought of civic religion as insufficient yet mostly harmless approximations of philosophical accounts of the gods. Cf. Inwood 2003a, 177: ‘Whereas the sceptics severed the link between the tradition, which they thought should be kept for practical reasons, and the truth, which they thought could not be established with any certainty, the Stoics took a different view (...) they believed the truth about gods and religion was in principle accessible and that traditional forms of cult and belief could at least be seen as approximations—however primitive and partial—of that truth.’

153 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.6: ‘You are a philosopher, and I ought to receive from you a proof of your religion, whereas I must believe the word of our ancestors even without proof (*a te enim philosopho rationem accipere debeo religionis, maioribus autem nostris etiam nulla ratione reddita credere*).’

154 Veyne 1983, 52: ‘une balkanisation des cerveaux’.

155 Ando 2010, 75: ‘What Cotta exemplified in his person is precisely the possibility for coexistence of a rigorous attention to reason on the one hand and a scrupulous regard for religion on the other—a coexistence that on my reading the tripartite theology was devised to explain.’ Cf. p. 69: ‘*On the nature of the gods* thus testifies in part to a profound unease. Cotta’s confidence in his beliefs continues unshakable and exists altogether to one side of his certainty that no claim to prove those beliefs has yet been redeemed.’

156 Ando 2010, 79.

differently within and across cultural borders is what drove Paul to describe his variant as ‘reasonable worship’.

### 2.3.5 *Dio Chrysostom: Quadripartite Theology in the Olympian Oration*

The main problem with recognizing a tripartite scheme of religious modes in Dio of Prusa’s famous oration 12, held on the occasion of the Olympics in AD 97, is the fourfold division he seems to prefer. Moreover, Dio is not consistent in his description of the fourth category. For our purposes here, I will evaluate Dio’s treatment of structure of the *theologia tripartita* and offer some thoughts on his specific additions to its content.

In section 39, Dio offers us a first structure. He presents two main sources for people’s conceptions of the divine, an innate and an acquired conception,<sup>157</sup> whereupon he further distinguishes three subdivisions within the second source that are strikingly congruent with our tripartite theology:

To resume, then: Of man’s belief in the deity and his assumption that there is a god (τῆς γὰρ περὶ τὸ θεῖον δόξης καὶ ὑπολήψεως) we were maintaining that the fountain-head, as we may say, or source, was that idea which is innate in all mankind (τὴν ἔμφυτον ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις ἐπίνοιαν) and comes into being as the result of the actual facts and the truth (ἐξ αὐτῶν γιγνομένην τῶν ἔργων καὶ τᾶληθοῦς), an idea that was not framed confusedly nor yet at random, but has been exceedingly potent and persistent (ἰσχυρὰν καὶ ἀέναον) since the beginning of time, and has arisen among all nations (παρὰ πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) and still remains, being, one may almost say, a common and general endowment of rational beings (σχεδὸν τι κοινήν καὶ δημοσίαν τοῦ λογικοῦ γένους). As the second source we designate the idea which has been acquired and indeed implanted in men’s souls through no other means than narrative accounts, myths, and customs (λόγοις τε καὶ μύθοις καὶ ἔθεσι). (Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.39)

The innate idea of the gods, presented here by Dio as a separate way of approaching the divine, stems from an age in which the ‘the earliest and most ancient men’ who ‘had grown up in his [i.e. the God’s] company and had remained close to him in every way’.<sup>158</sup> This is not dissimilar from the historiographical analysis offered by Varro, who also describes the initial uncor-

157 Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.44: Τριῶν δὴ προεκκειμένων γενέσεων τῆς δαιμονίου παρ’ ἀνθρώποις ὑπολήψεως.

158 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.28. Cf. also the notion of the ‘implanted word’ (Jas 1.21: τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον) in *James*, on which see Laws & Laws 2001, 82–84.

rupted, aniconic state of the Romans. Of particular interest is Dio's description of this initial phase in strikingly cognitive terms. The innate idea of the gods was common 'to the Greeks and Barbarians alike', innate in 'every creature endowed with reason (ἐν παντί τῷ λογικῷ), without the aid of human teachers or deceitful priests.<sup>159</sup> The people could not remain void of understanding (ἀξύνετοι), since they received discernment (σύνεσις) and reasoning power (λόγος), illuminated by natural phenomena and animals.<sup>160</sup> 'How, then, could they have remained ignorant (ἀγνώτες) and conceived no inkling of him who had sowed and planted and was now preserving and nourishing them?' he exhorts.<sup>161</sup>

In the lines following the section just quoted, Dio couples the final two categories of myths and customs with poets and legislators (40), which confirms the initial resemblance of the *theologia tripartita*, although the philosophers are kept out of sight, for now. Furthermore, the question arises as to how the first, inborn, universal idea of the existence of the gods relates to the later, acquired notion of them, implanted by rational deliberation (λόγος). To complicate things further, slightly later in his oration, Dio introduces what seems to be yet another category especially suited to his speech that circles around Pheidias's statue of Zeus: the category of visual, artistic representation of the gods (τὴν πλαστικὴν τε καὶ δημιουργικὴν τῶν περὶ τὰ θεῖα ἀγάλματα καὶ τὰς εἰκόνας). While explicitly naming this approach to the divine the fourth, not long after this same number is given to the philosopher, while assigning the numbers one, two, and three to the poets, lawgivers, and creative artists:

And furthermore, quite apart from that simple and earliest notion of the gods which develops in the hearts of all men along with their reasoning power (δίχα γε τῆς ἀπλῆς καὶ πρεσβυτάτης ἐννοίας περὶ θεῶν καὶ συγγενῶς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἅμα τῷ λόγῳ φυομένης), in addition to those three interpreters and teachers, the poets, the lawgivers, and creative artists, we must take on a fourth one, who is by no means indifferent nor believes himself unacquainted with the gods (οὐδαμῆ ῥάθυμον οὐδὲ ἀπίερος ἠγοούμενον ἔχειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν), I mean the philosopher (τὸν φιλόσοφον ἄνδρα), the one who by means of reason interprets and proclaims the divine nature (ἢ λόγῳ ἐξηγητὴν καὶ προφήτην τῆς ἀθανάτου φύσεως), most truly, perhaps, and most perfectly (ἀληθέστατον ἴσως καὶ τελειότατον). (Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.47)

159 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.27.

160 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.28.

161 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.29.

As we can see, Dio shares his appreciation for the philosophical religious endeavour with Varro. Unlike Varro, he recognizes the use of both poetry and artistry in describing, honouring, and imitating the gods, even though Pheidias, who functions as a character in almost half the speech, must go to great lengths to defend the necessity of images of the gods. In doing so, he aligns the art of sculpture with the art of poetry: the sculptor merely envisions and embodies the attributes of Zeus that Homer has even more aptly put into words.<sup>162</sup> By following yet making minor contributions of their own, artists are ‘the rivals as well as fellow-craftsmen of the poets’ (46). Pheidias scolds the barbarians for being unable to represent the gods in forms more appropriate than mountains, trees, or unshapen stones.<sup>163</sup> By choosing a human form, the sculptor chose the best form at hand and satisfies the human desire for nearness and physical adoration.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, he argues, an aniconic approach would not conjure up all the divine epithets which stimulate moral imitation of the divine virtues.<sup>165</sup> It is interesting to note that the alternative ‘looking only at the sky’ seems to be connected to the more intelligent men (60: ὁ νοῦν ἔχων), whereas the advantage of the statue of Zeus is that it can reach Greeks and barbarians (50), the many and inexperienced spectators (46: τοῖς πλείοσι καὶ ἀπειροτέροις θεαταῖς), and even the irrational brute (51: καὶ τὴν ἄλογον).

Apart from this relative appreciation of the poetic and the artistic, Dio elaborates upon Varro’s strict tripartite scheme and expands its categories in various ways. Taking their cue from Dio’s claim to carry out his performance with ‘philosophical precision’ (38; 43), a few scholars have tried to solve the puzzle of the changing categories.<sup>166</sup> According to Karl Reinhardt, Dio expands Varro’s tripartite division by adding a more basic, innate level, an *Urreligion*, effectively creating four categories.<sup>167</sup> By implication, Reinhardt seems to include the creative arts in the poetic approach, which would indeed serve the specific purpose and occasion of the oration. Somewhat similarly, Hans Dieter Betz presents the innate level, supplemented by poetry and the law, as the initial tripartite structure, expanded by Dio with representational art and philosophy.<sup>168</sup> Not entirely content with this explication, Andrew Sprague Becker

162 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.63–64, 78.

163 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.59–61.

164 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.60.

165 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.42. Cf. Betz 2004, 137, 139.

166 Becker 1993, 70: ‘The speech, while remaining an entertaining show piece, thus retains its coherence and its conceptual precision, a precision claimed by Dio himself for this speech.’ Cf. p. 69, n. 7.

167 Reinhardt 1953, 809–810.

168 Betz 2004, 133.

argues that Dio has upgraded and thereby equated the philosophical approach to the level of proto-religion, leaving only two main categories on the level of acquired knowledge of the gods: the civic and the artistic, comprising both the poets and the sculptors. Thus, he accounts for both the omission of philosophy in section 44 and the late and cursory treatment of the philosopher, who does not offer more assistance than to explicate what all humankind already knows deep within.<sup>169</sup>

Even if we grant that Becker's analysis explains some irregularities, it leaves others open. In fact, the equation of the inborn and the philosophical approach is in contradiction with section 47, quoted above, where the philosophical category is introduced as 'apart from' (δῖχα) the first notion of the gods. Still, I would agree with the strong connection between the philosophical *theologia* and the inborn notion: after all, both are associated with reasoning.<sup>170</sup> By adding the philosophical layer to his scheme lastly, Dio effectively closes the circle, a circle that started with the tripartite theology (39: *logos, mythos, and ethos*),<sup>171</sup> preceded by an innate level. The acquired level is elaborated on by first introducing poets and lawgivers (40), then adding visual artistry (44) and, last but certainly not least, philosophy (47):

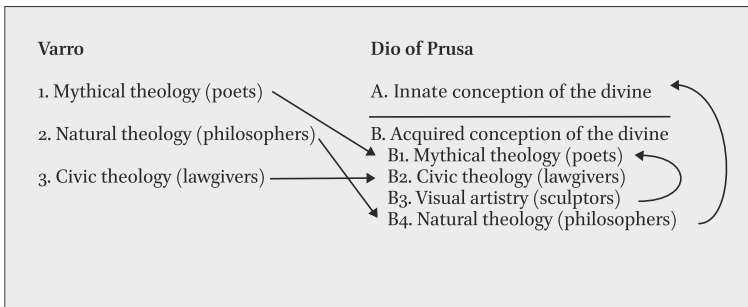


FIGURE 4 Varro's tripartite theology as compared to Dio of Prusa's

This rendition does not provide a neat solution to the different fourfold divisions in sections 44 and 47, yet it demonstrates how the theme of the *theologia tripartita* was taken up, applied, and rhetorically emulated for a specific occasion.

169 Becker 1993, 70.

170 In section 39, reasoning (λόγοις) seem to be connected to the philosophical approach, and in section 47, the inborn religious knowledge is said to come into existence together with reason (ἄμα τῷ λόγῳ φυομένης).

171 Pace Betz (2004, 133), who does not refer specifically to this passage and maintains that the innate level, the law, and poetry are conceived of as the initial tripartite structure.



### 2.3.6 *Plutarch: the Pistis of the Three Theologiae and Their Distinctive Value*

In the many writings of the second-century philosopher and biographer Plutarch, there are several shorter references to tripartite theology. In Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris* (*De Iside et Osiride*), the *tripartita* is referred to in passing, which suggests that he is referring to a known theme. A first passage concerns the nature of the divine as both good and evil. This opinion was 'handed down from writers on religion (ἐκ θεολόγων) and from lawgivers to poets and philosophers'.<sup>172</sup> Like Aetius, Plutarch emphasizes the three (or four) authorities not so much as 'users' of a specific *theologia*, as Varro did, but as the primordial teachers of the three traditions:<sup>173</sup>

Wherefore this very ancient opinion comes down from writers on religion and from lawgivers to poets and philosophers (παμπάλαιος αὕτη κάτεισιν ἐκ θεολόγων καὶ νομοθετῶν εἷς τε ποιητὰς καὶ φιλοσόφους δόξα); it can be traced to no source (τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀδέσποτον ἔχουσα), but it carried a strong and almost indelible conviction (τὴν δὲ πίστιν ἰσχυρὰν καὶ δυσεξάλειπτον), and is in circulation in many places among barbarians and Greeks alike, not only in story and tradition but also in rites and sacrifices (οὐκ ἐν λόγοις μόνον οὐδ' ἐν φήμαις, ἀλλ' ἐν τε τελεταῖς ἐν τε θυσίαις). (Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 369B)

Plutarch thus speaks of the ancient and hence untraceable nature of the general religious opinion. At the same time, even more interestingly, its strong persuasiveness (*pistis*) is brought to the fore: together the three sources produce a 'strong and almost indelible conviction'. Consequently, he argues, the teachings about the gods were widely disseminated among Greeks and barbarians: according to Plutarch, they were universally known. Moreover, Plutarch uses their double manifestation, 'not only in story and tradition, but also in rites and sacrifices', which again confirms that the *tripartita* has evolved from mere representations of the divine to descriptions of what we would call 'religion' in both thought and praxis.

172 Based solely on the syntax, it would perhaps be more natural to combine 'theologians' or 'writers on religion' (the modern connotations are indeed problematic) with lawgivers and poets with philosophers, yet from the perspective of the *theologia tripartita*, I follow the logic of the Loeb translation.

173 See also Lieberg 1973, 94, summarizing the contribution to the scholarly evaluation of the *tripartita* of Pépin 1958, 276–314, here esp. 291–293.

The introduction of the same work is more explicit about the relative value of the *theologiae*. The opening statement emphasized the main gift from the gods: ‘sensible people’ (τοὺς νοῦν ἔχοντας) should first and foremost ask for gaining ‘knowledge’ of the gods themselves (τῆς περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιστήμης), even if ‘of sense and intelligence (νοῦ δὲ καὶ φρονήσεως) He grants them only a share, inasmuch as these are His especial possessions and His sphere of activity’.<sup>174</sup> This is applied to everyone, Greeks and Egyptians alike. The author describes the ‘true Isis-devotee’ in particular as one who

when he has legitimately received (ὅταν νόμῳ παραλάβῃ)<sup>175</sup> what is set forth in the ceremonies (τὰ δεικνύμενα καὶ δρώμενα) connected with these gods, uses reason in investigating and in studying (λόγῳ ζητῶν καὶ φιλοσοφῶν) the truth contained therein. (Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 352C)

Here, it is possible to discern a layered use of religious faculties or experiences. The cultic experience—marked by *nomos* here, not indicating its ‘legitimacy’ but rather its civic origin—is subsequently enriched by philosophical enquiry. The mythical or narrative aspect of the myths that form the main part of this work is furthermore introduced by the following instruction:

If, then, you listen to the stories about the gods in this way, accepting them from those who interpret the story reverently and philosophically (παρὰ τῶν ἐξηγουμένων τὸν μῦθον ὁσίως καὶ φιλοσόφως), and if you always perform and observe the established rites of worship (τῶν ἱερῶν τὰ νενομισμένα), and believe that no sacrifice that you can offer, no deed that you may do (μήτε θύσειν μήτε ποιήσειν) will be more likely to find favour with the gods than your belief in their true nature (τοῦ δ’ ἀληθῆ δόξαν ἔχειν περὶ θεῶν), you may avoid superstition which is no less an evil than atheism (κακὸν ἀθεότητος δεισιδαιμονίαν). (Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 355C–D)

Apparently, not only cultic ceremony, but also myth is supposed to go hand in hand with philosophy for it to be beneficial. The civic cult is again denoted by the *nomos*-word group (a substantivized participle of the verb *nomizō*). Moreover, and in line with what we encountered in Plato (§2.3.2), sacrifice

<sup>174</sup> Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 351C–D.

<sup>175</sup> Alternative readings have ἄττ’ ἂν for ὅταν and παραβάλῃ for παραλάβῃ.

is 'perfected' by this Platonist as mental sacrifice, as 'having a true opinion (*doxa*) about the gods'. As for Plutarch's teachings on the extremes of atheism and superstition, on the golden mean of reasonable religion, and on the role of *pistis* therein, more will be said in chapter 4 (§4.3.5). For our purposes here, however, it is worth noting the link between the sacrificial cult and superstition. If we are allowed to extrapolate a bit on the basis of this final sentence, it seems that Plutarch links superstition to a less cognitive understanding of sacrifice.

Another locus in Plutarch's works where the tripartite theology resurfaces *obiter* is found in his *Dialogue on Love (Amatorius)*, where he discusses the topic of *erōs*:

Perhaps, my friend, our belief in all our notions (καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων), except those derived from the senses (ὅσα μὴ δι' αἰσθήσεως ἡμῖν εἰς ἔννοιαν ἦκει), comes originally from three sources: myth, law, and rational explanation (τὰ μὲν μύθῳ τὰ δὲ νόμῳ τὰ δὲ λόγῳ πίστιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔσχηκε); so it is undoubtedly the poets, the legislators, and thirdly the philosophers who have been our guides and teachers in what we think about the gods (τῆς δ' οὖν περὶ θεῶν δόξης). (Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 763C)

Again, the focus on the primacy and early contributions (ἐξ ἀρχῆς) of these three domains resurfaces. It shows that Plutarch also places the tripartite structure in the sphere of primitive humanity. Interestingly enough, here also all three categories brought *pistis*, conviction, to bear on everything except what was already known from the senses, particularly our opinions about the divine. *Pistis* is used here as a type of knowledge (paradigmatically related to *ennoia*), specifically knowledge about the gods, and knowledge derived from the three *theologiae*.<sup>176</sup>

In the same dialogue, Plutarch also emphasizes the differences of opinion between the poets, legislators, and philosophers when it comes to the nature and number of the gods. At least, this is what the father character points out, a character that in this dialogue represents the author himself at a younger

176 Gerd Schunack (1999, 318) also notes this interesting usage of *pistis*, yet interprets it as part of 'Plutarch's effort to eliminate the opposition or conflict between religion and science' ('Plutarchs Bestreben, einen Gegensatz oder Widerstreit von Religion und Wissenschaft aufzuheben'), which seems to be a pretty modern agenda. Instead, I would suggest the increasing usage of *pistis* as indicating a human-divine relationship is part of a wider development in Platonic epistemological discourse, whereby *pistis* is the most fitting term to bridge the sensibles-intelligibles gap (see my chapter 4 below).

age. He mentions the philosophers' aversion to poetic gods and their critique of the illogical guidelines for worship of the legislators, along with the other two's dissatisfaction with the philosophers' deification of abstractions (763C–D). The legislators and poets 'haven't the patience to listen to them, nor are they able to understand what is meant' (763D). In accordance with the theme of the dialogue, however, all three, with Hesiod, Plato, and Solon as their most famous mouthpieces, are said to be united in their acclaim for Erōs, the god of love (763E).

We can distinguish something of a pattern here, which has been rightly observed by Johannes Woyke:

Formally, the *theologia tripartita* is initially just about different knowledge-routes; however, the implicit duality of philosophy and legislation/mythology results from the judgmental distinction between the educated and the uneducated. (Woyke 2005, 421)<sup>177</sup>

According to Plutarch's father character, the main discord is between the legislators and poets on the one hand, and the philosophers on the other. There is therefore a duality within the tripartite structure of approaches to the divine, which is marked by their respective suitability for the uneducated multitude or the intellectual elite. A similar pattern was discernible in Varro and Dio: only a few people are able to grasp divine mysteries the philosophical way; poetry and law are concessions to the ordinary minds. By contrast, Cicero's Varro distinguishes between dangerous Greek myths and sacrosanct cultic Roman *religio*. Augustine, finally, also devotes a paragraph to pointing out how similar the mythical and the civic theology are, even as Varro wants to maintain the superiority of the state religion.<sup>178</sup> As we will see in the final sections, this distinction between the educated and uneducated is also addressed, and reversed, by Paul (§2.4.1).

Still, other references to the *tripartita* by Plutarch present us with a different division. In his treatise *On Superstition*, he criticizes superstitious persons, because they would not listen to philosophers or politicians in matters of religion. Instead, they believe artists:

<sup>177</sup> 'Formal geht es in der *Theologia tripartita* zwar zunächst einfach um unterschiedliche Erkenntniswege; jedoch ergibt sich die implizite Dualität von Philosophie und Gesetzgebung/Mythologie aus der wertenden Unterscheidung der Gebildeten von den Ungebildeten.' Cf. (with reference to Plutarch) Klauck 2007, 336–337: 'it is noteworthy that the triadic pattern can be overlaid by binary oppositions, when, for example, poets and legislators on the one side close ranks against philosophers on the other side.'

<sup>178</sup> Augustine, *City of God* 6.7.

Then again such persons give credence (πείθονται) to workers in metal, stone, or wax, who make their images of gods in the likeness of human beings (ἀνθρωπόμορφα τῶν θεῶν τὰ εἶδη ποιούσι), and they have such images fashioned, and dress them up, and worship them. But they hold in contempt philosophers and statesmen (φιλοσόφων δὲ καὶ πολιτικῶν ἀνδρῶν καταφρονούσιν), who try to prove that the majesty of God is associated with goodness, magnanimity, kindness, and solicitude. (Plutarch, *On Superstition* 167D–E)

Here, philosophical and civic religion stand in opposition to mythical religion. When we compare the connection between civic and philosophical religion to its relationship in the *Dialogue on Love*, the pattern previously discerned needs to be refined. The government, so it seems, can play different roles in educating the people about the gods. It can make use of mythical religion, promote superstition, and scorn philosophy, or it can help implement philosophical religion by reminding people of the goodness and ‘otherness’ of the divine.

Although Plutarch may be considered a mild Academic, or at least as a Platonist who regards the sceptical tendencies in Platonism as legitimate parts of Platonism, he is not as focused as Cicero’s Cotta on keeping civic and philosophical theology apart. Nor does he consider mythical theology a risky endeavour. Even though he does not go so far as the Stoics in mixing traditional and philosophical god-concepts,<sup>179</sup> the philosophical is allowed and even supposed to prevent common people from becoming superstitious. The key for Plutarch seems to lay in the beneficial assistance of philosophy, which keeps both other *theologiae* on track, as it were.

Mythical religion may in itself be able to play a relevant part. Lawgivers could make use of the superstition inherent to the people’s mythical theology to good ends. In times of radical reform, the people may be allowed to believe incredible stories to encourage their sense of allegiance to the gods and state. This, at least, is the strategy Plutarch ascribes to Numa in his biography of this legendary second king of Rome:

By such training and schooling in religious matters (παιδαγωγίας πρὸς τὸ θεῖον) the city became so tractable, and stood in such awe of Numa’s

---

179 Cf. Brenk 2005, 41: ‘Reinhard Feldmeier has shown how, in contrast to Seneca and Epictetos, who also are interested in one’s relation to God, Plutarch’s philosophy was closely tied to traditional forms of religion and cult. He did not want religious philosophy to substitute for traditional religion, and in this sense was a pathfinder in uniting religion and ancient philosophy, the synthesis which is so well-exemplified by Christianity.’ The reference is to Feldmeier 1998.

power, that they accepted his stories, though fabulously strange, and thought nothing incredible or impossible which he wished them to believe or do (καὶ νομίζειν μηδὲν ἄπιστον εἶναι μηδὲ ἀμήχανον ἐκείνου βουληθέντος). (Plutarch, *Numa* 15.1)

Fabulous stories about the gods, so it seems, were permissible as a pedagogical tool in Numa's days of reform. Even though Plutarch seems to endorse this strategy, to 'fire up the people's credulity by injecting into them the elements of fear of punishment and hope for the seemingly impossible' (as Hans Dieter Betz frames it),<sup>180</sup> this is only part of his evaluation of Numa's religious policy. Just as Varro did before, Plutarch praises Rome's aniconic religion prior to the days of Numa. Because Numa was so close with Pythagoras (*Numa* 8.4: Πυθαγόρα συγγεγονότος), he understood that the first principle 'was only discernible by the mind (8.7: νοητὸν ὑπελάμβανεν)'. And thus,

Numa forbade the Romans to revere an image of God which had the form of man or beast (ἀνθρωποειδῆ καὶ ζώομορφον εἰκόνα θεοῦ). Nor was there among them in this earlier time any painted or graven likeness of Deity (γραφτὸν οὔτε πλαστὸν εἶδος θεοῦ), but while for the first hundred and seventy years they were continually building temples and establishing sacred shrines, they made no statues in bodily form for them, convinced that it was impious to liken higher things to lower, and that it was impossible to apprehend Deity except by the intellect (ἄλλως ἢ νοήσει). Their sacrifices, too, were altogether appropriate to the Pythagorean worship; for most of them involved no bloodshed, but were made with flour, drink-offerings, and the least costly gifts. (Plutarch, *Numa* 8.7–8)

Based on this favourable description of Numa's aniconic policy, it seems that Plutarch's critique of mythical theology was particularly concerned with visual imagery of the gods.<sup>181</sup> The philosophical idea that the divine can only be known intellectually not only leads to restrictions regarding the use of images but also implies restrictions on cultic sacrifices. This connection will

180 Betz 2007, 51, cf. p. 52: 'Plutarch's sense for social pragmatism', and p. 54: 'this kind of religious credulity is approved in the sense that it is beneficial to use it politically for the control of the uneducated and volatile masses.'

181 Plutarch's critique of images is limited to its tendency to mislead the uneducated into thinking that they are more than symbolic; he does not dismiss the use of images of the gods altogether. Cf. Van Nuffelen 2011, 69, n. 130.

be important for my discussion of the implications of Paul's focus on intellectual reform for his position in sacrificial cult.

Unlike his critical take on visual images of the gods, and unlike Cotta, Plutarch does not regard mythical narratives or poetry as damaging to the human conception of the divine. In his treatise on the question of how to study poetry, he adopts a two-sided approach:

by setting against cheap and harmful poems the sayings and maxims of statesmen and men of repute, we were inducing a revolt and revulsion of faith (ἀφιστάναι καὶ ἀνακρούειν τὴν πίστιν) from such poetry, so whenever we find any edifying sentiment neatly expressed in the poets we ought to foster and amplify it by means of proofs and testimonies from the philosophers (ἐκτρέφειν χρὴ καὶ αὔξειν ἀποδείξεσι καὶ μαρτυρίαις φιλοσόφοις), at the same time crediting these with the discovery. For this is right and useful, and our faith gains an added strength and dignity (ἰσχὺν τῆς πίστεως καὶ ἀξίωμα προσλαμβάνουσῆς) whenever the doctrines of Pythagoras and of Plato are in agreement with what is spoken on the stage or sung to the lyre or studied at school. (Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* 35F)

The *pistis*, the faith people have in poetry, should thus either be tempered, in this case by civic wisdom, or increased 'by means of proofs and testimonies from the philosophers'. Hence, philosophy can strengthen the conviction (*pistis*) people already developed based on mythical religion. This is in accordance with Plutarch's description of the role of philosophy in *On Isis and Osiris*, where it was used to refine or enrich both mythical and civic religion.

To sum up, in Plutarch we encounter the discourse of the *theologia tripartita* in various forms. All approaches are said to be ancient and possess a certain degree of persuasiveness (*pistis*). Yet poets are often, though not always, misleading the people, whereas philosophy offers the best understanding for the intelligent few. Legislators or politicians can be grouped with either one of these, depending on the quality of their rule. In particular the iconic aspect of mythical religion is reviewed critically by Plutarch, whereas poetry may be very useful for its pedagogical potential as long as it is aligned with the philosophical. When it comes to the question of granting some moderate allowance to the people's mythical inclinations, Plutarch maintains that society flourishes when the rulers implement philosophical teachings and vice versa. This is the same intermediate and ambivalent position that civic theology has in Varro's tripartite scheme.

### 2.3.7 *Maximus of Tyre: a Rehabilitation of the Poets as Philosophers in Disguise*

Even though, to my knowledge, the late second-century Platonist philosopher and rhetorician Maximus of Tyre is never mentioned in the context of the *tripartita*, his orations show clear traces of this discourse. As such, his usage is a good example of how the technical model had developed into a commonplace topos in which different religious manifestations were compared, related, and criticized. Moreover, Maximus's usage of *pistis* in the context of these comparisons is abundant, indicating an increase in *pistis* vocabulary in this discourse.

Just as Varro did centuries earlier, he expresses the human need for statues of the gods, even though 'people whose memories are strong, and who can reach straight out for the heavens with their souls and encounter the divine, may perhaps have no need of images. But this is a category ill-represented among men.'<sup>182</sup> As a guide to the masses, 'legislators invented their own kind of images for men, as if for a class of children.'<sup>183</sup> Once again, popular worship and civic religion are presented as concessions to the majority of people.

Apart from the role of the legislators, the role of poets and philosophers regarding the divine is explicitly thematized in another of his essays. According to Maximus, the poets only told unlikely stories; the characters Odysseus meets are 'incredible (ἄπιστα), down to the last detail'.<sup>184</sup> Amidst these untrustworthy elements, however, poets like Homer function as authorities, offering insight and truth amidst fables. Maximus reports that it was on account of Homer that Alexander the Great trusted the words of the god Ammon that he was his son: he 'believed the god because of what Homer says (πιστεῦσαι τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τὴν Ὀμήρου φήμην) when he calls him "father of gods and men".'<sup>185</sup> Furthermore in the early days, the philosophers used myth themselves, but this had the disadvantage of confusing truth and untruth.<sup>186</sup> Yet, out of mistrust (*apistia*), 'they started to examine the old stories (τοὺς μύθους διερευνωμένη), until unable to endure their subtle indirectness any longer, they stripped and

182 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 2.2.

183 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 2.2.

184 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 16.6.

185 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 41.1.

186 Cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 18.5: 'Yet Socrates himself, the lover of wisdom, the conqueror of poverty, the enemy of pleasure, the friend of truth, can fill his conversations with such slippery and dangerous stories that Homer's allegories seem quite blameless by comparison!'



unwrapped philosophy from its old finery and converted it into bare doctrine.<sup>187</sup>

While the philosophers are thus criticized, Maximus rehabilitates the poets. He argues that the poets invented the device of myth as a golden mean between riddles and rational doctrines about the gods in order to educate the soul:

It was their realization of this truth that led the poets to invent the device by which they play on the soul in their discussions of the gods: namely, the use of myths, that are less clear than explicit doctrine, yet more lucid than riddles, and occupy the middle ground between rational knowledge and ignorance. Trusted (πιστευομένους) because of the pleasure they give, yet mistrusted (ἀπιστουμένους) because of their paradoxical content, they guide the soul to search for the truth (χειραγωγούντας τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπὶ τὸ ζητεῖν τὰ ὄντα) and to investigate more deeply. What has for the most part gone unnoticed is that these men, with their cunning designs on our attention, are really philosophers. (Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 4.6)<sup>188</sup>

In contrast to the riddles of philosophers, their abstract doctrines, or even the plausible myths some philosophers told, Maximus praises the poets for offering stories that are enticing and therefore trusted, but also too strange to be true and trusted at face value.<sup>189</sup> This double-edged popular attitude to myth, as both trusted and mistrusted, both deserving *pistis* and discouraging it, allows for it to serve as this middle ground, offering the people an accessible entrance to the divine.

Nevertheless, philosophy is not rejected by Maximus as an approach to the divine. It is only when it removes all connections to myth that it loses all effectiveness. That is why of all philosophical schools, the Epicureans are the main target of Maximus's polemics: their rejection of divine providence rendered the use of poetical allegory ineffectual in describing the gods. He thus ironically claims that he would rather trust Homer than Epicurus about Zeus (ἔγωγε πιστεύω μᾶλλον Ὀμήρω περὶ Διός).<sup>190</sup> The incredibility generally ascribed to

187 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 4.3.

188 Citations of Maximus of Tyre's orations in this chapter are based on the edition of the Greek text (1994) and translation (1997) by Michael Trapp.

189 Cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 18.5: 'simultaneously mistrusting and reveling in the licence proper to myth (ἀπιστῶν ὁμοῦ καὶ χαίρων τῇ τῆς μυθολογίας ἐξουσίᾳ).'

190 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 4.8, cf. 6.4 about Homer: 'a venerable authority who surely deserves our credence (παλαιὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ ἀξιόχρεως δῆπου πιστεύεσθαι).'

myth is thus transferred to Epicurean doctrine of divine tranquillity. As Maximus exclaims, ‘What an incredible myth (ὦ μύθων ἀπίστων)!’<sup>191</sup>

Whereas the three *theologiae* are thus not treated as a triad by Maximus, he explicitly addresses the topos of philosophy and poetry as rivals in speaking about the divine. His solution is to reconcile their approaches. In the end, and ideally, Maximus maintains that poets and philosophers have the same ‘art’ (τέχνη) and, hence, are virtually the same:

So do not ask whether it is the poets or the philosophers who have produced the better account of the gods. Call a truce and arrange a ceasefire between these pursuits, for it is in fact about just the one single and coherent art that you are enquiring. If you use the name ‘poet’ you are also saying ‘philosopher’; if you use the name ‘philosopher’ you are also saying ‘poet’. (Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 4.7)

The accounts about the gods by philosophers and poets are thus not merely in harmony, but rather merged into one approach.

### 2.3.8 *Summary: the Theologia Tripartita as Widely Known, Adaptable, Self-Critical Discourse*

In this section as a whole, we have seen how the threefold categorization of poetic, civic, and philosophical religion surfaces in diverse forms across genres, decades, and school boundaries. It is now possible to reaffirm the judgement of the scholar who foregrounded the *theologia tripartita* in scholarly research, Godo Lieberg: the *tripartita* represents not just a specific philosophical doctrine, but a widely used and accepted figure meant to bring both order and self-critical potential to the various religious manifestations of the ancient world.<sup>192</sup>

The increase in the usage of the tripartite theology discourse in the Hellenistic-Roman period is evident from the sources I discussed, and often noticed as such. Keimpe Algra imputes this development to the broadening

<sup>191</sup> Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 4.9.

<sup>192</sup> See Lieberg 1973, 107: ‘Erst so dürfte evident werden, daß man die Dreiteilung nicht als Doktrin eines bestimmten griechischen Denkers oder einer bestimmten philosophischen Schule, die in der Folge von späteren Denkern oder Schulen übernommen und abgewandelt worden wäre, sondern als universale Denkform verstehen muß, mit deren Hilfe mindestens seit der Zeit der hellenistischen Philosophie das antike Denken die durch Gesetz, Mythos und Spekulation vermittelte religiöse Wirklichkeit in ihrer Vielschichtigkeit und Verschiedenartigkeit besser zu erfassen suchte.’

audience for philosophers in this period to every educated citizen, and to the changing nature of philosophy as an encompassing ‘way of life’ which inevitably competed with more traditional religious practices.<sup>193</sup>

Another conclusion I would draw from this discussion of the *tripartita* is that its function, notwithstanding its diverse treatment, is not only descriptive but also evaluative, not only accommodating but also critical. The model itself appears to raise questions about how the different *theologiae* are to be balanced, related, or prioritized in religious thought and practice. Thus, the *theologia tripartita* offers an important tool which increases the self-conscious and self-critical potential of ancient religious traditions. One important insight, shared across different schools and traditions, is that the philosophical approach serves an important role in correcting or purifying the excesses of mythical and cultic religion.

The question I would like to turn to in the next section is how this evaluative tool may have served the Pauline movement. Paul of Tarsus was an important figure in the early development of what turned out to be an influential new religious movement. How can we relate his thought to the scheme of tripartite religion based on the epistolary documentation of his life and mission? In what ways can the Pauline writings be seen as partaking in, contributing to, and reconfiguring the discourse?

#### 2.4 Faith as a Indication of Philosophical Religion in Paul’s Letters

This section offers a first step in exploring the extent to which the first-order approach to religion that is the *theologia tripartita* can shed new light on the Pauline project. What type of ‘theology’ in the ancient sense of the word would Paul endorse, and which types of ‘theology’ did he reject? Did he merely reject the other types, or did he also reimagine and reconfigure them? How did he define his own project amidst known religious practices of the Graeco-Roman world? And what role does *pistis* play in these definitions?

In this section, I review a number of passages in which Paul appears to partake in the discourse of different types of religion. I argue that by on the one hand rebuking the mythical and civic religious practices of his day (§2.4.1) and on the other by adapting mythical and civic religious vocabulary as metaphors (§2.4.2 and §2.4.3), Paul presents his own project as a philosophical type of religion. *Romans* 12.1–3 especially will recur multiple times as a crucial text in which the apostle defines the type of religion he proclaims. Central

---

193 Algra 2007, 8–9. On philosophy as a way of life, see §6.3.2 *infra*.

to this philosophical religion is an ethical transformation of the ‘debased’ *nous* (§2.4.4). Furthermore, *pistis* vocabulary is shown to be ‘at home’ in this new philosophical-religious self-definition (§2.4.3 and §2.4.5). Particularly, from the perspective of the ‘tripartite theology’ discourse, the expression of a ‘measure of faith’ (Rom 12.3: μέτρον πίστεως) can be understood as an objective, philosophical standard for communal, ethical conduct (§2.4.5).

#### 2.4.1 *Debased Minds (Rom 1.28): Paul’s Criticism of Mythical and Civic Religion*

The one place in the Pauline corpus where the apostle explicitly addresses the pagan worship of pagan gods per se is in the first chapter of *Romans*. After briefly and somewhat enigmatically introducing his main message for both Jew and Greek as one in which ‘the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith’ (Rom 1.16–17),<sup>194</sup> Paul begins his first main argument by describing the lack of justice of both pagans and Jews in the eyes of God.<sup>195</sup> An important characteristic of this unrighteousness is the worship of created beings (Rom 1.25) and images of created beings (Rom 1.23) as gods.

The first part of this argument (Rom 1.18–32) has often been interpreted as Paul’s either aptly striking or awfully exaggerated depiction of the *condition humaine*, referring back to the fall of Adam and Eve.<sup>196</sup> The NRSV heading, for example, reads ‘The Guilt of Humankind’. As Stanley Stowers has argued, however, such a reading betrays individual-universal anthropological concerns whereas Paul can better be understood as making a collective historical analysis of the condition of the gentiles.<sup>197</sup> Stowers points out that Paul does

194 See on this text §3.4.4 *infra*.

195 I take *Romans* 1.18, ‘For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness (ἐπι πᾶσαν ἀσεβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων) of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth’, to address the ungodliness and unrighteousness of the gentiles (as listed in 1.29). Cf., for the view that this section of the letter is put in the mouth of a Christian-Jewish opponent, Campbell 2013. If we would adopt this scenario, my argument would be that Paul first gives an outline of another’s contribution to the discourse of ‘approaches to the divine’, and then presents his own solution as the most adequate one.

196 See e.g. Hooker 1960, esp. 300–303; Bryan 2000, 78 (‘in declaring that humanity was not ignorant (...) Paul has in mind (...) *Genesis* 1 to 3 (...) here the reminiscence is indirect and allusive, but, in my view, inescapable’), cf. also p. 83; Linebaugh 2013a, 111–115. It is also a conclusion of the volume completely dedicated to *Romans* 1.18–3.20 by Richard Bell (1998, 26): ‘Is he referring to the “fall of Adam”, the “fall of Israel” or the “fall of every generation”? I believe he is referring to all three.’ The judgement that Paul is heavily exaggerating is expressed by Sanders 1983, 125; Räisänen 1980, 301–302.

197 For an extensive overview of relevant texts and a more elaborate argumentation, see Stowers 1994, 85–100.

not refer to Adam here,<sup>198</sup> but rather places himself within a genre of narratives that describe the decline of civilization and virtue as a gradual, historical development. These narratives, handed down by both Hellenistic-Jewish and pagan authors, usually presume a primitive Golden Age in which humanity lives in harmony with each other and with the gods. Rather than claiming one or more specific parallels with Paul's account, Stowers speaks of 'broadly shared cultural knowledge manifested in particular narratives'.<sup>199</sup>

I agree with Stowers here, yet based on the actual Golden Age stories discussed extensively in the next chapter, I think more can be said about the specific manner in which Paul both makes use of these narratives and reconfigures them.<sup>200</sup> More explicitly, George van Kooten has also emphasized the relevance of these narratives, insofar as they had been developed by Varro and Plutarch about an original aniconic and even monotheistic religion which deteriorated into the excesses of image-worship in the polytheism of their days.<sup>201</sup> Based on the discourse presented in this chapter, I will show how such stories on the prehistory of religion are related to the theme of tripartite theology and, in the next chapter, to the discourse of Golden Age narratives as well. In both discourses, *pistis* terminology is involved.

Another related (and contentious) issue is whether or not Paul is subscribing to some sort of 'natural theology' in *Romans* 1 and 2 (particularly Rom 1.19–21 and Rom 2.14)—a modern technical term to be distinguished from the ancient *theologia naturalis* that was part of the ancient *tripartita* discourse. The question is whether knowledge of the divine can be derived from the cosmos or creation itself (natural theology), or whether this type of knowledge always presupposes revelation. Following Karl Barth, many commentators have argued against reading any kind of natural theology in *Romans* chapters 1 and 2.<sup>202</sup> The issue at hand is whether these judgements reflect an ancient

198 See also Fitzmyer 1993, 274: 'The alleged echoes of the Adam stories in Genesis are simply nonexistent'. Pace Dunn 1988a, 53.

199 Stowers 1994, 90.

200 In chapter 3 *infra*, I argue for a reading of Paul's *dikē* language in light of these Golden Age stories.

201 Van Kooten 2007. Cf. also Van Kooten 2008, 343–356.

202 E.g. Barrett 1991, 35 ('It is not Paul's intention in this and the following verses to establish a natural theology') and Cranfield 1975, 116 ('The result of God's self-manifestation in his creation is not a natural knowledge of God on men's part independent of God's self-revelation in his Word, a valid though limited knowledge, but simply the excuselessness of men in their ignorance').

or a more modern perspective on the issue.<sup>203</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer locates the presumptions of this debate in the Enlightenment distinction between faith and reason: because reason was extolled as the only entrance to knowledge of the world, ‘some commentators have subconsciously reacted by denying the capability of the human mind to attain some knowledge of God.’<sup>204</sup>

In this heavily polarized and theologized debate there is no lack of knowledge on either side of contemporary Hellenistic or Jewish-Hellenistic source material in which natural theology is obviously presupposed (most famously, *Wisdom* 13). However, the (mostly Lutheran and Barthian) sceptics of finding such a view in Paul choose to enlarge the divide between Paul and his intellectual surroundings.<sup>205</sup> According to such interpretations, *Galatians* 4.8–9 (‘Formerly, when you did not know God (...) but now that you have come to know God’) and *1 Thessalonians* 4.5 (‘like the gentiles who do not know God’) are taken as evidence that a pagan has no knowledge of God whatsoever.<sup>206</sup> These texts, however, are not conclusive when it comes to the status of all pagans: they can just as easily refer to particular groups of gentiles or at least leave the possibility open of an exception that proves the rule (as *Rom* 2.14 suggests; see §3.4.2 below).

Douglas Campbell argues that Paul could not have endorsed the natural theology he set out in *Romans* 1.19–20 (but voiced the reasoning of an opponent in this passage) as that would contradict his views elsewhere:

That salvation takes place in this fashion, hence not in terms of the divine initiative—perhaps covenantal—or even a divine response to

---

203 Cf. the critique in Barr 1994, 43: ‘first, they give the impression of confessional assertions rather than exegetically backed interpretations, and secondly, even taken as exegetical interpretations, they are logically inadequate, in that they do not exclude natural theology but only certain limited and partial forms of it or interpretations of it.’

204 Fitzmyer 1993, 274.

205 Richard Bell’s approach is illustrative. He spends 20 pages reviewing Greek philosophy and Hellenistic Judaism as possibly influential, only to conclude ‘that there is no clear evidence for a direct influence of Greek philosophical works on Paul’s argument (...) Nor indeed do I believe that very Hellenised authors like Philo had direct influence upon Paul (...) He was educated in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel’ (Bell 1998 at 82). See also Hultgren 2011, 91: ‘When Paul says that “what can be known about God” is plain to all, he does not go so far as to affirm that a person can know God through the observation of nature and/or unaided reason alone, a view that in fact existed in both Jewish and non-Jewish traditions in his day (...) Paul does not think in that way, but affirms a general revelation (rather than a natural theology).’ Cf. also Barrett 1991, 40; Linebaugh 2013a, 109–111.

206 Bell 1998, 98.

Jewish requests and/or earlier patriarchal commitments, is problematic, whether in terms of a wider comparison with Paul or with his Jewish backdrop. (Campbell 1999, 238)

He specifically refers to Paul's otherwise sceptical view of human wisdom (1 Cor 1.18–29) and human nature (Rom 7.7–25).<sup>207</sup> Instead, I would rather read the passage from 1 *Corinthians* as partaking in an anti-Sophistic discourse (see §5.4.2 below). Yet more to the point here, a collective-historical reading of *Romans* 1 only claims that there has been a Golden Age in which the pagans who then lived knew God. This reading leaves the matter of pagans in Paul's own day open to discussion.<sup>208</sup> It thereby offers a compromise which opens up the possibility to do justice to Paul's cultural embeddedness (by including a Golden Age of innate knowledge of God) and to his distinctiveness at the same time (by denying the present possibility of such knowledge without divine help). Furthermore, if we agree with the common view that an important aim behind *Romans* is to address tensions between Jewish and non-Jewish community members, it makes perfect sense to refer to a shared monotheism at the dawn of civilization.<sup>209</sup>

Both these discussions on the general interpretative frame of *Romans* 1.18–32 are enriched by comparing the text with the basic structure and more specific applications of the *theologia tripartita*. In the following paragraphs, I will note some interesting points of convergence and divergence.

Firstly, our sources for the tripartite theology consistently comprise a reference to the dawn of humanity and sometimes include even more specific historical analyses of the rise and fall of piety in an early human stage. Plutarch speaks of the time 'from the beginning'; Varro praises the rule of king Numa; Dio Chrysostom refers to the earliest and most ancient men who were not indifferent to the gods (12.27).<sup>210</sup> In Paul, the phrase 'ever since the creation

207 Campbell 1999, 238. Cf. also Gathercole 2002b, 38: 'This [i.e. the Stoic concept of natural law] would be a notion quite alien to one whose gospel destroyed the wisdom of the wise.'

208 That some kind of natural theology can be found in Paul is upheld by i.a. Fitzmyer 1993, 274; Van Kooten 2007, 634–636; Martens 1994a, 59 ('Paul has, therefore, implicitly recognized that knowledge of God could have come through nature, and, it is true, to some extent acknowledged a law of nature, or (better stated) an order in nature. Its time, however, has passed: reason dissolved into perversion.')

209 This argument is developed in Van Kooten 2007. For the social aims of the letter, cf. Esler 2003, 26; Thompson 2011, 43.

210 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.27: οὐκ ἐὼντα κατανοστήσαι καὶ ἀμελήσαι τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους καὶ παλαιστάτους. Other references: see §2.3.1 and §2.3.5 above.

of the world' (1.20: ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου) also betrays a historical setting, with the preposition taken in a temporal way rather than denoting causal origin.<sup>211</sup> We can also point to the consistent use of the indicative aorist in verses 19b–31, after which he concludes in verse 32 with the result, the state of present-day wickedness in action and assent. Even though these grammatical clues are not conclusive *ipso facto*, they nevertheless offer indications that this text offers a bird's-eye view of primitive human history. Together with the convergence with contemporary Graeco-Roman diagnoses of gradual deterioration after a golden, primitive age, they present us with strong evidence that Paul (or whoever's voice Paul is mimicking) is in fact joining in this discourse of historical meta-narrative.

The first phase of humanity Paul describes, in which knowledge of God was readily available, reminds us of the innate knowledge Dio Chrysostom ascribes to the first humans who lived near the gods. Both authors describe these events in a historiographical-collective manner, which is in accordance with Stowers's position, yet both also offer anthropological reflections relevant to the present on the basis of this historical analysis. For Dio, this is a positive innate knowledge of the gods in all humans, for Paul just as in *Wisdom*, a foolishness regarding the divine combined with moral deprivation common to all pagans in general, resulting in their inexcusability.

Such a phase of open knowledge of God is also in accordance with my preferred exegesis of *Romans* 2.14 (for a more elaborate exegesis of this passage, see §3.4.2 below). This notoriously challenging verse brings the real or hypothetical possibility to the attention of pagans or gentile Christians who live by the law (ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν). If every single person would be subject to the diagnosis of *Romans* 1.18–32 individually, without exception, this verse does indeed require some exegetical artistry, such as assuming that these pagans are followers of Christ (who do not have the law by nature or birth right) or that this is a mere rhetorical possibility. If we interpret *Romans* 1.18–32 in a historical-collective fashion, it may be at least theoretically possible for a present-day individual to do well according to the knowledge of the divine that once was part of his people's historical legacy. This solution also corresponds with the related discourse of internal and natural law, a discourse I will discuss in the next chapter (on the Graeco-Roman discourse, see §3.3.4 and §3.3.5; on its application to Rom 2.13–16, see §3.4.2).

The second similarity between this passage and the *tripartita* texts we reviewed above is the way in which Paul echoes a widely shared caution or

211 On the temporal use of ἀπὸ in this verse, see Fitzmyer 1993, 280.



outright criticism of the poetic representations of the divine, i.e. of mythical theology. Paul's critique of idolatry is regularly interpreted against the background of the Hebrew Bible's rejection of idolatry and mockery of idols in second temple literature.<sup>212</sup> Already in the Hebrew Bible, many texts ridicule the lifelessness, powerlessness, and manmade status of idols.<sup>213</sup> Second temple texts such as *Wisdom* expanded on these older prohibitions of idolatry by offering rationalizations of how humans came to make and worship statues (e.g. out of grief over a lost love, adoration for a ruler, yearning for profit), which made it easier to destroy them.<sup>214</sup> Unlike these texts, however, Paul's account does not speak so much of a violation of the law or the lifelessness of statues, nor does it offer further rational explanations for idol worship; he simply deems the worship of images folly (v. 22).

Deeming the worship of images folly would in itself ring a familiar bell with Paul's pagan audience. But his formulation of what went wrong in the 'religious development' of pagans is more interesting than that: 'they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being (ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνας φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου) or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.'<sup>215</sup> The pagan idols do not even represent God; they are made in the image, the likeness, of man, who is according to *Genesis* made in God's own image. Idols are thus twice removed from God. Instead, God's power and nature are to be known through 'the things he has made' (1.20: τοῖς ποιήμασιν), which are better representations. The *tripartita* discourse offers a highly relevant parallel here, since it introduces distinctions between correct and incorrect usage of religious imagery, between images mirroring the divine and images mirroring what is only human.

A brief review of what we have seen thus far concerning mythical theology is helpful here. To Plato, all artistic representations were by their nature concerned with that which seems, with imitation of a phantasm (φαντάσματος μίμησις) rather than imitation of the truth (ἀληθείας μίμησις), of that which

212 See e.g. Dunn 1988b, 61–62. For a history of interpretation and contextualization of this verse, see Ferguson 2011, 443–449. In this article, Ferguson points out that we need not look to Egypt to find instances of birds, beasts, and reptiles, but that all three are part of the contemporary iconography of Zeus. His analysis stopped there, whereas I choose to contextualize the verse within pagan *criticism* of representations of the divine.

213 For an overview, see Bergmann 2006, 208–210.

214 Bergmann 2006, 212.

215 *Romans* 1.23. Cf. also *Wisdom* 13.10 (ἀπεικάσματα ζώων), 13.13 (εἰκόνι ἀνθρώπου), 13.16 (ἔστιν εἰκών).

is.<sup>216</sup> As we have seen, Varro viewed the introduction of representations of the divine by ‘the ancients’ as an understandable development, even if its all-too-human interpretation was a corruption in the early stages of Roman history for which the poets are to blame. Human images of the gods were meant to convey their rational nature, not their emotional excesses. Cicero mocks Homer’s and Hesiod’s anthropomorphic gods, and Plutarch describes the philosophers’ criticism of their all-too-human nature. Although Dio’s speech vindicates Pheidias’s sculpture of Zeus, he introduces the issue as one not without importance or danger, and he is critical of simulacra of gods from ancient times whom he describes as untrustworthy and not stimulating to the mind (οὐ πάνυ τούτοις οὔτε πιστεύοντες οὔτε προσέχοντες τὸν νοῦν).<sup>217</sup> Furthermore, even as Dio criticizes the aniconic worship of the sky, he seems to suggest that people need an adequate *nous* or *logos* in order for these aspects of creation to inspire the correct worship and morality.<sup>218</sup>

All in all, there seems to be a philosophical consensus on good and a bad usage of images in worship: representations needed to be representations of the divine, not representations of human weakness. Paul conforms with this discourse by not criticizing representation of the divine per se (as we will see in §2.4.3 and in chapter 6, human beings could represent or imitate divine glory), but rather criticizing the human (or even bestial) likeness in which those representations were made. In rejecting such representational art, he went further than most participants in this discourse.<sup>219</sup> Perhaps he comes closest to Plato’s own stance, since according to Paul, all idols are images (artistic representations) of images (human beings) of God. Plato and Paul would agree that such poetic representations in the image of man do damage to the rational part of the soul.

That brings us to a third point of overlap, namely that there is a connection between the rational faculty and the gods as its object. This point of overlap between Paul and pagan sources is not always recognized and is at times even

216 Plato, *Republic* 598b. In the previous sections the example of the creation of a couch is used to illustrate that in fact, artists only offer creations of the third order, for the painter of a couch imitates the couch maker’s couch, who in turn imitates the divine idea of a couch.

217 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.53.

218 See the passages referred to above (§2.3.5), and see also Betz 2004, 139: ‘By comparison, non-iconic worship of the deity by looking only at the open sky appears reductionist in that it is limited to specifically gifted and philosophically trained individuals.’

219 Cf. Rowe 2005, 299: ‘Paul’s (...) critique of pagan εἰκόνας is indeed deeply and resolutely aniconic, εἰκόνας here is synonymous with εἰδῶλον.’

bluntly denied in NT scholarship. According to Johannes Behm in his contribution to the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ‘any reference to the philosophical or mythical-religious term *nous* is missing’ and ‘the naive understanding of *nous*, which is characteristic of the NT, can only be grasped from the wide distance of early Christianity from all philosophical reflection and religious mysticism in its environment.’<sup>220</sup> Others recognize a clear connection between Paul’s use of the *nous* and a philosophical understanding. As James Dunn notes, in verse 20 Paul

clearly trades on the commonplace of Greek philosophy: that the human mind perceives the existence and nature of God rationally as more or less an axiom of human reason and indeed an unavoidable corollary of the fact of human rationality itself. (Dunn 1998, 74)

Indeed, my reading of *Romans* 1 and 12 against the background of the *theologia tripartita* topos makes this philosophical-religious connection even more explicit, albeit on a more abstract level. According to Dunn, this ‘trade’ on Greek philosophy is not that remarkable, for ‘Paul was simply using the apologetic bridge to non-Jewish religious philosophy which had earlier been constructed within Hellenistic Judaism’ (74). Yet we may grant Paul some credit here, for this seems to be more than mere apologetics or a shallow commonplace. The relatively frequent occurrence of cognitive terms in *Romans* 1.18–32 (ἀλήθεια, γνωστός, νοέω, γιγνώσκω, διαλογισμός, σοφοί, δοκιμάζω, ἐπίγνωσις, νοῦς,<sup>221</sup> ἐπιγιγνώσκω, and their opposites: ματαιόω,<sup>222</sup> ἀσύνητος, μωραίνω, ψεύδος, ἀδόκιμος), suggests that in Paul’s analysis, the mind was the locus of the problem (and of the eventual solution: see §2.4.3 below).<sup>223</sup> It was in this rational part of the human being that the people

220 See Behm 1942, 956: ‘Jede Beziehung zu dem philosophischen oder mythisch-religiösen Terminus νοῦς fehlt’; and (at 958): ‘Nur aus dem weiten Abstand des Urchristentums von aller philosophischen Reflexion und religiösen Mystik der Umwelt ist das unbefangene Verständnis von νοῦς, das dem NT eignet, zu begreifen.’

221 As Dunn himself observes (Dunn 1998, 73), *nous* is a term that hardly occurs in the non-Pauline NT literature and is only irregularly used as a translation in the LXX.

222 This is a striking parallel at the level of the word to *Wisdom* 13.1: ‘For all human beings who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature (Μάταιοι μὲν γὰρ πάντες ἄνθρωποι φύσει, οἷς παρῆν Θεοῦ ἀγνωσία).’

223 Paul seems to expand here upon the judgment in LXX *Isaiah* 44.18, which also deals with the worship of idols, that ‘they did not know how to think (ἐγνώσαν φρονήσαι); because they were blinded (ἀπημαυρώθησαν) so as not to see with their eyes and understand with their heart (ὅτι τοῦ βλέπειν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ νοῆσαι τῆ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν).’ Cf. also the diagnosis in cognitive terms in *Ephesians* 4.17–19.

originally knew God and his works (v. 19–20), and it was in this faculty that the distortion took shape (v. 21, 28). In these Graeco-Roman sources, however, the rational connection between gods and men per se is usually not problematized. This connection is taken for granted as the foundation for the three *theologiae*, in particular the philosophical.<sup>224</sup> Conversely, in his criticism of mythical theology, Paul reveals the underlying problem as one of a structural, intellectual nature: ever since the loss of the first Golden Age, the nations have suffered from debased minds.

If pagan authors do not question a general intellectual connection to the divine, they do relate the worship of images to an insufficient, dysfunctional, or darkened cognitive facility. This can be noted as a fourth parallel between Graeco-Roman sources on the tripartite theology and Paul. Apart from the references I already mentioned above, Dio mocks the Epicureans as worse than senseless brutes for not paying attention to the gods, despite deeming themselves ‘wiser than all wisdom’ (σοφώτεροι τῆς ἀπάσης σοφίας). He explains that, in his opinion, the Epicureans

have hung before their eyes a curtain of deep darkness and mist (πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν σκότος πολὺ προβαλόμενοι καὶ ἀχλύν) like that which, according to Homer, kept the god from being recognized when he was caught; these men, then, despise all things divine (ὑπερφρονούσι τὰ θεία), and having set up the image of one single female divinity (...) to which they gave the name of Pleasure (...) her they prefer in honour and worship. (Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.36)

Even though there is no exact parallel to *Romans* 1 at the level of the word,<sup>225</sup> the paradox of claiming to be wise yet not seeing what is in front of you recurs in both polemical passages and can perhaps best be described as a recurring

224 In earlier Greek poetry, the human incapacity to make proper use of their *nous* seems a more common theme. See e.g. Parmenides, *On Nature* 6.6, where the mind of mortals is said to be wandering (πλακτὸν νόον). According to Semonides, humans do not even possess a mind (νόος δ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἀνθρώποισιν), nor do they know anything of how God will bring each thing to pass (οὐδὲν εἰδότες ὅπως ἕκαστον ἐκτελευτήσει θεός): see Semonides, *Fragment* 1.3–5 apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.34.15. For Stobaeus, see the edition by Wachsmuth and Hense (1884).

225 The verb σκοτίζω Paul uses is scarce in classical literature, though it occurs in the Septuagint: ‘Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see’ (σκοτισθήτωσαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν) (Ps 69.23 / LXX *Psalms* 68.24), a verse that is quoted by Paul in *Romans* 11.8 to denote the blindness of the main part of Israel.

topos regarding human dispositions towards the gods.<sup>226</sup> In section 2.4.3 on *Romans* 12, I will also consider the positive, opposite imagery of removing the darkness from the mind and recognizing the divine for what it is.

Fifthly and finally, the interconnected sociological, religious, and psychological dichotomies between mass and elite, between iconic and aniconic religion, and between passions and mind play an important role in Graeco-Roman sources and Paul alike. Above, I discussed the duality present in the tripartite structure between poets and legislators on the one hand and philosophers on the other (see §2.3.6). Philosophical theology (*theologia naturalis*) is particularly associated with intellectual pursuits, whereas mythical and civic theology is meant to entertain and edify the brutes and masses, which cannot help but make and worship images of the divine. This duality between knowledge and futility, wisdom and foolishness, also runs through Paul's account. Already in verse 14, when he states the purpose of addressing the Roman community, he calls himself 'a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish' ("Ἐλλησὶν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης). The consequences of the darkening of the mind are not only linked to the worship of images in *Romans* 1; they also affect the moral behaviour through the workings of passions and lusts (v. 24: ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν; v. 26 εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας). The convergence of psychological and sociological divisions can be considered a commonplace in Greek philosophy, at least since Plato's *Republic*.<sup>227</sup> As we saw in Plato, religious typologies that count as early developments of the *theologia tripartita* were compatible with this scheme (see §2.3.2). Just as in the *Republic*, where the level of the appetites is at the same time a part of the soul, a societal group, and the part of religion most susceptible to poetic perversities, so too does Paul offer a diagnosis that seamlessly combines psychological, sociological, and religious aspects.

Now that the parallels between *Romans* 1.18–32 and the Graeco-Roman literature that makes use of the tripartite theology have been made clear, it is worth noting those differences that come to the fore. For in his divergence from the established discourse, the distinctiveness and specificity of Paul's message stands out. Furthermore, following from the final point of overlap I discussed, we may now ask whether there even is a tripartite structure of religion in Paul. Does he cleave to the more common binaries such as wise versus

226 Harris (1962, 90) loosely points to the similarity between this part of Dio's speech and Pauline thought by likening the Epicureans who exchanged God for the self-acclaimed goddess Pleasure to Paul's gentiles in *Romans* 1.21. Cf. p. 96 for another reference to Paul.

227 On the discussion on the primacy of the psychological or the societal division in Plato (which one is deduced from the other), see Cornford 1912.

foolish that are implicit in (but not unique to) many sources of the *theologia tripartita*?

At first sight, Paul could be addressing the civic aspect of worship in verse 23, whereas verse 25b speaks about the nature of the divine and could therefore be offering a critique of a philosophical/cosmological theology. In an excursus on the two first commandments and the *theologia tripartita*, Johannes Woyke also asks to what extent these two schemes help to explain the relationship between *Romans* 1 verse 23 and verse 25b.<sup>228</sup> In Woyke's estimation, verse 25b is not so much referring to philosophical deliberations as to a more general Greek conception of the divine. Still, it is a pity that his analysis ends there. For when we take a step back and look at the structure underlying larger parts of the letter, more interesting conclusions can be drawn.

As for *Romans* 1, the main *theologiae* or ways of approaching the divine Paul is criticising here are, in my opinion, the poetic (including the artistic) and the civic. As discussed, these are commonly linked by association with their 'target audience', the uneducated masses. But both are also closely linked in practice, since statues and images are depictions of myths as well as an essential part of public cults and festivals.

Paul, however, does not stop there. The *Letter to the Romans* is all about overcoming social dissent, and in his analysis, Paul goes a step further than the Graeco-Roman source material I discussed by including the wise and knowledgeable in his tirade about their inexcusability. Even though on the surface he seems to reaffirm the distinction between Greek and barbarian and between wise and foolish by playfully referring to these categories in verse 14, he turns the tables by citing the mind as the location where something went fundamentally wrong.<sup>229</sup> All pagans, Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish, collectively suffer from a similar condition: a debased *nous*.<sup>230</sup> It will be in this precise spot that salvation must take hold in order for all people to be able to worship 'logically' again. The *nous* that was not able to pass the test (ἀδόκιμος) from *Romans* 1 must be renewed so that it is able test everything else in this world (εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν), as phrased in *Romans* 12.

Consequently, even though I argue in this chapter that Paul presents his project as a form of philosophical religion, this does not mean that Paul

228 Woyke 2005, 429.

229 Paul follows a similar strategy in seeming to agree with well-known polemic of pagan idolatry, but then turns the tables in *Romans* 2 by including Jews in a shared inexcusable status of humanity towards God. On this in particular, see Bloomquist 2003, 189–191.

230 There is a play on words between the cause, 'they did not acknowledge' (οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν), and the result of a 'debased' (ἀδόκιμος) mind, just as earlier with the verb μετήλλαξαν ('they exchanged'). See Bryan 2000, 80.

upholds first-century pagan philosophical conceptions of the divine and approaches to the divine. As for our ability to live a good and righteous life, worthy of the divine and reminiscent of the initial, pure philosophical religion, Paul seems less optimistic than most of his philosophical contemporaries.<sup>231</sup> Unlike the pagan parallels discussed above, Paul's project includes a divinely enabled rehabilitation, since the mind of the foolish and the wise alike are in desperate need of renewal. This renewal or transformation (Rom 12.2) will be discussed below (§2.4.4), but first I want to turn to two examples of how Paul makes use of cultic vocabulary to describe his type of philosophical religion (§2.4.2 and §2.4.3).

#### 2.4.2 *Reasonable Worship (Rom 12.1) and the Offering of Pistis (Phil 2.17): Cultic Sacrifice as a Metaphor for Philosophical Religion*

Most commentaries describe what we now know as chapter 12 of Paul's *Letter to the Romans* as the beginning of an ethical, hortatory, paraenetic, or practical section in the otherwise overly theological and theoretical epistle.<sup>232</sup> This traditional division of the letter has the advantage of creating some structural clarity, yet nonetheless obscures more in-depth unity and the development of Paul's message on the level of ideas. Particularly, I would argue for a substantial cohesion between *Romans* 12.1–3 and the section of the letter we just discussed (*Romans* 1.18–32). By using the tripartite typology as a lens or a reading tool, the interconnection between otherwise loosely linked chapters in the letter and the function of *Romans* 12:1–3 as a pivotal Pauline self-description is brought to the fore. In fact, this text emerges as the central crux of Paul's message, as his correction of pagan and Jewish religiosity, in the words of Philip Esler, 'a new *modus vivendi*'.<sup>233</sup> In *Romans* 12, so I would argue, Paul offers a

231 Cf. on Stoic optimism as regards virtuous living Thorsteinsson 2010a, 29.

232 E.g. Fitzmyer 1993, 637 ('hortatory section; catechetical unit; paraenetic development'); Dunn 1998, 500 ('ethical exhortation'); Bryan 2000, 194 ('exhortation or *parainesis*'); Viagulamuthu 2002, 19 ('After completing his doctrinal discussions, he enters into paraenetic discussions'). Exceptions include Wilson 1991, 128 ('Thus we should not think of this exhortation as a mere afterthought or a formal consideration dictated by Paul's epistolary style.'). Esler 2003, 312 ('Paul's concern is clearly with something much closer to the classical Greek interest in a cohesive account of the good life than merely with the criteria for right and wrong action. To describe these verses as "ethical" in that sense would be reductionist.'). Stowers 1994, 317–320, who also calls attention to the unity of chapters 12–13 and the rest of the letter, particularly the beginning, to which it serves as 'a positive reversal and counterpoint' (at 317). Stowers's discussion of these chapters, however, is cursory, since it only functions to confirm his thesis on the unifying theme of faithfulness as adaptability to the needs of others.

233 Esler 2003, 311.

solution to the problem of *Romans* 1: how to restore the access to the divine and to the ‘good’, when all human understanding is diagnosed as failing and utterly defect, leading to poetic and cultic religious deformities.<sup>234</sup>

Before we continue discussing Paul’s self-definition along the lines of philosophical religion (in §2.4.4 and §2.4.5), and after having reviewed his rejection of important aspects of poetic and civic religion (in §2.4.1), it is time to consider the extent to which he engaged with poetic and civic religion in more positive terms (in this subsection and the next). I will argue that Paul presents his own philosophical-religious program by creatively reconfiguring poetic and civic terms and imagery. In the discussion of the development of tripartite theology in Plato’s thought (in §2.3.2), I observed the revolutionary development of rephrasing the ritualistic nature of civic theology in terms of philosophical concepts. Sacrifices were condoned, but their meaning was transformed from within by philosophical concepts such as moral imitation of the divine. Paul’s strategy is not very dissimilar, though it is perhaps more radical, as I will suggest here. In this subsection and the next, I will focus on two passages in which the language of civic religion is used metaphorically to describe his movement as belonging to the sphere of philosophical religion. Sacrifices come alive as intellectual human sacrifices (*Romans* 12, discussed in this subsection); cultic images of God come alive as human representations of the divine (2 *Corinthians* 4, discussed in §2.4.3).

First, let us turn to *Romans* 12. As an opening gesture of this section of the letter, Paul appeals to his brothers and sisters ‘by the mercies of God’—both a motivation or mitigation of the appeal and a foundation upon which the following appeal itself rests<sup>235</sup>—to ‘present your bodies as a sacrifice (παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν)’, which is both ‘living, holy and pleasing to God (ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ)’. This act is further defined by the apposition ‘your reasonable worship’ (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν).

The most remarkable feature of this first verse is the combination of two sets of vocabulary: terminology that belongs to the domain of ritual offering is combined with the contrasting participle ‘living’ and adjective ‘gifted with reason’ (λογικὴν).<sup>236</sup> In the words of Colin Kruse, ‘it is noteworthy that while

234 The connection between *Romans* 1.18–32 and *Romans* 12.1–3 is also emphasized by Luke Timothy Johnson (Johnson 2003, 219 (reprinted in Johnson 2013): ‘intentional echo’), George van Kooten (2008, 389), and Craig Keener (2016, 227).

235 For the mitigating function of these and similar phrases on the level of discourse, see Runge 2010, 639.

236 *Pace* Viagulamuthu (2002, 19), according to whom all of this language can be labelled ‘sacrificial’.



the apostle uses the terminology of cultic worship, what he means by worship has to do with the way people live rather than their activities in a cultic setting.<sup>237</sup> This is a perceptive remark, but it would be even more interesting to explore the consequences of this imagery. The words that refer to presenting a body as a holy and acceptable sacrifice to God obviously recall the sacrificial cult, familiar to pagans and Jews as a cornerstone of what with tripartite terminology may be called ‘civic religion’. Also, the substantive *latreia* usually refers to this cultic aspect of relating life on earth to the divine.<sup>238</sup> But what changes occur when Paul calls the body to be sacrificed *your* body, the sacrifice *living*, and the cult *logical*?

The idea of presenting oneself as living, though previously dead, is already used earlier in the same letter:

No longer present (μηδὲ παριστάνετε) your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness (ὄπλα ἀδικίας), but present (ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε) yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life (ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας), and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness (ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης). (*Romans* 6.13)

This phrase indicates that the cultic happening of ‘presenting’ a sacrifice was used by Paul to indicate righteous (or unrighteous for that matter), ethical behaviour.<sup>239</sup> The imagery is transposed from a cultic to an ethical semantic domain.<sup>240</sup> Moreover, just as in *Romans* 12, the reversal of death and life is used here to indicate the ethical transformation of Paul’s addressees. Such an ethical transformation seems to belong to the domain of philosophical religion rather than that of civic religion.

If Paul indeed uses terms from the domain of civic religion to denote an ethical, or indeed philosophical, religious transformation, should we understand this as an outright rejection of civic religion, including animal sacrifice? Or

237 Kruse 2012, 463.

238 Even though the etymological basis of the word is not exclusively cultic, meaning ‘service, servitude’, in the LXX, all eight occurrences of the noun arguably refer to or imply the sacrificial cult. In the NT, there are four other occurrences of the noun, of which only the first has a more general meaning: *John* 16.2, *Romans* 9.4, *Hebrews* 9.1, 6.

239 The notion of offering oneself to a God could be connected to the practice of worshippers offering votive reliefs or little statues of themselves. Cf. on this practice Van Straten 1981, 81–82.

240 Thorsteinsson (2006, 148) deems such usage ‘figurative’: ‘it is (...) clear that these are used figuratively as a means of pointing to a particular attitude of mind and way of life as the proper and sufficient worship.’

is Paul actively condoning the practice of sacrificial rites simply by using sacrificial language, as others have suggested?<sup>241</sup> I may have to follow Stephen Finlan in distinguishing between more subtle degrees of engagement with cultic actions: (1) attributing moralizing meanings to sacrificial cult, (2) interiorizing the meaning of a sacrifice to its performer, (3) appropriating cultic actions metaphorically, and (4) rejecting cultic sacrifices altogether.<sup>242</sup> Where can we locate Paul in this scheme? Here, a further search for similar phrasings is helpful in order to understand what discourse Paul is participating in.

As LXX, TLG, and LLT (with Latin equivalents) searches demonstrate, however, the combinations ‘living sacrifice’ or ‘logical worship’ do not occur as such in either Jewish or Graeco-Roman sources of our period (first century BC—second AD) or before.<sup>243</sup> An exception is found in the *Sibylline Oracles*: ‘and bring me, the living one, a living sacrifice’ (8.408: καὶ ζῶσαν θυσίαν ἐμοὶ τῷ ζῶντι πόριζε). As these writings were at least partially edited by Christians, they are not particularly helpful for understanding Paul’s intellectual world, as they may have been influenced by him. Without exact verbal parallels, we need to look for a different, more abstract level of intertextuality to shed light on Paul’s meaning. There are various authors and corpora that present themselves as candidates for comparison.

As outlined by Walter Wilson, there is some precedent for emphasizing the ethical aspect over the cultic or emphasizing the ethical aspect in cultic actions in Jewish and Jewish-Hellenistic literature, in particular those arising

241 Cf. Witherington III & Hyatt 2004, 284: ‘He thus unites worship with ethics, adoration with behavior’; Viagulamuthu 2002, 328: ‘Paul takes it for granted that the Christians are not exempt from cult’.

242 See Finlan 2012, 83–86. Finlan identifies two more meanings in what he describes as processes of ‘spiritualization’, degrees which I deem less useful for our discussion here: a first usage in which the sacrificed object serves to represent another, and a sixth usage in which sacrifice itself is no longer referred to, instead ‘persons or communities becoming infused with spiritual properties and values’. The term ‘spiritualization’, however, seems to invite all kinds of unwelcome dualistic notions (as if moral actions are not embodied), notions that are not implied in the tripartite model of ancient religion.

243 The adjective λογικός is not used in the LXX at all. The combination of the lemmata ζῶν and θυσία at a maximum of five words distance renders no relevant results (Theophrastus, for instance, speaks of the sacrifice of creatures (ζῶων θυσίαν) yet not of a living sacrifice); there is no co-occurrence of the lemmata λογικός and λατρεία apart from Christian authors. The combination of λογικός and πίστις does give us some interesting passages in Galen, on which see §4.2.1 *infra*. In the LLT, the variants of logi\*/ratio\* and cult\* render no results with a maximum of 10 words distance; the combination of viv\* and sacri\* does not render any relevant parallels either. The combination λογική θυσία is found in the *Corpus Hermeticum*: see below in this section.

from diaspora situations.<sup>244</sup> However, the passage that he labelled ‘the most developed treatment of the issue’, i.e. *Sirach* 34.21–35.13, is not critical of cultic offerings per se. It equates holding the law to making an offering and is critical of unethical sacrificial behaviour:<sup>245</sup>

So is a person when he fasts for his sins and goes again and does the same things, who will listen to his prayer, and what did he gain by humbling himself? He who keeps the Law multiplies offerings. One who makes a sacrifice for deliverance is he who pays heed to the commandments. (...) An offering of a righteous person enriches the altar. A righteous man’s sacrifice is acceptable, and its memorial will not be forgotten. (*Sirach* 34.31–35.2, 35.8–9)

Thus, *Sirach* 34.21–35.13 relativizes the outward performance of the ritual while taking the act of sacrificing for granted. There is no indication of abandonment of ritual sacrifice or of a logical or rational alternative offering. Referring to this and similar texts, James Dunn has emphasized the important difference between this reasoning and *Romans* 12.1 by arguing that the early Christians’ ‘use of sacrificial imagery implies a *replacement* of ritual sacrifice’ (italics his).<sup>246</sup> Paul’s language implies, indeed, a more radical reconfiguration than *Sirach*’s, at least in the situation his addressees find themselves in (far away from the Jerusalem temple).

Closer parallels to Paul are found in Philo. Philo distinguishes between the literal account and the allegorical reading of proscriptions in *Leviticus*: ‘The true altar of God is the thankful soul of the sage.’<sup>247</sup> In this context, Philo also emphasizes the intention of the sacrificial act:

And thus we have the clearest proof (σαφεστάτην πίστιν) that he holds the sacrifice to consist not in the victims (τὰ ἱερέϊα θυσίαν) but in the offerer’s intention and his zeal (τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ προθυμίαν) which derives its constancy and permanence from virtue (τὸ μόνιμον καὶ βέβαιον ἐξ ἀρετῆς). (Philo, *On the Special Laws* 1.290–291)

The act of sacrifice is put into an ethical perspective to such an extent that the soul of the worshipper is the altar and his/her virtue the sacrifice, which is also

244 See Wilson 1991, 137.

245 Numbering according to Ziegler’s edition (1965), NETS, and NRSV.

246 Dunn 1988a, 710.

247 Philo, *On the Special Laws* 1.287.

a replacement of sorts. Nevertheless, the allegory is offered parallel to the literal practice of sacrificial rites. The practice itself is not profoundly questioned (it is rather justified), nor is the rational or logical nature of this alternative type of sacrificing explicitly mentioned. In a different treatise, Philo connects being *logikos* to God. The fact that we are reasonable beings implies that we possess a mind and are capable of rational discourse:

Once more, the power of thinking is peculiar to the mind (ἡ διανοητικὴ δύναμις ἰδίᾳ τοῦ νοῦ ἐστὶ), and while shared, it may well be, by beings more akin to God (τῶν θειοτέρων φύσεων), is, so far as mortal beings are concerned, peculiar to man (ἰδίᾳ δὲ ὡς ἐν θνητοῖς ἀνθρώπου). This power or faculty is twofold. We are rational beings (λογικοί ἐσμεν), on the one hand as being partakers of mind (νοῦ μετέχοντες), and on the other as being capable of discourse (διαλεγόμεθα). (Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.23)<sup>248</sup>

The mind, our speaking and cognitive capacity, is said to be our distinctive quality and is connected to the divine.<sup>249</sup> The combination we found in Paul of the concepts of sacrifice and our intellectual nature is absent from Philo's works. When it comes to the criticism of civic religion or its replacement with a philosophical alternative, we encounter more specific examples in Neopy-

248 Cf. on the primacy of the mind in creation and its allegorical linkage to men Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.73: 'Exceedingly well did God the Framers of living beings contrive the order in which they were created. First He made mind, that is to say, man (νοῦν πρῶτον τὸν ἄνδρα), for mind is most venerable in a human being.'

249 Based on its connection with the *logos* as a 'personal mediator and high-priest that came from God' in Philo, Xavier Viagulamuthu (2002, 333) argues for a double meaning of *logikos* as both spiritual, heavenly, divine, and rational. However, the reference he provides to demonstrate that the adjective *logikos* refers to this meaning of *logos* (*Allegorical Interpretation* 1.41) does not speak of such a divine figure. Therefore, I would argue that the connotation of *logikos* as 'divine' is only based on the divine origin of the mind also found in pagan literature. Apart from the examples given, cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.8.13 (1179a26–27): 'that part of man which is best and most akin to themselves [i.e. the gods], namely the intellect (τῷ συγγενεστάτῳ τούτῳ δ' ἂν εἴη ὁ νοῦς)'. 'Spiritual' as a translation, however, has the disadvantage of spiritualizing this intellectual or psychological concept. Cf. Esler 2003, 310: 'Sometimes λογική is translated as "spiritual," but this misses the strongly cognitive dimension to the start of ch. 12, which will be continued with "the renewal of mind" in v. 2 and further references in v. 3.'

thagoreanism, Platonism, Peripatetic philosophy, in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and in Stoic popular philosophy.<sup>250</sup>

As for Pythagoreanism, we already saw that Numa was considered to be influenced by Pythagoreanism in his idea that since the gods are known intellectually, sacrifices need not include bloodshed (see §2.3.6).<sup>251</sup> Even more relevant Pythagorean witnesses to a ‘worship of the mind’ as opposed to cultic worship can be found in a collection of sayings called *Sententiae Pythagoreorum*, which are representative of a revival of Pythagoreanism that began in the first century B.C.E.<sup>252</sup> In *Sententia* 66, we read that ‘the temple of God is the mind of the wise person’ (νεὼς θεοῦ σοφὸς νοῦς).<sup>253</sup> What is more, in *Sententia* 20, sacrifices are downplayed in favour of ‘the mind that is in God’:

Offerings and sacrifices (δῶρα καὶ θυηπολῖαι) do not pay honour to God; votive offerings set up in a temple (ἀναθήματα) do not embellish God. But the mind which is full of God and has been sufficiently established unites with God (τὸ ἐνθεον φρόνημα διαρκῶς ἠδρασμένον συνάπτει θεῷ), for it must be that like comes to like (χωρεῖν γὰρ ἀνάγκη τὸ ὅμοιον πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον). (*Sententiae Pythagoreorum* 20)<sup>254</sup>

Here, sacrifices are juxtaposed with mental unification with God.<sup>255</sup> Even though the precise date or origin of these sayings is unclear, they reflect a direct competition between civic religion and philosophical religion approximating the period in which Paul of Tarsus lived. In accordance with Paul, they pinpoint the faculty of reason as the proper location of worshipping God.<sup>256</sup>

250 A conservative and somewhat defensive position as regards the possibility that non-Jewish sources have something to add to interpret *Romans* 12.1 is expressed by Charles Barrett (1991, 231): ‘The Hellenistic parallels do not prove that Paul’s thought was based on Stoic material. The Old Testament itself knows inward as well as material sacrifice.’

251 According to Iamblichus, however, this rejection only pertains to the ‘most contemplative of the philosophers’ (*De Vita Pythagorae* 24.107).

252 Wilson 2012, 3. Many references to the Pythagorean Sentences can be found in *The Sentences of Sextus*, a name probably referring to Quintus Sextius, a first century BC ‘Stoic philosopher with Pythagorean leanings’ (Wilson 2012, 10), but they were edited to suit the needs of late second and early third century Christian communities (see p. 1).

253 *Sententiae Pythagoreorum* 66a, Greek text and translation Chadwick 1959, 89.

254 Greek text and translation Chadwick 1959, 86.

255 The phrase of ‘like to like’ is similar to Plato’s take on worship in the *Laws*: see Plato, *Laws* 716c–d and §2.4.5 *infra*.

256 For a comparison between *Sententia* 20 and *Romans* 12.1–2, cf. Van Kooten 2008, 164–165: ‘This anti-cultic stance was characteristic of Pythagoreanism and also constituted the revolutionary nature of early Christianity.’

As for Platonic discourses, we have encountered the Platonic idea that ‘like comes to like’ (in Plato’s *Laws*, see §2.3.2): the human mind is united with God in its intellectual and moral capacity as part of Plato’s contribution to the *tripartita* discourse *avant la lettre*. We saw how Plato’s idea of the moral sacrifice was taken up possibly a century later by the head of the Aristotelean school, Theophrastus (depending on what words from Porphyry we ascribe to him). Here, the phrasing is also in highly cognitive terms. A sacrifice is pleasing to the gods if it includes the right opinion about them (ἡ ὀρθὴ περὶ αὐτῶν), the right attitude and conduct (ἡθός), and a pure mind (νοῦς καθαρός).<sup>257</sup> In the Platonism closer to Paul’s own time, we encounter the idea that the mind and the activity of a specifically ‘logical’ soul ought to be directed towards and imitate the divine. In Alcinous’s *Handbook of Platonism* from the second century AD, the rational soul (ψυχῆς λογικῆς) is described as one who contemplates the divine by means of his intellect, thus being in a state of wisdom (φρόνησις):

Contemplation, then, is the activity of the intellect when intelligizing the intelligibles (ἡ θεωρία ἐνέργεια τοῦ νοῦ νοούντος τὰ νοητά), while action is that activity of a rational soul (ψυχῆς λογικῆς), which takes place by way of the body. The soul engaged in contemplation of the divine and the thoughts of the divine is said to be in good state, and this state of the soul is called ‘wisdom (φρόνησις)’, which may be asserted to be no other than likeness to the divine (ὅπερ οὐχ ἕτερον εἴποι ἄν τις εἶναι τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ὁμοιώσεως). (Alcinous, *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae* 2.2, 153.3–9)<sup>258</sup>

In this context, the idea of likeness to the divine, to which we will return in chapter 6, is shown to be part of the discourse of how to approach the divine. In *Romans*, the topic of what kind of worship is appropriate (Rom 12.1–2) also leads to an appeal to ‘put on Jesus Christ’ (Rom 13.14: ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν), suggesting a similar likeness to the divine.

On a verbal level, however, the closest parallel to Paul’s language can be found in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a collection of treatises ascribed to one ‘Hermes Trismegistus’, written somewhere between the end of the first and the end of the third century in Egypt.<sup>259</sup> In two of these treatises, the phrase *logikē*

257 Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* 2.60–61.

258 Translation Dillon 1993, 4. On this topos of *homoiōsis theōi*, see chapter 6, specifically §6.3.4 *infra*.

259 Litwa 2018, 1–14 offers a useful introduction to all Hermetic literature in his translation. On the dating, see 11–13.

*thusia*, ‘rational offering’ or ‘speech offering’ is used—once in the treatise *Poimandres*, in which Hermes answers to his epiphany with the prayer, ‘accept my pure, reasonable offerings’ (δέξαι λογικὰς θυσίας ἀγνάς),<sup>260</sup> and three times in a dialogue between Hermes and his son Tat, with exclamations such as:

To you, god, genarch of progeneration, I, Tat, send speech offerings (σοί, γενάρχα τῆς γενεσιουργίας, Τὰτ θεῶ πέμπω λογικὰς θυσίας). God—you, father; you, lord; you, mind (σὺ πάτερ, σὺ ὁ κύριος, σὺ ὁ νοῦς)—accept from me what speech you want (δέξαι λογικὰς ἅς θέλεις ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ). (*Corpus Hermeticum* 13.21)<sup>261</sup>

That these offerings were called ‘reasonable’ or ‘consisting of speech’ is likely due to the Hermetic ‘loathing for material acts of worship’.<sup>262</sup> The convergence with Paul’s *logikē latreia* led scholars such as Lietzmann, Reitzenstein, and, more recently, Viagulamuthu to conclude that Paul used this Hermetic terminus technicus in the meaning of ‘geistig, vergeistert’ and not as a ‘vernünftiger Gottesdienst’.<sup>263</sup> Viagulamuthu adds that, in order to distinguish his movement from the mystics, particularly regarding the importance of the body, he added ‘your’ to ‘logical worship’: it is something else than ‘their’ logical worship.<sup>264</sup> I seriously doubt if Paul’s audience understood this all too subtle hint. Indeed, this argument seems to me to be more ‘farfetched’ (to use one of Viagulamuthu’s terms) than ascribing to Paul the desire to supersede cultic worship (what Viagulamuthu deems farfetched).<sup>265</sup> The solution that I propose is to place Paul in the wider discourse of critically questioning sacrificial aspects of civic religion and offering a philosophical (or even mystical, for these are not the opposites Reitzenstein thinks them to be: see §8.3.1 below) alternative.

260 *Corpus Hermeticum* 1.31, my translation, Greek text Nock 1960, 19.

261 Greek text: Nock 1945, 209, translation Copenhagen 1995, 54. The other places in this dialogue are 13.18 and 13.19. G. R. S. Mead translates ‘reasonable offerings’.

262 So Festugière 1949, 1.81–84, through Litwa 2018, 9.

263 See Reitzenstein 1920, 180: ‘Von einem “vernünftigen Gottesdienst” kann weder nach griechischem Sprachgebrauch noch dem Zusammenhang oder dem Gedankenkreis des Paulus die Rede sein.’ (Viagulamuthu refers to the first publication of this 1909 lecture: Reitzenstein 1910, 180). Reitzenstein refers to Lietzmann as his source. Cf. Viagulamuthu 2002, 342: ‘If our conjecture that Paul is alluding to the mystery-religions is correct, these meanings, and not “rational”, would be apt. Just as the CH [Corpus Hermeticum] believed in a sacrifice coming from the indwelling God, and that therefore it is spiritual, so the Christian’s sacrifice also springs from the indwelling God, and hence it is also spiritual.’

264 Viagulamuthu 2002, 342.

265 So Viagulamuthu 2002, 351.

Speaking of philosophical critique, the Stoics appear to have been critical of cultic worship too.<sup>266</sup> Of Zeno, whose works no longer survive, it is reported that he advised ‘not to build temples of the gods, because a temple not worth much is also not sacred and no work of builders or mechanics is worth much.’<sup>267</sup> In the first century AD, Seneca ridicules both Jewish and pagan rituals such as lighting the Sabbath light and ‘thronging the doors of temples.’<sup>268</sup> These practices serve human ambition, whereas ‘the gods do not need light’ and ‘God seeks no servants’ (95.48). Thus, Seneca joins the philosophical discourse of criticizing civic religion. Instead, the philosophical alternative is that ‘God is worshipped by those who truly know Him (95.48: *deum colit qui novit*)’. Seneca emphasizes that to know God is to know the divine providential care.<sup>269</sup> Remarkably though, the first step in this cognitive process of worshipping, so we learn, is to ‘believe’:

The first way to worship the gods is to believe in the gods (*primus est deorum cultus deos credere*), the next to acknowledge their majesty (*reddere illis maiestatem suam*) to acknowledge (*reddere illis*) their goodness without which there is no majesty. (...) Would you win over the gods? Then be a good man. Whoever imitates them, is worshipping them sufficiently (*Satis illos coluit, quisquis imitatus est*). (Seneca, *Epistles* 95.50)

It is telling that proper cognitive worship, starting with an act of *credere*, was juxtaposed to irrational civic religion in contemporary Stoic thought. Consequently, the opposite of not acknowledging God and his providence would be the major religious error, which is not unlike the purport of *Romans* 1.28,

266 The agreement between *Romans* 12 and Stoic teachings have been discussed in depth by Runar Thorsteinsson (2006, see 147–150 on *Romans* 12.1–3). Still, Thorsteinsson distinguishes Paul's views from Stoic ones as regards critique on cult (at 149): ‘Unlike Seneca, however, Paul does not criticize cultic worship.’ For my take on this issue, see the remainder of the present subsection.

267 Zeno apud Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1034B (SVF 1.264). On Zeno's ideal city, see §3.3.5 *infra*.

268 Seneca, *Epistles* 95.48.

269 This is conforming the four Stoic teachings on the gods, on which see i.a. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.3: ‘To take a general view, the topic of the immortal gods which you raise is divided by our school into four parts: first they teach that the gods exist (*docent esse deos*); next they explain their nature; then they show that the world is governed by them; and lastly that they care for the fortunes of mankind.’ Cf. Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.14.11. On the interrelatedness of divine existence and divine providence, see Algra 2003, 160.



‘they refused to acknowledge God (ἔχρειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει)’. As the remainder of Seneca’s advice shows, worship goes hand in hand with ethics: imitation of the gods in their goodness is paramount (on this theme, see my chapter 6). A little further, he switches from the topic of dealing with the gods to dealing with fellow humans, and summarizes his advice in one rule:

I can lay down for mankind a rule (*formulam*), in short compass, for our duties in human relationships: all that you behold, that which comprises both god and man, is one (*unum est*)—we are the parts of one great body (*membra sumus corporis magni*). Nature produced us related to one another (*cognatos*), since she created us from the same source and to the same end (*ex isdem et in eadem*). She engendered in us mutual affection (*amorem indidit mutuuum*), and made us prone to friendships (*sociabiles*). (Seneca, *Epistles* 95.52)

Seneca’s teaching follows a specific order: from relationships with the gods in terms of acknowledging them and imitating them, to interhuman relationships in terms of loving one another as one, related body. Similarly, in *Romans* 12.1–3, Paul starts with the idea of ‘logical worship’ but easily moves from there to ethical advice, to the image of being one body, and even an ethical ‘rule’ of *pistis* themes on which I will elaborate below (see §2.4.4–2.4.5).

Epictetus also closely connects the cognitive faculty to his own depiction of the right approach to God. He defines a human being as a rational, mortal being (ζῶον λογικόν θνητόν).<sup>270</sup> In the first instance, *logikos* refers to our faculty of speech, which other animals lack.<sup>271</sup> Yet, as becomes clear from the context of his thought, we are also considered distinct from beasts and sheep by not following our lower impulses or passions. If we do descend to the level of beasts and sheep, we destroy this faculty (τὸ λογικόν), which is hence better understood as ‘reason’. Virtue itself was defined by the Stoics as ‘the natural perfection of a rational being qua rational’ (τὸ τέλειον κατὰ φύσιν λογικοῦ ὡς λογικοῦ).<sup>272</sup> Accordingly, Epictetus argues that because we are different in essence from swans or nightingales, and since God gave the power to speak reasonably to humanity, we should worship accordingly by singing hymns:

But as it is, I am a rational being (νῦν δὲ λογικός εἰμι), therefore I must be singing hymns of praise to God. This is my task; I do it, and will not desert

270 Epictetus, *Discourses* 12.9.1–5.

271 See the first meaning recorded in LSJ.

272 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.94 (Zeno) (SVF 3.76).

this post, as long as it may be given me to fill it; and I exhort (παρακαλώ) you to join me in this same song. (Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.16.20–21)

This manner of casting worship in terms of singing hymns possibly goes back as far as Xenophanes, who states in his *Elegeia*:

First, sensible men should hymn God (Χρῆ δὲ πρῶτον μὲν θεὸν ὑμνεῖν εὐφρονας ἀνδρας) with reverent stories and pure speech (εὐφήμοις μύθοις καὶ καθαροῖσι λόγοις), pouring a libation and praying to accomplish what is just (τὰ δίκαια δύνασθαι). (Xenophanes, *Elegeia* B1.13–15)<sup>273</sup>

Here also, worship is connected to being reasonable—if we follow the LSJ in ascribing their meaning 11.2 of εὐφρων to this passage<sup>274</sup>—and to *logoi*, and, moreover, cultic acts are set in a context of righteous action.

This connection of human nature to a rational, philosophical, ethical manner of worshipping the gods via *to logikon* seems to be perfectly in line with Paul's statement in *Romans* 12.1.<sup>275</sup> The *logikē latreia* of Paul also refers to more than speech alone, as is clear from the cognitive markers in the following sentences. The comparison is valid, even if unlike him, Stoic philosophers generally chose to participate in pagan civic religion. In fact, it is not clear to what extent Paul chose to continue participating in his own, Jewish civic religion, so he may even share their approach in this regard.

Is it possible to infer, then, that Paul is specifically referring to this Stoic concept?<sup>276</sup> Or did Paul join a Hellenistic-Jewish, Platonic, Pythagorean, or Hermetic discourse of philosophical religion by using civic terms metaphorically? Such either/or-questions may not be the best approach to the problem. As we have seen when discussing the *tripartita* sources, the relationship

273 Greek text Diels & Kranz 1951, 127.

274 LSJ, s.v. εὐφρων 11.2: 'of sound mind, reasonable, "ἀνδρες" Xenoph.1.13.'

275 Pace Viagulamuthu 2002, 340: 'In spite of all their doctrines on λογικός and λόγος, they [the Stoics] nevertheless took part in the official cult of the gods. Therefore, the λογικός and the body-sacrifice association in Rom 12.1 does not likely refer to them.' Cf. his contradictory argument on p. 351 based on i.a. 'the Greek philosophers' that Paul could not be substituting cultic worship, precisely because these philosophers did not abandon actual sacrifice. On the participation of the Stoics in civic cult, cf. Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 31.5 (who prescribes proper participation) and Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1034B–C (who critiques them for doing so).

276 So Thorsteinsson 2010a, 25: 'as early as in 12.1–2 we see clear allusions, not merely to philosophical discourse in general, but to standard Stoic terminology.' Cf. Thorsteinsson 2010c, 25.

between the *theologiae*, in particular between the philosophical and the others, seems to have become an matter of intense debate across intellectual schools in the Hellenistic-Roman period.<sup>277</sup> In a volume addressing ‘religious transformations in the Graeco-Roman empire’, Polymnia Athanassiadi and Constantinos Macris speak of a broader tendency they call ‘the “philosophization” of the religious’ (‘la philosophisation du religieux’), indicating that what started as philosophical critique of civic religion became a widely accepted ‘attitude spirituelle’ or a *religio mentis*: a new type of intellectual sacrifice, introduced by philosophers and theosophical thinkers, gained acceptance across philosophical boundaries and in circles far beyond the strictly philosophical.<sup>278</sup> One of these circles, I would argue, consisted of Pauline, early Christian communities.

The philosophical sources under consideration here take a critical stance towards the cultic elements in civic religion, even if they did condone or even justify it by taking their meaning to a philosophical level. Paul partakes in this philosophical discourse on how civic religion is to be evaluated, yet he seems to take it one step further. Viewed from the perspective of the tripartite theology, Paul criticizes pagan civic religion, because its starting point is the debased *nous* from *Romans* 1. Instead, he offers a philosophical alternative: reforming one’s mind, which in turn reforms one’s ethics and in the end also communal, embodied worship into a *logikē latreia*.

Thus, to return to our original question, is Paul rejecting all cultic religion and animal sacrifice in this section of *Romans*? Let us first examine some academic voices that would answer in the negative. In his analysis of ‘the Christian rejection of animal sacrifice’, as the work is also titled, Daniel Ullucci argues that both the pagan and the earliest Christian discourse on animal sacrifice are misunderstood as critique. Instead, they should be seen as ‘competition’ and ‘part of a larger argument over what sacrifice ought to be.’<sup>279</sup> *Romans* 12.1–2, which is according to this author seen by many as ‘the pinnacle of the sacrificial theology for the whole New Testament’, is no exception:<sup>280</sup>

277 See §2.3.8 *supra* and Algra 2007, 9.

278 Athanassiadi & Macris 2013, 67: ‘Dans des milieux philosophiques et théosophiques la tendance à un sacrifice conforme aux exigences d’une *religio mentis* (...) se fait jour. Augurant “la fin du sacrifice”, cette tendance au “sacrifice mental ou intellectuel” (...) ou au “sacrifice du Cœur” cesse bientôt d’être confinée au cénacle théosophique et à la communauté textuelle pour se répandre, sous la forme d’ordre divin ou d’exhortation philosophique adressée aux cités et aux prêtres, par le vaste monde.’

279 Ullucci 2012, 5.

280 Ullucci 2012, 77.

There is no justification for reading a replacement of animal sacrifice in this passage. Paul does not say that the bodies of believers are living, holy, and pleasing to God but that the bodies of animals are not. (Ullucci 2012, 77)

Strictly speaking, Ullucci is indeed correct in his description of what Paul does not say. Yet the triple reversal of normal sacrificial language in Paul's description in this text cannot be so easily ignored. Interestingly, Paul juxtaposes civic and philosophical vocabulary three times, thereby changing the civic, material connotations into philosophical, ethical metaphors. He invokes the imagery of a sacrifice in order to transform it into something that lacks a normal cultic, sacrificial setting altogether. And he concludes by calling this new type of sacrifice 'your logical worship', which sounds like a redefinition of what the whole of their worship ought to consist of.<sup>281</sup>

The same applies to Kar Yong Lim's analysis of Paul's usage of temple imagery in the Corinthian letters. He rightly points out that Paul's use of the metaphor of a temple for his community, particularly the one in Corinth, need not commit us to a temple-replacement theology, for the pagan Corinthians would not be reminded of the temple in Jerusalem in the first place.<sup>282</sup> It is rather in contrast to the many polytheistic temples in their own surrounding culture that Paul calls for holiness and dedication to the one God. On the other hand, Paul's own proposal of a reasonable worship calls the importance of cultic elements in his theology into question. By suggesting that people are the temple, Paul reinvents the ritual as ethical. In other words, Paul transforms civic religion into philosophical religion.

This is evident from a wider look at cultic vocabulary in the Pauline corpus. In *Romans* 1.25, discussed in the previous subsection, he accused the pagans of illogically worshipping (ἐλάτρευσαν) the creature rather than the Creator. Jews still had their worship which involved sacrifice in the temple (Rom 9.4: Ἰσραηλῖται, ὧν (...) ἡ λατρεία), which, if we follow the logic of Paul's alternative, is not wrong per se, but at least insufficient for the situation his addressees find

281 Cf. Delling 1962, 11: 'the combination of words θυσίαν ζώων [living sacrifice] makes the image in principle unimaginable, but is deliberately chosen (in contrast to the animal slaughtered in sacrifice, the offering of which is futile); it shows to what extent it has been stripped of its sacral associations in the thought of Paul.' Cf. Van Kooten 2008, 343: 'Paul presents his own religion as a "logical [i.e. non-ritualistic] form of worship"'; cf. 389–390, with references to Philo and Neopythagoreanism.

282 Lim 2010. I do not agree, however, with Lim's interpretation of the identity of the people from whom the Corinthians should refrain. As I will argue in chapter 8, these are not outsiders in general but people 'who call themselves brothers' (see §8.4 *infra*).

themselves in. The new type of logical *latreia* Paul envisions is for those who worship in God's spirit (Phil 3.3: οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες)<sup>283</sup> or with the 'spirit of faith' (2 Cor 4.13: πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως); who offer their *pistis* as sacrifice and ritual service (Phil 2.17: ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν); and whose body is the temple in which God is to be glorified (1 Cor 6.20: δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν; cf. 1 Cor 3.16).<sup>284</sup> I will examine one of these texts, 2 *Corinthians* 4, more closely in the next subsection (§2.4.3), as it stands out as metaphorical cultic language precisely in light of the discourse of tripartite theology. The combination of these phrases already indicates the new anthropological and intellectual focus of the type of religion Paul promotes.

The notion of a 'sacrifice and offering of *pistis*' (Phil 2.17) is particularly remarkable. At first glance, and based on the contextual markers 'sacrifice' (θυσία) and 'offering' or 'service' (λειτουργία), this 'faith' seems to resemble something like our modern idea of 'faith': a highly religious notion. Knowing, however, that our prototypical religious use of the lexeme 'faith' was not quite a prototypical use of *pistis* in the period in question, we need to consider other semantic domains. The phrase 'sacrifice and service of faith' as it appears here, in *Philippians*, follows an extensive call to be 'of one mind' (Phil 2.2: τὸ αὐτὸ φρονήτε; τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες) and 'of the same mind as Christ' (Phil 2.5: τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), explicated in the famous 'Christ-hymn'. Hence, we seem to find ourselves with another juxtaposition of cultic (sacrifice, offering) and intellectual notions (*phroneō*, *pistis*). Combined with our findings in *Romans* 12.1–3, Paul's coinage of a 'sacrifice and offering of faith' suggests that *pistis* is a significant concept in this renewed-*nous*-based religion, one connected with following the thought-pattern of Christ (see chapter 6 on becoming like the divine).<sup>285</sup>

Is Paul's religion of the mind a full-fledged religion? It may not be a proper religion if we allow our view on ancient religion to be determined by the type of research focusing on cult and polis religion. Oda Wischmeyer, for instance, takes an etic perspective and concludes that Paul's one and only religion was Judaism, of a Pharisaic subcategory, that Paul's understanding of pagan religion was a bad caricature of polytheism at best, and that after the Damascene

283 Or, 'worship God with the spirit', as some manuscripts render a dative (Θεῷ).

284 Cf. also Paul's own apostleship as an act of λατρεύω in *Romans* 1.9.

285 Though cf. on the combination of *pistis* language and libations as belonging to the cultic setting of establishing pacts and friendships Faraguna 2012, 357.

experience, Paul became the advocate of a weakened sort of religion.<sup>286</sup> She notes that Paul's new eschatological movement, without cult practice and with hardly any rituals, appeared to be an endeavour too ambitious for the liking of his *ekklēsiai*. From an etic science-of-religion approach, however, we run the risk of overlooking the truly religious nature of 'philosophical theology' or *theologia naturalis*. Even though this etic approach is an interesting thought experiment that confirms the non-cultic shape of Paul's project, the question remains whether this brings us any closer to understanding Paul's religion or Paul's notion of faith on its own terms. From our perspective in this chapter, this 'weakened' low-in-cult type of religion then turns out to fit the specific tripartite category of philosophical religion: a proper or 'strong' type of religion from the perspective of this ancient discourse.

At the end of this section, it is relevant to engage with one specific articulation of the position that Paul upholds cultic religion whilst strictly separating cult from ethics. Hans Dieter Betz offers a comprehensive interpretation of the first verses of *Romans* 12 in two successive articles in which he characterizes this text as 'Paul's definition of ethics' and 'Paul's definition of Christian religion'.<sup>287</sup> To some extent he underlines the exact position I am defending in this chapter, especially when he argues that

religion, not 'endowed with reason' (λόγος), is irrational. The additional qualification [i.e. λογικὴν], therefore, separates Christianity as religion from irrational superstition. Despite its rejection of all traditional religion, Christianity is neither atheism nor a new superstition. (Betz 1991, 337)

I largely agree with Betz here, even though, in light of the *theologia tripartita* literature, I would rather formulate it less apologetically and in slightly different terms.<sup>288</sup> Paul does not simply reject the degenerated poetic and civic

286 Wischmeyer 2002. Wischmeyer recognizes that there was no word in ancient Greek to communicate precisely this concept, and therefore she chooses to make use of the metalanguage (the etic concept) of 'religion' to analyse the structure of Paul's thought from an outsider perspective and to escape both 'theological concepts' and to some extent 'historical presentation' (76–80).

287 See respectively Betz 1988, 218 ('der Definition der Ethik'); Betz 1991, 343.

288 I agree with Betz's emphasis on the early Christians' need to present themselves as the mean between superstition and atheism, only I would not yet call this 'Christianity's' concern as if the early Christians knew they started some new religion. I do not see this as Paul's major concern in *Romans* 1 or 12, nor do I agree with Betz's assessment that *Romans* is the only letter in which Christian self-definition is at stake (see 317–318). In chapter 8 below, I will elaborate on this issue of self-definition.

religion of his day, but defines his project by re-imagining civic religious practices as intellectual worship, made possible by a Christ-like transformation of the debased mind (see §2.4.4). He thereby offers a philosophical approach to God, not only for the elite, but for the masses as well.

Betz, however, explicitly emphasizes the factual nature of the ritual.<sup>289</sup> As part of his argument, he takes issue with the tendency of ‘spiritualization’ in New Testament commentaries, whereby he understands spiritualization as a reduction to inner, mental, or personal activities.<sup>290</sup> Yet, by adding that ‘the apostle does not abrogate actual performance of the ritual’ he overlooks the complete lack of evidence of these cultic performances in Paul’s congregations.<sup>291</sup>

Another aspect of Betz’s interpretation remains more problematic. According to Betz, Paul only introduces the concept of *logikē latreia*, his definition of religion, because of the need for such a more historical perspective in *Romans*. Hence, ‘Paul’s definition of Christian religion does not appear to be an essential part of his understanding of the Christian faith.’<sup>292</sup> Here, we once again find ourselves in the midst of a discussion on the fundamental nature of religion and faith in antiquity, as outlined in section 2 of this chapter. Betz appears to be aware of the difficulties when it comes to defining religion in general and ancient religion in particular, yet fails to explicitly account for his own extensive usage of the term.<sup>293</sup> ‘Religion’ seems to be widely applicable on the one

---

289 Betz 1991, 320, n. 14. My critique of Betz in this subsection is mainly developed by drawing from the discourse of the *theologia tripartita*. It is unclear whether Betz was already working on this theme, on which he published an article in 2004, in the early nineties, although in this article he refers to Dio’s Olympian oration in one footnote (p. 324, n. 103).

290 Betz 1991, 320, n. 14.

291 Cf. the critique offered by Edwin Judge (2008e, 608): ‘Nor has Betz allowed for the metaphorical function of *latreia* in Rom 12.1. Instead he has assumed (as virtually all writers on the New Testament do) that “worship” (in the cultic sense) is seriously provided for in the New Testament.’ Cf. also his article in the same collection of essays, “Was Christianity a Religion?” (2008d, at 406, also *pace* Betz): ‘This instance of *latreia* is clearly metaphorical, and does not imply that Paul is offering “a comprehensive concept comprising ritual worship and ethics” which defines “the Christian religion” as “an enlightened form of religion”’.

292 Betz 1991, 343. On the close connection between this ‘definition of Christian religion’ and faith (*pistis*), see §2.4.5 *infra*.

293 His article opens with an extensive footnote on the issue: Betz 1991, 315, n. 1. Nevertheless, he then simply adopts the term without further considerations. See for instance at p. 316: ‘even within the New Testament itself several authors have made serious attempts to self-define Christian religion as they have understood it’. And cf. Betz 1994, 1: ‘As a religion Christianity was of course Hellenistic.’

hand, yet Betz only finds traces of it in Paul by linking it to *latreia* and cognates, whilst strictly separating it from ethics.<sup>294</sup> According to him, religion is ‘worship’, but does not seem to include moral transformation.

The dismissive response to Betz’s thesis by Edwin Judge is therefore not surprising: ‘The reason why Paul does not find the concept of religion essential is of course rather that it does not exist in the clear way the thesis of Betz seems to require.’<sup>295</sup> When we look at Judge’s understanding of ancient religion, however, we learn that he restricts religion in antiquity to civic religion. He describes it as being characterized by ‘its concentration upon correct procedures in worship’.<sup>296</sup> His criticism of Betz’s usage of the term is informed by a strict separation of religion and philosophy: ‘[n]either correct belief nor good behaviour was part of what we choose to call religion in antiquity.’<sup>297</sup> The ‘we’ in this sentence may denote Judge himself, but it certainly does not include the present author, nor, at first glance, Hans Dieter Betz (and for good reasons). Based on a first-order, tripartite definition of ancient religion, it comprised both ‘correct procedures’ (civic religion), artistic representations (poetic religion), and ‘correct belief’ with ‘good behaviour’ as its result (philosophical religion).

It is with regard to this final aspect that Betz is also reluctant to expand his own implicit understanding of ancient religion.<sup>298</sup> Following Albrecht Dihle’s essay on the canon of two virtues,<sup>299</sup> he argues that ethics in antiquity was generally based on religious piety. Yet, even though Betz continuously refers to ancient philosophical texts, mostly to Seneca’s portrayal of Posidonius, he describes Paul’s position as divergent:

Remarkably, however, in *Romans* 12.1–2 Paul keeps religion and ethics separate, although the former is the basis for the latter. Religion is not a virtue, and Paul never uses the term εὐσέβεια (‘piety’) to designate it.

---

294 Betz 1991, 337, cf. p. 342, quoted below.

295 Judge 2008e, 608.

296 Judge 2008e, 608.

297 Judge 2008e, 608.

298 In his conclusion, Betz seems somewhat surprised by the many parallels he encounters in philosophical literature, and feels the need to emphasize the separation between early Christianity and ancient philosophy (Betz 1991, 343): ‘What are we to make of this resemblance? The fact that there is such a resemblance at all is unexpected. Paul, after all, is not a philosopher but a theologian writing from the inside perspective of the Christian faith.’

299 Dihle 1968.



Ethics is intellectual discernment not to be confused with ritual performance. (Betz 1991, 342)

So here, according to Betz, only the ritual, ‘civic’, aspect is deemed ‘religion’ by Paul, whereas ethics is treated separately by the apostle, who accordingly devotes a second sentence (Rom 12.2) to this topic. Confusing ritual performance and intellectual discernment (that is, religion in the narrow cultic sense and ethics) is, however, precisely what Paul is doing in the first two verses by incorporating language from one domain into the other. For what could it mean to offer yourself as a living sacrifice, or in other words, your *pistis* as sacrifice (Phil 2.17), if not to worship logically (that is, with your transformed mind) and thereby discern and act on what is good, acceptable, and perfect? In its use of civic religious vocabulary, *Romans* 12.1 is Paul’s expression of his philosophical approach to religion.

#### 2.4.3 *Earthen Vessels with the Spirit of Pistis (2 Cor 4.13): Cultic Images as a Metaphor for Philosophical Religion*

There is another passage in the Pauline corpus that stands out for the appearance of what we might call civic religious vocabulary, even though this may not be evident at first glance.<sup>300</sup> In *2 Corinthians* 4, a passage I will also return to in chapter 4 (§4.4.3) and 6 (§6.4.4), Paul contrasts the glory, life, and light inside him with the affliction, death, and despair he undergoes. In this account, he quotes the first line from LXX *Psalms* 115:

But just as we have the same spirit of faith (πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως) that is in accordance with scripture—‘I believed’ (Ἐπίστευσα), and so I spoke—we also believe (πιστεύομεν), and so we speak. (*2 Corinthians* 4.13)

Seeing as the psalm continues with the theme of the speaker being brought low (ἐταπεινώθη), it is evident that in Paul’s mind, this condition of speaking out of faith from a position of suffering seems to be part of the intertextual connection. This connection has been noted many times. However, there are more parallels with the psalm that are not so easily distinguished.

<sup>300</sup> A third candidate for Paul’s metaphorical usage of cultic imagery is found earlier in *2 Corinthians*: being ‘an aroma of Christ’ is arguably related to religious processions. See Attridge 2003, 88: ‘Paul’s imagery in *2 Cor* 2.14–17 can be construed as a consistent development of the imagery of sacred unguents used in religious “triumphs” in which devotees made known the presence of a deity and also their relationship to the potent power celebrating the triumph.’ Though compare the extensive study by Christoph Heilig (2017) who argues for a military context.

*Psalm 115* (LXX) deals with the topos of the righteous sufferer by imagining this suffering as part of an offering to God. The question of what should be rendered to God is asked (τί ἀνταποδώσω τῷ Κυρίῳ), and by means of an answer, the psalmist names his vows or prayers (τάς εὐχάς) and the intention to 'offer an offering of thanksgiving' (θύσω θυσίαν αἰνέσεως). His suffering, paraphrased as 'the death of his saints' (ὁ θάνατος τῶν ὁσίων αὐτοῦ), is transformed into something which constitutes honour (τίμιος) in the eyes of God. In this way, the psalmist comes close to reimagining cultic acts as mental and ethical acts, and sacrifice as righteous, moral suffering of a human being. As we saw in the previous subsection, this idea, with apparent roots in Jewish as well as Platonic thought, is very much in line with Paul's idea of a *thusia zosa*, 'living sacrifice', and a *logikē latreia*, 'reasonable worship'.

Taking this further knowledge of LXX *Psalm 115* into account in our reading of 2 *Corinthians 4* highlights the cultic elements in this passage. Just as in *Romans 12.1*, 'present your bodies as a living sacrifice', Paul uses the verb 'to present' (παρίστημι) in the same sentence in which he quotes *Psalm 115* to express his expectation of being 'presented' to God. Like an animal sacrifice, Paul's body is being subjected to death in order to receive life (2 Cor 4.11). The grace of God will thus lead to more people offering mental offerings of thanksgiving (2 Cor 4.15). Cultic language is used to express the process of people gaining the life of Christ.

If we can indeed assume such a cultic setting for this passage, based on the intertextual connection to this psalm there is another connection to pagan cult which may help us to understand even more of what Paul is saying, especially regarding the 'earthen vessels'. To this end, we should recall the allowance Varro made for cultic images, as part of the tripartite theology discourse discussed above. Whereas Varro was very sceptical about the poets and their all-too-human representations of the gods, he conceded that the human body as such was not an altogether bad choice of the ancients for representing the divine. Varro refers to the practice of placing vases in temples to represent an aspect of the divinity, as wine vessels were used to represent a god associated with wine. Likewise, Varro argues:

By an image (*per simulacrum*) which had the human form the rational soul was signified, because the human form is the vessel, as it were, (*velut vase*) in which that nature is wont to be contained which they attribute to God, or to the gods. (Augustine, *City of God* 7.5)

Varro's description of the human form as a vessel for the divine nature is completely in line with Paul's argument here.<sup>301</sup> Paul reasons that he is himself a vase in which is hidden 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor 4.6). Not only is Christ called an 'image of God' (εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ) in this passage, Paul is describing himself as a simulacrum of God.

Most commentaries and analyses unfortunately miss this cultic, devotional frame when they read Paul's metaphor of the vessel as an expression of fragility, vulnerability, or trifling value.<sup>302</sup> Among those who do pick up on this discourse when discussing this part of the letter are Jane Heath and Nijay Gupta. Without reference to Varro or the tripartite theology discourse, Heath discusses the highly cultic and (as her own approach emphasizes) highly 'visual' manner in which Paul presents himself as a vessel containing glory. 'Paul is like an idol', she concludes, since 'Paul's imagery is consistent with ancient language for discussing images of deities, both in Hellenistic and in Jewish culture.'<sup>303</sup> Gupta, when commenting on the use of faith language in this passage (2 Cor 4.13–18), also emphasizes the link to the Jewish critique of pagan idolatry. According to him, however, Paul uses *pistis* in this passage to emphasize that while pagans worship in awe of the glittering outside, the inside can only be seen in faith, looking beyond the unbelievable exterior.<sup>304</sup> While I do not share this conclusion on the nature of faith (as I will explain below in §4.4.3)—faith does not so much overcome the unbelievability of the earthen vessel as it transcends the limited realm of sense-perception—the context of idol worship is important here to show how Paul deviates from pagan cultic discourses.

In Paul's presentation, it is a weak and assaulted human body that contains divine glory. This is a sharp contrast to the much more common pagan usage of a splendid human shape that represents divine splendour. To some extent, Paul follows Varro's take on the subject by criticizing images of creation that are meant to represent God while simultaneously indulging the use of the human form for God. But he diverges from Varro's thought in two substantial ways, namely by only endorsing real humans (no statues) as divine images and by opting for the worst human bodies to represent the greatest divine glory.

301 Cf. for a treatment of the same topos Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.52: 'For the body is as it were a vessel or a sort of shelter for the soul (*quasi vas est aut aliquod animi receptaculum*).'

302 E.g. Watson 1993, 43, but see also more detailed studies such as Fitzgerald 1986, 167–168.

303 Heath 2009, 277.

304 Gupta 2020b, ch. 7, 'On Faith and Forms'.

The idea that visible, 'sensible' images offer insight into the divine is a familiar topos in Hellenistic-Roman philosophy (see also chapter 4). Moreover, the idea that a created being is a temple of God and offers access to the divine is also a shared conception amongst philosophers such as Seneca and Plutarch.<sup>305</sup> The former speaks of the universe as 'the vast temple of all the gods (*ingens deorum omnium templum*) (...) whose true apparitions and true aspects she [i.e. Wisdom] offers to the gaze of our minds (*cuius vera simulacra verasque facies cernendas mentibus protulit*).'<sup>306</sup> The latter calls the universe 'a most holy temple and most worthy of a god (ἱερὸν ἀγιώτατον καὶ θεοπρεπέστατον) in which humans are cast as spectators of 'sensible representations of intelligibles (αἰσθητὰ μιμήματα νοητῶν) that the divine mind, says Plato, has revealed.'<sup>307</sup> According to both authors, however, humans are the spectators, not the cultic statue itself. They fit the picture Paul painted in *Romans* 1, that the divine nature and power are 'understood and seen through the things he has made'. However, to picture oneself and one's addressees both as a temple (1 Cor 3.16 and 6.19) and as the ultimate simulacrum, as he does in 2 *Corinthians* 4, seems to be particular to Paul.<sup>308</sup> In a survey of 'New Testament Iconography', C. Kavin Rowe praises Paul's innovative work in this regard as 'a reordering of social space not around εἰκόνες but around community (...) this community itself, by virtue of its participation in the εἰκῶν θεοῦ, is an image.'<sup>309</sup> Particularly in his letters to the Corinthian community, this is a creative move which not only captures a fundamental theological notion, but also confronts the Corinthians with their role as sacred images who by their very nature cannot partake in the worship of other divinities.

This comparison to a cultic simulacrum is thus used to emphasize that Paul, a living human being, represents the deity. But there is another side to this comparison: it also serves to highlight his role as a votive offering, pledged to God and suffering on account of Christ. In fact, many classicists have done

305 To represent the cosmos as a building or sacred building is an even more common theme that can be found across ancient Near-Eastern cultures: see Van Leeuwen 2007.

306 Seneca, *Epistles* 90.28.

307 Plutarch, *On Tranquillity of Mind* 477C.

308 The closest parallel with a collective pictured as a temple building seems to be *Community Rule* (1QS) 8.5: 'the Council of the Community shall be established in truth. It shall be an Everlasting Plantation, a House of Holiness for Israel' (translation Vermes 1997, 109). Here, however, the role of this Council of Community seems to be to offer atonement in the role of priests by living obedient to the covenant, not the representation of divine glory or the transmission of knowledge of the divine. Cf. Cryer & Thompson 1998, 92–93.

309 Rowe 2005, 309.

away with the dichotomy between cult statues and images used as votive offerings.<sup>310</sup> It is now commonly assumed that in the antique framework, images could easily perform both the role of being dedicated and offered to the gods and representing and embodying them at the same time. We already saw how this idea of *being* a sacrifice is present in the psalm Paul quotes here. The Graeco-Roman cultic context is perfectly aligned with this element. Paul sees himself as not only reflecting the divine ('so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh'), he is also like one 'given up to death for Jesus's sake' (2 Cor 4.11): that is, an offering to God.

To sum up, we have seen once again how Paul draws on the religious practices and thought from the diffuse Mediterranean culture he was part of, all the while reconfiguring the metaphors and concepts to fit his own broader mission and an agenda specific to his letters. Viewed from the perspective of the *theologia tripartita*, Paul takes up the cultic theology of temples, icons, vessels, and offerings and transforms it into what we may well call *theologia naturalis*. Indeed, the point he makes concerns the manner in which humans can have knowledge of God through created being. By pinpointing Christ, himself, and finally his communities as icons he effectively turns these communities into a *theologia*, a doorway to knowledge about God.

And what is the role of faith, or more specifically the *pneuma tēs pisteōs* in this context? It was at least important enough to Paul to quote this short phrase from the psalm in question and to highlight the verb (ἐπίστευσα) in new, substantivized terms as a 'spirit of faith'. The precise role of faith in being an image of the divine will become clearer when I discuss the other discourses in the remaining chapters (particularly chapter 6 on imitation of the divine). For now, it is enough to note that *pistis* is apparently a notion that is relevant to Paul for describing his project and teachings in philosophical-religious terms.

#### 2.4.4 *Be Transformed by a Renewal of the Mind (Rom 12.2): Philosophical Religion as Ethical Transformation*

In section 2.4.2, I discussed the beginning of *Romans* 12 and argued for a metaphorical usage of cultic terms through which Paul defines his movement as philosophical-religious. In the following sentence, Paul's audience is said 'not to be conformed to this age' (μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ), but instead 'to

<sup>310</sup> See in particular the volume on divine images in the ancient world edited by Jannis Mylonopoulos (2010). As the editor summarizes in the introductory chapter (p. 4), 'It is one of the contentions of this volume that the very opposition of "cult statue" and "votive offering" is methodologically problematic. Even those images located in the centre of a temple were normally votive offerings of the city to its gods.'

be transformed by a renewal of the mind' (ἀλλὰ μεταμορφούσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός)<sup>311</sup> so that they may 'examine what is the will of God, the good, the pleasing, and the perfect' (εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον).

These admonitions can be considered further elaborations of the appeal formulated in verse 1, in which Paul already referred verbatim to his earlier diagnosis of *Romans* 1 by describing a different type of worship (λατρεία). Similar verbal references to *Romans* 1.18–32 can be distinguished in this follow-up sentence, which further defines the philosophical alternative Paul is offering to his at least partially gentile audience. In *Romans* 1, the diagnosis was that their minds were literally 'failing the test' (Rom 1.28: ἀδόκιμος), because they did not approve God (after testing) (Rom 1.28: ἐδοκίμασαν). The prognosis offered in *Romans* 12 is that they will again be able to test (and approve) (Rom 12.2: δοκιμάζειν) the will of God. This renewed possibility is opened up by transforming the mind (νοῦς), the exact faculty that was failing in civic-poetic religion according to *Romans* 1.28. Lastly, it should be pointed out that Paul is again speaking of a specific age (αἰών) to which his public should not conform. Correspondingly, as discussed above (§2.4.1), *Romans* 1.18–32 can best be explained as a historiographical analysis of different periods: an initial Golden Age followed by successive periods of degeneration leading to the present, evil age to which one should not conform. This somewhat pessimistic 'historiographical framing' is confirmed by other Pauline expressions that also contain *schēma* language, particularly *1 Corinthians* 7.31: 'For the present form of this world is passing away' (παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου).

Apart from ways in which Paul knits together these parts of the letter, some phrases deserve more attention because of their meaning and philosophical significance. First, there is the imperative μεταμορφούσθε, 'be transformed', used in direct syntactical contrast to μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε, 'do not become conformed'. In Paul's letters, as in the entire New Testament, the former verb occurs only once more in *2 Corinthians* 3.18, where 'we' are said to behold the reflection of glory of the Lord without a veil over our minds<sup>312</sup> and are thus transformed into that same image (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα) from glory to glory. The description of petrified and veiled minds, here referring to

311 Many textual witnesses, including the Codex Sinaiticus, have the additional pronoun ὑμῶν, yet this is absent from i.a. P46 (dated 2nd century), Alexandrinus, Vaticanus e.a.

312 A justifiable translation for καρδία (v. 15) is used as a synonym for τὰ νοήματα (v. 14). Cf. καρδία (v. 21) and νοῦς (v. 28) in *Romans* 1.

Moses and the people of Israel, reflects a similar Pauline idea, even as it is applied to pagans in *Romans* 1.<sup>313</sup>

Whereas in *2 Corinthians* 3.18, the object of this metamorphosis is God himself, Paul uses a slightly different term, *συμμορφώω/σύμμορφος* when he is referring to Christ. God has selected people 'to be conformed to the image of his Son' (Rom 8.29: *συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ*); Paul wants 'to conform to Christ's death' (Phil 3.10: *συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ*); and Christ will 'transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory' (Phil 3.21: *ὃς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ*). In this last verse, note the combination of *μορφή-* and *σχῆμα* language we also find in *Romans* 12.2, which suggests that they function as semantic parallels to Paul. Furthermore, it can be inferred from these other verses that the type of mind Paul has 'in mind' to be transformed into is that of Christ.<sup>314</sup> This process of 'shaping' Christ's followers into his image is part of a larger motive of imitation (see my chapter 6 below for more).

In pagan Greek and Latin sources, *metamorph-* language it is mostly used in the context of myth or parables, usually referring to gods and demi-gods transforming either themselves into humans and animals or human beings into animals.<sup>315</sup> Betz notes that this metamorphosis is grounded in ancient philosophical thinking on human nature, yet he offers no specific *topoi* or sources on which this judgement is based.<sup>316</sup> Whereas TLG searches demonstrate that

313 There may be a difference in gravity and in intended referents between the condition of 'hardening' in *2 Corinthians* 3.14 pertaining to Israelites (in the days of Moses and, arguably, in the days of Paul) and that of being blinded in *2 Corinthians* 4.4, a condition suffered by *apistoi*, who may well be pagans. If this is so, the latter condition seems to better approximate the mind's condition of being 'corrupted' or 'dysfunctional' in *Romans* 1. Cf. *Ephesians* 4.17–18, where 'futility of their minds' (*ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν*) and 'darkened in their understanding' (*ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντε*) explicitly concerns gentiles. See §4.4.4 below on *2 Corinthians* 3–5 and chapter 8 on Paul's usage of *apistoi*.

314 Cf. *1 Corinthians* 2.16: 'But we have the mind of Christ' (*ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν*) and *Philippians* 2.5: 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus' (*τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*). On this 'noetic transformation', see Lee 2006, 160: 'The Corinthians belong to a new humanity, and their participation in this new humanity is inextricably linked to the possession of the νοῦς Χριστοῦ.'

315 Cf. for instance Parmenides, *Fragment* 24; Pseudo-Diogenes, *Epistles* 34.2; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 1.24.8.

316 Betz 1988, 213: 'Dieser Begriff der Verwandlung hat seine tiefen Wurzeln im antiken philosophischen Denken über die menschliche Natur.' His contextualization remains somewhat general, also with regard to νοῦς: 'Die Wissenschaft hat bisher keine Untersuchung vorgelegt über die unbezweifelbaren, aber komplizierten Hintergründe in der griechis-

a ‘metamorphosis of the mind’ or a ‘renewal of the mind’ is not a common philosophical terminology in the extant Greek sources, we do find its Latin equivalent in Quintilian and Seneca. In Quintilian’s handbook of oratory, the minds (*animi*) to be transfigured are those of the judges, which is the orator’s ultimate yet difficult aim:

Thus we have still before us a subject which both offers the most powerful means of securing our aims, and is much more difficult than anything we have discussed above: I mean the business of affecting the judges’ minds, shaping them to our wishes, and, one might say, transfiguring them (*movendi iudicium animos atque in eum quem volumus habitum formandi et velut transfigurandi*). (Quintilianus, *The Orator’s Education* 6.2.1)

Even though in Paul the genre is quite different and the verb used intransitively, the synonyms Quintilian offers are significant: a transformation of the mind is linked to a ‘movement’ of minds and to the ‘formation of a *habitus*’ or attitude.

Yet even more relevant to our purposes is the vocabulary of transfiguration in Seneca, used in the context of moral progress and self-knowledge:

I understand, my dear Lucilius, that I am being not only reformed, but transformed (*Intellego, Lucili, non emendari me tantum sed transfigurari*). I do not yet, however, assure myself, or indulge the hope, that there are no elements left in me which need to be changed. Of course there are many that should be made more compact, or made thinner, or be brought into greater prominence. And indeed this very fact is proof that my spirit is altered into something better (*in melius translati animi*)—that it can see its own faults, of which it was previously ignorant. (Seneca, *Epistles* 6.1)

We see here that it is again the mind (*animus*) that needs a transformation to become better, the effect of which is a clearer vision of what is not perfected yet. While this passage just quoted is cited regularly as a parallel, it is relevant to look for further clues to better understand Seneca’s idea of transfiguration of

---

chen Philosophie. Nun kann kein Zweifel daran bestehen, daß der Begriff νοῦς sich auf den Intellekt bezieht’ (p. 13). Cf. on the possible connection between μεταμορφώω, Paul’s μορφή language and philosophical εἰκῶν discourse Van Kooten 2008, section 1.3: ‘Image, form and trans-formation: A semantic taxonomy of Paul’s ‘morphic’ language’ (69–91).



the mind.<sup>317</sup> This process of ethical growth is elaborated on in another passage on ‘transfiguration’, in which Seneca quotes an unknown source (meant to refer to Lucilius’s letters) to expatiate upon the steps necessary to become wise:

It is said: ‘Philosophy is divided into knowledge and state of mind (*scientiam et habitum animi*). For one who has learned and understood what he should do and avoid, is not a wise man until his mind is metamorphosed into the shape of that which he has learned (*nondum sapiens est, nisi in ea, quae didicit, animus eius transfiguratus est*). This third department—that of precept (*pars praecipendi*)—is compounded from both the others, from dogmas of philosophy and state of mind (*et ex decretis et ex habitu*). Hence it is superfluous as far as the perfecting of virtue is concerned.’ (Seneca, *Epistles* 94.48–49)

This remarkable Stoic definition of philosophy as both ‘knowledge’ and a ‘transfigured mind’ (*animus eius transfiguratus*) comes very close to Paul’s own admonition to transform one’s thinking and suggests that this admonition takes part in a typical philosophical discourse.<sup>318</sup>

When we arrive at the passage just cited, Seneca had just given his own definition of virtue as *contemplatio* and *actio* (94.45), deeming admonition (*admonitio*) necessary for the latter part. Thus, he refines the statement he quotes by rehabilitating the third element, that of concrete precepts or admonitions regarding what to do and what to avoid. He responds that there is reciprocity between the reformed mind and following precepts, that only those who are already wise have no need of them, and that the question remains how we are to know if we have arrived there. Therefore, we, especially the less genius (*inbecillioribus (...) ingeniis*), are in need of someone to precede us (*aliquem praecire*).<sup>319</sup> The connection, common in ancient ethics at least since Socrates/Plato, between knowledge and moral action functions as a backdrop to both Seneca’s and Paul’s instructions.<sup>320</sup>

317 E.g. Plummer 2000 [1915], 106; Keener 2009b, 227, n. 127.

318 Cf. on this parallel Thorsteinsson 2006, 148: ‘precisely as Seneca, Paul is not only thinking of intellectual transformation—that of learning and understanding—but of a metamorphosis of both discernment and deed. He is thinking of a total moral transformation.’

319 Seneca, *Epistles* 94.50.

320 See also Johnson 2003, 220: ‘Paul shares the logic of ancient moralists, who assume that moral behavior follows upon right perception, enabling ancient polemic to argue that just as good perceptions lead to proper behavior, so also wicked deeds suffice to demonstrate a derangement in thinking.’

In fact, the correction by Seneca that it requires more than merely knowledge, namely a good *habitus* and admonitions, to be virtuous can be regarded as a correction of the strict ‘knowledge is virtue’ thesis ascribed to Socrates by Aristotle, who also critiques this view.<sup>321</sup> In view of the remainder of *Romans* 12, Paul would certainly agree. Indeed, there is an even stronger agreement as to what is fostered by these admonitions and in turn inspires to do what is good: nothing other than *credere/fides/fiducia*, the Latin equivalents of *pisteuō/pistis*:

Two things grant more strength to the mind (*plurimum roboris animo dant*)—trust in the truth and confidence (*fides veri et fiducia*); both are the result of admonition. For men believe it (*creditur illi*), and when belief is established (*cum creditum est*), the mind receives great inspiration and is filled with confidence (*magnos animus spiritus concipit ac fiducia impletur*). Therefore, admonition is not superfluous. (Seneca, *Epistles* 94.46)

I will pick up on this interesting connection when I discuss the ‘measure of *pistis*’ below and the relevance of *habitus* (in Greek: *ēthos*) for understanding Paul’s *pistis* vocabulary in chapter 6. For now, we have seen how the Pauline phrase that we ought to ‘be transformed by the renewal of the mind’ has close parallels in the philosophical transformation Seneca envisions that consists of an ‘appropriation of teachings’.

The other verb, *suschēmatizō* (συσχηματίζω), used negatively in this sentence, rarely occurs in non-Christian or Jewish classical sources outside of astrological contexts. Only Plutarch uses it in moral contexts. Sometimes its meaning is merely one of superficially changed appearances, as in his description of vice during the day: ‘by day vice, looking outside of itself and conforming its attitude to others, is abashed and veils its emotions, and does not give itself up completely to its impulses (Plutarch, *On Virtue and Vice* 100F–101A). Or, similarly, in the outward changeability of the flatterer: ‘But the flatterer, since he has no abiding-place of character to dwell in (μίαν ἐστίαν ἦθους οὐκ ἔχω) (...), moulding and adapting himself to suit another (...), changes his shape to fit his receiver (συσχηματιζόμενος τοῖς ὑποδεχομένοις).’<sup>322</sup> Interestingly,

321 This reception of Socrates’s teachings rests mostly on Aristotle’s portrayal, e.g. in *Eudemian Ethics* 1.5.15–18 (1216b4–26) and is not entirely justified, for Socrates thought of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) as an art (τέχνη), not merely rational principles (λόγοι), as shown by John Sellars’s thesis (2003, esp. 50–53).

322 Plutarch, *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 52A–B.

it also occurs twice in the context of the reign of Numa, the second kind of Rome, who will figure prominently in the next chapter. First, in what Plutarch calls a myth, that the goddess Egeria ‘helped him in instituting and shaping the government of his State (συσχηματίζειν τὴν πολιτείαν).’<sup>323</sup> And second, with the even rarer compound verb *summetaschēmatizō* (συμμετασχηματίζω: 12 occurrences of the lemma in the entire TLG corpus), Plutarch reasons that if the subjects of a just ruler like Numa will follow the

shining example of virtue in the life of their ruler (τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐν εὐδὴλῳ παραδείγματι), they will of their own accord walk in wisdom’s ways (ἐχουσίως σωφρονούσι), and unite with him in conforming themselves (συμμετασχηματίζονται) to a blameless and blessed life of friendship and mutual concord (πρὸς τὸν ἐν φιλίᾳ καὶ ὁμοιοῖᾳ τῇ πρὸς αὐτοὺς (...) ἀμύμονα καὶ μακάριον βίον) attended by righteousness and temperance (μετὰ δικαιοσύνης καὶ μετριότητος). (Plutarch, *Numa* 20.8)<sup>324</sup>

Remarkably, here the language of *suschēmatizō* is combined with the vocabulary of thoughtfulness, measure, and moderation, which Paul also uses in *Romans* 12.3 (see the next subsection). More generally, these instances show that *suschēmatizō* can indeed serve in an ethical context, and that its meaning can range from a negatively coloured superficial conformity to profound moral change for the better.

As for Paul’s usage of *mind* (νοῦς), I already noted the references to *Romans* 1.18–32 and the important connection in Pauline thought to Christ’s mind. In scholarly commentaries, there is some discussion about the possible dualism at play in this section or in Paul in general, either between the body and the mind, or between the mind and the spirit (πνεῦμα). James Dunn insists that these verses are best understood by speaking of ‘the human *soma* as the embodied “I” and ‘the *nous* as the rational person, the perceiving, thinking, determining “I”.’<sup>325</sup> Instead I would argue that *Romans* 12.1–2 rather functions to underline their unity, especially when ‘presenting your body’ is seen metaphorically.

323 Plutarch, *On the Fortune of the Romans* 321B.

324 On the discourse of a ‘living law’ in this text, see §3.3.6 *infra*; on the motive of assimilation to a ruler, leader, or god, see my chapter 6.

325 Dunn 1998, 74, cf. on the more comprehensive meaning of νοῦς p. 75, n. 107: ‘*Nous* could have an emotive overtone in Greek thought (LSJ, *nous* 3), just as it could occasionally (6 times) translate Hebrew *leb*, “heart” (as against the 723 occasions in which *leb* is translated as *kardia*).’

Luke Johnson observes that in the beginning of *Romans* 12, ‘there is an emphasis on the readers’ cognitive capacities rather than affective dispositions’.<sup>326</sup> Even though the purpose of his article is to show that Paul’s religious and moral teachings, his pneumatology and ethics, are intertwined, Johnson starts off by postulating precisely such a dichotomy, as if both represent two separate discourses. Hence, according to his conclusion, Paul provides a religious framework to an otherwise horizontal Aristotelean morality by adding concepts such as transformation to the mind of Christ, the measure of faith, and the aid of the Holy Spirit.<sup>327</sup> Here, it seems, some anachronisms regarding what constitutes religion and philosophy/ethics appear to be in play. According to the authors discussed in section 2.3, the mind is the ultimate gift of the gods to humanity, with which people can know the gods and can become more like them, i.e. live a morally good life. These *topoi* are deeply religious yet at the same time philosophical and ultimately ethical in their implications. Furthermore, the concepts of *pneuma* and *nous* were closely related in Stoic philosophy. ‘For the Stoics both πνεῦμα and νοῦς were pervasive in universal humanity’, as Michelle Lee states in her section on the importance and Stoic background of cognitive language in 1 *Corinthians* 1–4.<sup>328</sup> In Jewish-Hellenistic thought, ethics and piety are also inextricably related. For instance, in 4 *Maccabees*, it is stated that ‘devout reason (ὁ εὐσεβῆς λογισμὸς) is master of all emotions’.<sup>329</sup> The mind is even considered to be the epitome of the creation of humanity:

For, as I have said, the temperate mind (ὁ σώφρων νοῦς) is able to get the better of the emotions, to correct some, and to render others powerless. (...) Now when God fashioned human beings, he planted in them emotions and inclinations (τὰ πάθη αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ἥθη), but at the same time he enthroned the mind among the senses as a sacred governor (τὸν ἱερὸν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν) over them all. (4 *Maccabees* 2.4.18, 21–22)

326 Johnson 2003, 218. The motivation for his research, however, is the fact that ‘here, where we most might have expected it, we find no role at all assigned to the Holy Spirit.’

327 Johnson 2003, 235: ‘while Paul’s moral logic is remarkably similar to the character ethics of Aristotle (...) the framework for that logic is pervasively colored by his religious convictions.’

328 Lee 2006, 158.

329 4 *Maccabees* 18.2. Cf. the combination of *pistis*, *logos* (ἀλόγιστον) and *eusebeia* in 4 *Maccabees* 16.22–23: ‘You too must have the same faith in God (τὴν αὐτὴν πίστιν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἔχοντες), and not be grieved. It is unreasonable for people who have religious knowledge not to withstand pain (ἀλόγιστον γὰρ εἰδότας εὐσέβειαν μὴ ἀνθίστασθαι τοῖς πόνοις).’

A moderate mind is thus key for living a moral life, a life pleasing to its Creator. In sum, to artificially separate the religious from the philosophical, pneumatology from ethics, *nous* from *pneuma*, or *pistis* from *logos*, would not make sense to either Jew or Greek in the Hellenistic-Roman period. Whereas we are accustomed to place terms like 'spirit' and '(measure of) faith' in the box labelled 'religion' and 'mind' or 'thought' on an altogether different shelf, all these terms perfectly fitted within the ancient topos of moral perfection of the godlike mind.

#### 2.4.5 *Think with Thoughtfulness According to the Measure of Pistis* (Rom 12.3): Faith as a Divine, Philosophical Standard

Up until now, and unlike the chapters to come, this chapter has not yet delved too much into Pauline *pistis* itself. In the text I conclude with, however, *pistis* does occur in the unique expression<sup>330</sup> of a 'measure of *pistis*'. The notion of 'thinking with moderation' is further specified as a mode of thinking according to this measure. But interpretations differ widely when it comes to whom they should think of (themselves or each other), what this measure is (a subjective amount or an objective standard), and what *pistis* means (faith, faithfulness, or a stewardship). But before we come to this particular expression, we ought to have a further look at the beginning of verse 3:

For by the grace given to me I say (Λέγω γὰρ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι) to everyone among you (παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν) not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think (μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν), but to think with sober judgement (ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν). (*Romans* 12.3)

In most editions and commentaries, verse 3 marks the transition into a new pericope, focusing on the different gifts or tasks within the community. Seen from the perspective of a philosophical agenda behind this text, however, the strong cohesion of these verses with the preceding two becomes apparent. Yet, already on a verbal level, we note the coherence between verse 3 and 1 because of the parallel opening construction: 1) a verb of communication in first person singular; 2) a particle; 3) a motivational / foundational formula referring to God's involvement with 'by' (διὰ) + double genitive. Moreover, the 'not'-'but' (μὴ-ἀλλὰ) construction provides a syntactical link to verse 2.

<sup>330</sup> It does not occur elsewhere in either Jewish-Hellenistic, early Christian or Graeco-Roman extant sources.

So what is this third verse about? The main message Paul is directing ‘to all who are amongst you’ (παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν) involves a creative use of verbs, all related to ‘thinking’ (φρονέω). These phrases are difficult to render in English without losing sight of the wordplay, but its essence is something like ‘not to have higher thoughts than one must think, but to think with thoughtfulness’.<sup>331</sup> In order to better understand what this brief statement means, I will discuss the use of these words in both Pauline and Graeco-Roman sources.

The verb *phroneō* is much exploited in (authentic and disputed) Pauline literature, accounting for 23 of the 27 occurrences in the whole New Testament corpus. Of these 9 occur in *Romans*, with an additional 4 instances of the otherwise-in-the-NT-lacking noun φρόνημα and 1 instance of φρόνιμος.<sup>332</sup> Although the basic meaning of *phroneō* and cognates is rather general, rendered as ‘thinking’, ‘thought’, and ‘intelligent’ or ‘in one’s right mind’, a closer look at the Pauline passages shows some more specialized, recurring uses.

One particular semantic field in which *phroneō* language is used by Paul or his school is that of a ‘two-fold mind-focus’. Accordingly, *Romans* 8.5–8 speaks of thinking and thought of the flesh and of the spirit (τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς / τοῦ πνεύματος); *Philippians* 3.2 is an invective against ‘those whose minds are set on earthly things’ (οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονούντες); and *Colossians* 3.2 advises to ‘set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth’ (τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). Second, *phroneō* language functions even more dominantly in a specifically social context, where the unity among the community members is at stake. A key phrase here is ‘to think similarly’ or ‘to be of like mind’ (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν).<sup>333</sup> A third recurring usage is close in meaning to ὑπερφρονεῖν: this is when φρονεῖν is used in the context of being able to boast, becoming proud or arrogant. This meaning is closely related to social concerns: *Romans* 11.20 warns against becoming proud vis-à-vis the Israelites (μὴ ὑψηλὰ φρόνει), an admonition repeated in *Romans* 11.25 (ἴνα μὴ ᾗτε [ἐν] ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι). And in an ironic fashion, pride is also at stake in

331 Cf. the translation of Robert Jewett (2003, 102), who also tries to maintain the wordplay: ‘do not be superminded above what one ought to be minded, but set your mind on being sober-minded.’ On the syntactical connectedness and personal or neuter referent of ἐκάστω, see below, §2.4.5.

332 The noun φρόνησις occurs only twice in the NT: *Luke* 1.17 and *Ephesians* 1.8. The adjective φρόνιμος occurs 15 times, of which 10 times in *Luke* and *Matthew* and 5 times in the Pauline letters.

333 See *Romans* 12.16, 15.5, 2 *Corinthians* 13.11, *Philippians* 2.2–5 (twice, also τὸ ἐν φρονούντες), 4.2. Passages without this exact wording yet voicing a similar concern include *Philippians* 3.15 and *Galatians* 5.10.

Paul's puns in *1 Corinthians* 4.10 ('We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise (φρόνιμοι) in Christ') and *2 Corinthians* 11.19 ('For you gladly put up with fools, being wise (φρόνιμοι) yourselves'). The second and third usage I distinguish here are explicitly linked in *Romans* 12.16, not long after the verse we are discussing here (Rom 12.3):

Live in harmony with one another (τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονούντες); do not be haughty (μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονούντες), but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are (μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς). (*Romans* 12.16)

From this it is possible to infer that in *Romans* 12.3 Paul is also addressing social issues. His addressees are to worship as one instead of claiming to have higher thoughts than others.

Still, as I argued in the previous subsection (§2.4.4), this is not to say that he no longer participates in a religio-philosophical discourse. In fact, *phronēsis* was a pre-eminent philosophical virtue. As 'practical wisdom', it was a key term of the Peripatetics and next to *sōphrosynē* one of the four cardinal virtues, arguably the most important, in contemporary Stoicism.<sup>334</sup> Chrysippus describes it as the 'knowledge of what is to be done and what is not or what is indifferent or the knowledge of good things, bad things, and indifferent things'.<sup>335</sup> This connection with knowing what to deem good allows us to see how it relates this sentence (Rom 12.3) to the previous one (Rom 12.1–2): it is by thoughtful thinking (φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν) that we are able to distinguish (δοκιμάζειν) what is good (τὸ ἀγαθόν). Still, unlike suggestions by some scholars such as Runar Thorsteinsson, I would not go so far as to argue for an intentional reference to Stoicism here.<sup>336</sup> I would, however, argue that Paul alludes to this philosophical virtue in order to show how the type of worship he proposes is philosophical in nature, instead of civic or mythical.

334 For the four cardinal virtues in Stoicism, see e.g. Chrysippus in SVF 3.262, where all four virtues are given a short definition; Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1034C (SVF 1.200): φρόνησιν ἀνδρείαν σωφροσύνην δικαιοσύνην; Seneca, *Epistles* 90.46, on the lack of knowledge of these four virtues in the second age: *iustitia*, (...) *prudentia*, (...) *temperantia ac fortitudo*. In a different letter, Seneca traces all virtues back to *prudentia* (the Latin equivalent of φρόνησις) and concludes that 'prudence is sufficient to constitute the happy life' (*Epistles* 85.2).

335 Chrysippus apud Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.7.5 (SVF 3.262): φρόνησιν δ' εἶναι ἐπιστήμην ὧν ποιητέον καὶ οὐ ποιητέον καὶ οὐδετέρων ἢ ἐπιστήμην ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν καὶ οὐδετέρων.

336 Thorsteinsson 2006, 149–150.

The verb ὑπερφρονεῖν is only used in the NT in this one instance and is used relatively rarely in other Greek sources—I have counted only 635 instances for all cognates in the full TLG database of which less than a hundred are dated before 200AD. Used intransitively, its literal meaning of ‘over-thinking’ or ‘thinking highly’ is linked to pride and arrogance. Used transitively, it means ‘looking down upon’ in either a literal or in a figurative manner as in ‘thinking lightly of’ (*cum gen.*) or ‘despising’ (*cum acc.*).<sup>337</sup> Both uses are strikingly frequent in the context of religion or the gods. An example of a very literal usage with humorous figurative ambiguity is the caricatural portrayal of Socrates in Aristophanes’s *Clouds*. Socrates makes his entrance in a basket in the sky, where he claims to be able to meditate more easily about celestial phenomena. The anti-hero of the play, Strepsiades, remarks, ‘And so you look down upon the gods (τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπερφρονεῖς) from your basket, and not from the earth?’<sup>338</sup> The insinuation that the philosopher’s inquiries may negatively influence his devotional attitude gives us an interesting insight into this period’s popular reception of the pretensions of natural philosophy.<sup>339</sup> In more serious contexts, the verb can also signify a lack of devotion, such as in Dio’s *Olympic Oration*, in a passage already quoted on the Epicureans, who are accused of despising the divine (ὑπερφρονουσι τὰ θεῖα).<sup>340</sup> In the same sentence, their act of elevating Pleasure to a divine status is also called an act of hubris.<sup>341</sup> These examples indicate that in common Greek thought—if one can speak of such a vague concept based on extant literary sources—ὑπερφρονεῖν was often considered a religious offence as well. So again, it can be safely concluded that separating the religious from the philosophical-ethical does not make sense from an ancient perspective.

I want to illustrate this point by one more source, in which not only having high thoughts is linked to hubris and to the religious, but in which the concept of *sōphronein*, thinking moderately, is also foregrounded as the antidote to *hyperphronein*. This combination of verbs occurs in less than a handful of non-Christian Graeco-Roman texts that survive.<sup>342</sup> The most relevant passage is from another play, a tragedy this time: Aeschylus’s *Persae*. The ghost of Darius

337 The first meaning can also go with a dative to express ‘pride in or of’: see LSJ for some further references.

338 Aristophanes, *Clouds* 226–227.

339 See on the popularisation of natural philosophy in this period West 2001, 121.

340 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.36.

341 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.36: ὑπερφρονουσι τὰ θεῖα, καὶ μίαν ἰδρυσάμενοι δαίμονα πονηρὰν καὶ ἄτοπον, τρυφήν τινα ἢ ῥαθυμίαν πολλήν καὶ ἀνειμένην ὕβριν, Ἥδονην ἐπονομάζοντες.

342 The only other instance before the third century AD (based on a TLG advanced lemma proximity search of both verbs with 5 lines of maximum distance) is Maximus of Tyre,



is commenting on the Persian defeat and Spartan victory at Plataeae, which he imputes to the Persians'—and in particular his son Xerxes's—hubris and desecration of temples and statues of gods:

The heaps of corpses will voicelessly proclaim to the eyes of men, even to the third generation, that one who is a mortal should not think arrogant thoughts (οὐχ ὑπέρφρου θνητὸν ὄντα χρῆ φρονεῖν): outrage (ὔβρις) has blossomed, and has produced a crop of ruin, from which it is reaping a harvest of universal sorrow. Look on the price that is being paid for these actions, and remember Athens and Greece: let no one despise (μηδέ τις ὑπερφρονησας) the fortune he possesses and, through lust for more, let his great prosperity go to waste. Zeus, I tell you, stands over all as a chastiser of pride that boasts itself to excess (κολαστής τῶν ὑπερκόμπων ἄγαν φρονημάτων), calling it to stern account. With this in mind, please advise him to show good sense (σωφρονεῖν); warn him, with well-spoken admonitions, to stop offending the gods with his boastful rashness. (Aeschylus, *Persae* 818–831)

Clearly, having 'high thoughts' is the topic at hand. This notion is used synonymously with hubris and is deemed an offence worthy of divine intervention, with Zeus acting as the 'punisher of extremely arrogant thoughts'. It is left to humans to warn each other to instead show prudent or moderate thinking.

The relevance of this short reflection on φρονεῖν language for the exegesis of *Romans* 12.3 can be summarized thus: for one thing, Paul was not availing himself of a commonplace wordplay but devised his own figure of speech in combining ὑπερφρονεῖν, φρονεῖν, and σωφρονεῖν. But more to the point as regards the purpose of this chapter, he is not addressing a purely ethical or social problem, as opposed to religious concerns. In fact, the whole dichotomy between ethics and religion is false, from both an ancient and Pauline perspective.

Whom is Paul's audience to think of with moderation? In the traditional translation and interpretation, they must think thus about themselves, for it

---

*Philosophical Orations* 18.1, but here the context does not refer directly to the gods: 'When the youth proved chaste and rejected his bullying suitor' (ὡς δὲ ἔσωφρόνει τὸ μειράκιον καὶ ὑπερφρόνει ὑβριστοῦ ἔραστοῦ). The only result with ὑπερφρονεῖν and σώφρων is Euripides, *Oedipus*, fragment 543, 545: 'Truly, it is better for a man, if he gets a virtuous [wife] (σώφρον ἦν λάβη) (...) Every sensible wife (πάσα (...) ἡ σώφρων γυνή) is her husband's slave; the wife without sense despises her partner out of folly (ἡ δὲ μὴ σώφρων ἀνοία τὸν ξυνόνθ' ὑπερφρονεῖ)'. A similar lemma search with ὑπερφρονεῖν and σωφροσύνη did not render any results.

is God who gives to each (ἐκάστῳ) a measure of faith. Yet, the same word, ἐκάστῳ, can also refer to the object of the right way of thinking by simply altering the customary punctuation.<sup>343</sup> This way, the addressees are said to think with moderation about each person (or each thing).<sup>344</sup> This choice in interpretation is bound up with the second issue: how to understand *metron*.

In principle, *metron* can refer to (1) an amount or proportion, i.e. the outcome of a measurement, or to (2) the standard or criterion by which something is measured, either (2a) literally, e.g. a yardstick or measuring rod, or (2b) figuratively, as a metaphor for something we judge by. The second, metaphorical usage that is very common to us nowadays appears to have been introduced only in the fifth century BC by Protagoras's famous statement itself, even if was commonly used in the first century.<sup>345</sup> Combined with the ambiguity of the genitive of *pistis* in Paul, meanings of *metron pisteōs* range from 'the amount of faith' or 'the measure of credit' (*genitivus partitivus*) to 'the criterion that is faithfulness' (*genitivus qualitatis / explicativus*). In the first reading of *Romans* 12.3, a different amount of faith,<sup>346</sup> or a different type of stewardship is given to each.<sup>347</sup> In the second, depending on the place of ἐκάστῳ, either

343 Cf. Johnson 2003, 226. This point seems to be overlooked by many: see e.g. Poirier 2008, 147: 'the syntax of *Romans* 12:3 seems to suggest that the expression μέτρον πίστεως (whatever it means) represents something that differs from one believer to another.'

344 In view of the social focus of this part of the letter, I would opt for a personal referent.

345 See Van Berkel 2013, 59: 'It is, I would like to submit, *MM* itself that created the very concept of a standard. This is exactly why in New Testament Greek the verb μετρεῖν can mean "to judge", the noun μέτρον "judgment"'. Plato was the first to use *kritērion* (a neologism then) as a substitute for *metron* as he refers to Protagoras's statement in *Theaetetus* 178b: 'for he possesses within himself the standard by which to judge them (ἔχων γὰρ αὐτῶν τὸ κριτήριον ἐν αὐτῷ)'. Cf. Van Berkel 2013, 42–43.

346 E.g. Bultmann who maintains in his article on *pistis* in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1968, 219) that the measure and analogy of *pistis* refer to 'differences conditioned by individual gifts and situations'. Cf. Dunn 1988a, 721; Sampley 1991, 46–48; Esler 2003, 313 ('Paul suggests that different measures of faith have been allocated to each'); Morgan 2015, 298 ('this phrase, in context, surely refers to different quantities of *pistis* which God has apportioned (*emerisen*) to different people as a gift or grace (12.6) and which allow them to exercise different ministries (12.6–8)').

347 The rendering of *pistis* as 'stewardship', 'trusteeship', or 'that which is entrusted' is argued for by John Poirier (2008, at 148) as it was earlier in Dutch by A. Dirkwager (1992, 13–16, at 14: 'volgens de maat van wat God ieder heeft toevertrouwd'), and with the similar meaning of 'credit' or 'credibility', 'a measure proportionate to the task entrusted' by Albert Vanhoye (2006, at 107). Cf. also Bultmann 1968, 219: 'The reference is not merely to stages or grades of πίστις, but to differences conditioned by individual gifts and situations.'

one measure of faith(fulness) is given to each,<sup>348</sup> or one measure is given to them in general, wherefore they must think prudently about each other.<sup>349</sup> In other words, the interpretation emphasizes either the difference between community members or the single point of reference that binds them together.

The first, differentiating meaning is often chosen in translations and commentaries. True, Paul does speak of *pistis* as something that can be strengthened or in respect of which one can grow. Nevertheless, this need not lead us to suppose that such *pistis* is an individual matter (see §4.4.1 below). There are, however, several reasons for preferring the second, unifying meaning of *metron pisteōs*, extending from the letter itself, via other Pauline uses of *metron*, to its usage in pagan philosophy.

From the direct context, it is clear that the subject at stake is the right way to relate to each other—not to oneself—as members of one body. As Ben Dunson points out, even if a variety in faith as such does not theoretically exclude unity in Christ, ‘on the differential reading 12.3 only mentions diversity, and as such—without a corresponding reference to unity—could hardly function as a reason for not becoming conceited.’<sup>350</sup> Furthermore, from the larger context of the letter we learn that, based on *pistis*, the weaker other is to be accepted as such (Rom 14.1), which also suggests that *pistis* as an objective source helps to respond wisely to difference (for an elaborate discussion of this text, see §5.4.4 below).<sup>351</sup>

348 E.g. Jewett 2007, 102: ‘the measuring rod of faith that God dealt out to each’, which is further subjectively explicated as ‘the unique experience of faith that each person and group possess in Christ’. With greater emphasis on God’s objective faithfulness, cf. Bryan 2000, 197: ‘I think it more likely [*pace* Bultmann] that by *pistis* here Paul is loosely referring to what he has asserted from the beginning to be of the essence of the gospel—that it is bound up with God’s faithfulness in Christ toward each of us, and the level of faithfulness to which each of us is thereby invited (so 12.1)—this is surely among the best antidotes anyone could have against the temptation to think of oneself more highly than one ought to think.’ And, more explicitly, on a measure of *pistis* as an objective moral compass to guide each one’s judgment, cf. Cranfield 1962. Cf. on Cranfield’s interpretation Dunson 2011, 37. This option also seems to be advocated by Thomas Schumacher (2012, at 231): ‘Es ist der Maßstab, mit dessen Hilfe sich die “Echtheit” und die “Zuverlässigkeit”, also die πίστις, des eigenen Tuns erkennen lässt.’

349 This option, which I would choose and argue for below, is informed by Johnson 2003, 226.

350 Dunson 2011, 37, cf. n. 72. All in all, though, Dunson emphasizes that in *Romans*, ‘faith functions in a markedly individual fashion’ (p. 39). For my response see §4.4.1 (on individual versus communal faith) and §7.4.1 (on *Romans* 10, Dunson’s key passage) *infra*.

351 I follow Thomas Schumacher (2009, 491) in his interpretation of πίστις in *Romans* 14.1 as referring to the verb (προσλαμβάνεσθε) instead of to the weak one (τὸν ἀσθενούντα), thus avoiding the unnecessarily complicated notion of being ‘weak in faith’. On *pistis* in *Romans* 14, see §4.4.3 *infra*.

In Stoic thought, we encounter the concept of *metra* as universal standards, as when Epictetus castigates his Epicurean and Academic opponents for not pursuing the ‘measures and standards for discovering the truth’ (μέτρα καὶ κανόνας εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας) received from nature.<sup>352</sup> Moreover, the combination of *sōphronein* and *metron* in Paul’s sentence suggests that the meaning of *metron* is not a quantitative amount, but rather a general, appropriate criterion to use in thinking prudently. The combination of both can be found in philosophical discussions on the virtue of moderation (*sōphrosynē* / *temperantia*), such as this example from one of Seneca’s letters:

Temperance (*temperantia*) controls our desires; some it hates and routs, others it regulates and restores to a healthy measure (*ad sanum modum*), nor does it ever approach our desires for their own sake. Temperance knows that the best measure of the appetites (*modum cupitorum*) is not what you want to take, but what you ought to take. (Seneca, *Epistles* 88.29–30)

The first use of *modus* in the passage cited falls under the category of ‘the outcome of a measurement’, while the second is rather a figurative ‘measuring rod’: a rule according to which we can keep our desires in check. As *pistis* is clearly not a desire one should have a moderate amount of, the ‘measure of *pistis*’ in *Romans* 12.3 is most likely not a quantity but a criterion for the activity of *phronein eis to sōphronein*, ‘thinking thoughtfully’.

Of course, the other instance of *pistis* only a little further in *Romans* (Rom 12.6) needs to be considered as well. Here, the idea of a difference in gifts among the parts of one ‘body’ of Christ-followers is foregrounded:

We have gifts (ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα) that differ according to the grace given to us (κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθείσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα): prophecy, in proportion to faith (εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως); ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching. (*Romans* 12.6–7)

The gift of prophecy is specified as a gift, ‘according to the proportion of faith’ (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως). As this phrase is constructed as κατὰ + noun + modifier, parallel to the phrase in the beginning of the sentence (κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθείσαν ἡμῖν), the logical reading seems to be that *pistis* has a meaning corresponding to grace. Still, the question remains whether this grace is

<sup>352</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.21.

a singular source of goodness, meant to qualify ‘gifts’ (χαρίσματα), or whether it pertains to ‘differing’ (διάφορα), as the NRSV suggests. Is grace different for everyone? Likewise, the ‘proportionality of faith’ can mean a single, objective, divine standard, or the specific, subjective, personal trust or credit granted to the one prophesying.

A more differentiating and personal meaning of *pistis* is certainly a possibility here. In that case, however, I would rather not opt for the meaning of an amount of faith present in the one prophesying (‘in proportion to his/her faith’); rather, I prefer to see it as referring to the entrusted gift and its purpose (‘in proportion to what was entrusted’).<sup>353</sup> This way, it is also in accordance with the other specifications in the enumeration: all gifts should be used with the aim of the gift-giver in mind. In that case, just as in *Romans* 12.3, *pistis* is still a qualitative rather than quantitative designation, and it is still determined by the divine. Such a small change in meaning in view of the preceding sentence and the *metron pisteōs* is perfectly conceivable.

Nevertheless, a more objective meaning of ‘proportion of faith’ (Rom 12.6: ἀναλογία τῆς πίστεως) would strengthen the interpretation of *metron* as a single, objective standard. A minority of interpreters has opted for an objective sense. Aquinas seems to be one of the earliest proponents of an interpretation as ‘according to the rule of faith’ (*secundum rationem fidei*) in his lectures on *Romans*.<sup>354</sup> Such an understanding may be somewhat anachronistic, as it assumes the establishment of a dogmatic or kerygmatic ‘faith’ (on this issue, see §6.4.1 and §7.4.1 below). Yet, when we interpret it as ‘according to the divine proportionality of faith’, its meaning closely resembles the ‘measure of faith’ as a divine standard of good conduct. Important parallels for such an objective usage may be found in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, where ‘proportion’ is an important characteristic of justice:

The just (τὸ (...) δίκαιον) in this sense is therefore the proportionate (τὸ ἀνάλογον), and the unjust is that which violates proportion. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.3.14 (1131b17–18))<sup>355</sup>

353 As also argued by Vanhoye and Poirier. See Vanhoye 2006, 109: ‘In reality the context of Rom. 12.6, even more than that of Rom. 12.3, requires the meaning, not of “faith”, but of the “credit” or “trust” accorded to the prophet by God.’ And see Poirier 2008, 151: ‘Thus fidelity to the office of prophet involves prophesying in line with one’s (prophetic) stewardship.’

354 Thomas Aquinas, *Super epistolam ad Romanos lectura*, caput VII, lectura 2.

355 Cf. at 5.3.8 (1131a29–31): ‘Justice is therefore a sort of proportion; for proportion is not a property of numerical quantity only, but of quantity in general, proportion being equality of ratios (ἢ γὰρ ἀναλογία ἰσότης ἐστὶ λόγων), and involving four terms at least.’

The usefulness of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* for understanding this part of *Romans* has been detailed by Luke Johnson, so there is no need to repeat his arguments here, even though, as I explained in the previous subsection (§2.4.4), I do not agree with his overall conclusions.<sup>356</sup>

Another example of the usage of 'proportion' (*ἀναλογία*) as an orderly principle within philosophical discourses is Plato's *Timaeus* (recurring in Plutarch's commentary).<sup>357</sup> In this creation-narrative, it is the body of the cosmos (τὸ τοῦ κόσμου σῶμα) which is 'harmonized by proportion (*δι' ἀναλογίας ὁμολογήσαν*) and brought into existence.'<sup>358</sup> 'Proportion' is defined here as 'that which most perfectly unites into one both itself and the things which it binds together'.<sup>359</sup> Here the context is more cosmological than ethical (though these are closely connected in the Platonic scheme), but the notion of proportion as that which keeps a body together is noteworthy, for it is a metaphor Paul also uses in this sentence. To prophesy 'according to the proportion of faith' would then acquire the sense of 'with an eye to how faith binds (the body) together'. Nevertheless, for now it suffices to conclude that the interpretation of the 'proportion of faith' (*ἀναλογία τῆς πίστεως*) leaves enough room for understanding the 'measure of faith' (*μέτρον πίστεως*) as a divine standard of ethics.

Based on TLG searches, the lemmas of *ἀναλογία* ('proportion') and *μέτρον* ('measure') are rarely found together in the period under question (first century BC—second century AD), except for some specialized usage in Galen (in a medical context) and one interesting passage from Philo. Like Paul, Philo discusses the issue of divine gift-giving, particularly the distribution of wisdom:

[T]he heavenly food of the soul, wisdom (*σοφία*), which Moses calls 'manna,' is distributed to all who will use it in equal portions by the divine Word, careful above all things to maintain equality (*πεφροντικῶς διαφερόντως ἰσότητος*). Moses testifies to this in the words, 'He that had much, had not too much, and he that had less did not lack' (Ex. xvi. 18), when they measured by the admirable and precious standard of proportion (*ἤνίκα τῷ τῆς ἀναλογίας ἐχρήσαντο θαυμαστῷ καὶ περιμαχίτῳ μέτρῳ*). (Philo, *Who Is the Heir?* 191)

356 Johnson 2003; for the connection as regards *ἀναλογία*, see p. 225.

357 Plutarch quotes from *Timaeus* 32c as quoted here and reasons (*On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* 1017A): 'So he most manifestly teaches that god was father and artificer not of body in the absolute sense, that is to say not of mass and matter, but of symmetry in body and of beauty and similarity.'

358 Plato, *Timaeus* 32c.

359 Plato, *Timaeus* 31c.

Proportion (ἀναλογία) is here a specific type of standard (μέτρον) which God uses to distribute the gift of wisdom. It is therefore an objective and divine norm that aspires to a certain equality rather than a certain differentiation according to the amount of faith of the receiver.

In addition to these arguments based on *Romans*, it is worth noting the use of ‘measure’ (μέτρον) as a metaphorical standard in early Christian writings. Apart from Jesus’s saying ‘you shall be measured by the measure you measure by’,<sup>360</sup> Paul uses a good deal of metaphorical ‘measure’ language himself in one other letter in a long defence of his own position:

When they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves (αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς), they do not show good sense. We, however, will not boast beyond measure (εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα), but according to the measure of the standard that God has assigned to us (κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου), to reach out even as far as you. (...) We do not boast beyond measure (εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα), that is, in the labours of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases (αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν), we may be greatly enlarged among you according to our standard (μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν). (*2 Corinthians* 10.12b–13, 15)

People that ‘measure themselves by themselves’ use their own person or one another as a norm. This description reminds us of the sophist’s position of man being the measure of all things.<sup>361</sup> Paul juxtaposes this way of measuring against that which takes a divine measure as its point of reference. As in *Romans* 12.3, God is portrayed here as the one who assigns such a measure.

As part of his argument for interpreting the measure of *pistis* as a stewardship, John Poirier refers *Ephesians*: ‘But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift’ (Eph 4.7). Poirier points out that ‘measure’ here refers to ‘the distributive aspect of Christ’s gift’.<sup>362</sup> Unfortunately, however, Poirier seems to overlook the wider context of this text. While it is indeed

360 *Matthew* 7.2 (ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν); cf. *Mark* 4.24, *Luke* 6.38b.

361 As famously phrased by Protagoras: ‘Of all things the measure is man, of those that are (the case), that/how they are (the case), and of those that are not (the case), that/how they are not (the case)’ (πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστι, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν), i.a. apud Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.60 (cf. Plato, *Theaetetus* 152a).

362 Poirier 2008, 152.

the case that here the different tasks within the *ekklēsia* are also mentioned (Eph 4.11), these differences represent an imperfect situation, ‘until all of us come to the unity of the faith (εις τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως) and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ (εις μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ).’ (Eph 4.13) The ‘measure’ that is spoken of here is undoubtedly a singular, external standard, as it belongs to Christ. As such, it is very helpful to include this text as a parallel to support not a differentiating but rather a unifying meaning of the *metron pisteōs*.

To sum up what we have seen so far, other early Christian passages with ‘measure’ language all fit the definition of an external, metaphorical ‘measuring rod’. This suggests that in *Romans* 12, where in the subsequent verses the social cohesion of the congregation is discussed, the meaning of thinking according to the ‘measure of faith’ is also meant metaphorically, as a single, unifying, God-given, moral criterion to judge each other by. The other instance of *pistis* in the direct context (Rom 12.6) may be somewhat more subjectively coloured (‘in accordance with the proportion of what was entrusted’), yet it too allows for a similar, objective meaning. Following Plato, Philo speaks of a standard of proportion, which is a divine means of equally distributing gifts. From a Graeco-Roman perspective, then, it indeed makes perfect sense to appeal to *pistis* as the objective standard of communal conduct. As I will further discuss in chapter 7, *pistis* and even more so its Roman equivalent *fides* are widely used as community-founding values and as such are not only recognized but personified and thus worshipped (see esp. §7.3.1). It thus connects both inter-human and divine-human relationships as a bond of trust.

Finally, when we move from a word-search based approach to a more conceptual level, the measure of *pistis* begins to resemble the idea of an internal measure in Platonism. In the next chapter, this concept will be discussed in more detail in context of the Graeco-Roman discourse on the relationship between external laws of a city-state and the virtuous life of citizens (§3.3.5). For now, I want to focus on one passage from Plato’s *Laws*, a work that deals extensively with this precise question. In the present chapter, I quoted from this passage, which was still well known in later periods,<sup>363</sup> to show that for Plato, civic religious ritual gained a new, philosophical dimension (see §2.3.2). Here, the protagonist, the Athenian stranger, addresses the inhabitants of the ideal city-state Magnesia. The path ahead is pictured as a following after the divine measure:

---

363 Cf. Alcinous, *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae* 28.3 (181–182 in Hermann’s edition); Arius Didymus apud Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.49.23–25. Cf. Annas 1999, 56: ‘This passage of the *Laws*, much quoted and referred to in the ancient world.’



What conduct, then, is dear to God and in his steps (ἀκόλουθος θεῶ)? One kind of conduct, expressed in one ancient phrase, namely, that ‘like is dear to like’ when it is moderate (ὅτι τῷ μὲν ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον ὄντι μετρίῳ φίλον ἂν εἴη), whereas immoderate things are dear neither to one another nor to things moderate. In our eyes God will be ‘the measure of all things’ (πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον) in the highest degree—a degree much higher than is any ‘man’ they talk of. He, then, that is to become dear to such an one must needs become, so far as he possibly can, of a like character; and, according to the present argument, he amongst us that is temperate is dear to God (ὁ μὲν σώφρων ἡμῶν θεῶ φίλος), since he is like him. (Plato, *Laws* 716c–d)

Interestingly, the connection of *metron* language with *sōphrosynē* language, both indicating a measured, moderate, thoughtful manner of thinking, recurs both here and in the Pauline text under discussion (Rom 12.3: σωφρονεῖν).<sup>364</sup> This particular wording helps us to understand how Plato envisions the realization of virtue. To live virtuously is to live according to the measure of all things, namely God, and to live like God means living with temperance or moderation (σώφρων) and with measure or moderation (μετρίῳ). By referring to the ‘measure of man’, this Platonic statement is obviously a response to the sophists’ position as well. Even though the Platonic measure is meant to function as an inner or internalized law, it comes from an external, objective, and divine source.<sup>365</sup> It is not of human origin.

And that is precisely the point Paul is making in *Romans* 12.3: since God gave us one standard of conduct, fully expressed in the faithfulness of Christ, we can and should no longer think according to a man-made, hubristic measure. Instead we must think according to this divine measure, that is, thoughtfully and with a renewed *nous*, about fellow Christ-followers. This contrast between an external and internal impetus for virtue in Plato’s work resembles that between civic religion and *logikē latreia* in Paul’s letters: only the latter can truly effect a transformation of the *nous*. In more common Pauline terms, it resembles the antithesis between *nomos* and *pistis*: the external law can only act by means of force, or, at best, as a tutor (Gal 3.24–25: παιδαγωγός), and is therefore insufficient, whereas the internal law of *pistis* transforms the mind and unites the community from within.

364 The idea that ‘like is dear/known to like’ is also employed by Paul in 1 *Corinthians* 2.10–13: cf. Fitzmyer 2008, 180.

365 On the theme of ‘imitation of God’ (*homoiosis theōi*), see chapter 6 *infra*.

With this connection, we arrive at the topic of the next chapter, in which I take a different route through the semantics of *dikē* language and Graeco-Roman Golden Age narratives to shed light on the relationship between faith, law, and justice.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter began by reviewing some underlying difficulties in studying and describing religion and in particular ‘faith’ in classical cultures. Awareness of the risk of heedlessly applying modern notions to ancient phenomena has increased in the scholarly world. At the same time, when it comes to describing faith and belief in antiquity, post-Enlightenment assumptions, such as the antitheses between religion and philosophy or between knowledge and faith, still lurk behind a considerable amount of present-day research. As Henrik Tronier stated, ‘the cognitive contrast between religion, faith, and revelation on the one hand and philosophy, knowledge, and reason on the other—a dichotomy that lies deep in the Western consciousness (...) cannot be maintained.’<sup>366</sup>

Hence, in order to overcome this resilient contrast, I explored an ancient, first-order approach to religion in antiquity. As such, the pattern of the *theologia tripartita* offers an interesting tool to compare critiques and analyses of religious phenomena in classical literature. It presents three approaches to the gods, represented by lawgivers, poets, and philosophers, that are variously evaluated, differentiated, and harmonized by different ancient authors, thus constituting a discourse that we may indeed deem ‘religious’. In particular the philosophical approach is seen by many contributors to this discourse as a way to correct or purify civic religion, even as its conceptions of the divine cannot be grasped directly by the masses.

The Pauline corpus shows traces of participating in this discourse. By defining his movement by means of *pistis*, and by juxtaposing cultic vocabulary and philosophical terminology, Paul presents his teachings as a philosophical alternative to and critique of pagan cult and myth.<sup>367</sup> In his thought, mythical religion (*mythos*) has turned into irrational idolatry, and civic religion (*nomos*)

<sup>366</sup> Tronier 2001, 168. Tronier considers this one of the dichotomies which are ‘traditionally linked to the supposed Judaism/Hellenism dualism and often presupposed in interpretations of Paul’ (p. 168).

<sup>367</sup> To some degree, this also brings the insufficiency of the Jewish cult to the fore, see above, §2.4.2.

into ethnocentric ostentation (see the next chapter), whereas philosophical religion according to the divine *logos*, or in Pauline terms, the measure of *pistis*, offers true, logical worship and establishes virtuous communities. Unlike most of the participants in this discourse, however, Paul's philosophical religion is not exclusively available to the educated few: the measure of *pistis* is one divine standard to guide all who participate in his movements.

The next chapter is also concerned with larger, structural, and idealized reconstructions of the cosmos, but our focus will shift to the complex relationship between *pistis* and *nomos* by comparing the Pauline narrative of faith, law, and justice to that of his Graeco-Roman contemporaries. Similar cultural topoi we encountered in this chapter, such as the unspoiled, utopian Golden Age of humanity, will be taken up again. Against this discourse, well-trodden Pauline notions such as 'justification by faith' can be approached from a new angle.

# Pistis, Dikaiosynē, and Nomos: Faith as Unwritten Law of the Golden Age

## 3.1 Paul the Universalist? New Perspectives on an Old Debate

As one of the people responsible for the revival of Paul's letters in contemporary philosophy, Alain Badiou is known for his particular interest in Pauline universalism: 'For Paul,' Badiou claims, 'the truth event repudiates philosophical Truth (...) Paul is an antiphilosophical theoretician of universality.'<sup>1</sup> Paul's conceptions of 'law' (νόμος, *nomos*), 'justice' (δικαιοσύνη, *dikaiosynē*), 'faith' (πίστις, *pistis*), and their cognates are also explained by him in this light. Badiou's Paul is the one 'who identifies his faith only in being affected by the collapse of customary and communitarian differences.'<sup>2</sup> According to Badiou, the Pauline connection between faith and justice is offered by the concept of hope, albeit not a hope in a future judgement that would again bring separation.<sup>3</sup> Instead, for Paul, 'it is of utmost importance to declare that I am justified only insofar as everyone is.'<sup>4</sup> By thus framing Paul as his founding hero of universalism, Badiou not only addressed a metaphysical conception from a creative angle; he also consciously or inadvertently picked up on a major contested issue in Pauline scholarship.

In the vocabulary specific to the field of New Testament studies, the issue relates to the doctrine of 'justification by faith', or, in broader terms, to the question of what a significant part of Paul's good news was all about, to whom it was addressed, and what it was formulated against. It is not my main aim in this chapter to merely summarize the main currents in researching Paul's 'justification by faith' axiom. Instead, after having done so briefly in the next section, I hope to contribute to the debate by examining Graeco-Roman semantics and discourses pertaining to justice, law, and faith.

Even though the amount of scholarly work on justification in the New Testament reaches enormous proportions, relatively little has been unearthed in

1 Badiou 2003, 108.

2 Badiou 2003, 102.

3 Badiou 2003, 93, cf. 95.

4 Badiou 2003, 96.

this particular material.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, Paul's Jewishness and Hellenism are often bluntly played off against one another in the context of this discussion (on this wider 'trend', see §1.3.1 above). Dunn and Suggate state simply: 'When Paul brought the language of righteousness / justification to the fore it was the language of the Old Testament which he was using.'<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, Paul's usage of *pistis* in the context of 'law' is deemed highly original, as David Hay claims: 'The distinctiveness or originality of Paul's thought regarding faith is largely connected with his viewing faith as excluding reliance on works of the law.'<sup>7</sup> Panayotis Coutsoumpos explicitly rejects the relevance of Paul's Hellenistic identity:

Is the apostle Paul to be seen as a Hellenized Greek Jew from Tarsus? Or was he a Pharisee trained by Gamaliel in Jerusalem? Clearly, Paul's conversation about the law in his epistles does not come from an outsider, but from one who understood the beliefs regarding the law which Jews of the time held. (...) Consequently, the Judaism of Jerusalem, rather than the paganism of Tarsus, seems to be the root for Paul's approach of the problem of law. (Coutsoumpos 2008, 45–46)

In reply to Coutsoumpos, I grant that Paul was an insider as regards the Mosaic Law. On the other hand, both in his Jewish-Hellenistic upbringing and in his missionary travels, he must have encountered multiple narratives about justice and was forced to think about 'law' as a concept that transcended Judaism.

Even when scholars speak of Pauline universalism, it is often contrasted with contemporary pagan thought, for instance to Stoic universalism. Eliezer Gonzalez connects Paul's universalism to his adaptability and argues for a biblical model of divine condescension as opposed to Hellenistic philosophical currents: 'While Paul's adaptability is rooted in interplay of a range of contemporary Hellenistic influences, it is clear that the concept of divine condescension is key.'<sup>8</sup> He does not seem to consider the possibility that divine condescension is a Hellenistic concept as well: in this chapter alone we will

---

5 An important exception which offers a preliminary sample of what may be unearthed here, particularly relating to how Paul has been consciously contextualizing his gospel to the Roman connection between righteousness, peace, and faithfulness, is Haacker 2003, 124.

6 Dunn & Suggate 1994, 31. Cf. Garlington 1994, 47: 'because δικαιοσύνη assumes as its frame of reference the Hebrew (as contrasted with the Graeco-Roman) notion of righteousness'.

7 Hay 2006, 48.

8 Gonzalez 2011, 69.

encounter numerous accounts of divinities leaving their heavenly bliss to aid fallen humanity (see §3.3.3). Some scholarly contributions do include Hellenistic material. Mark Seifrid wrote a book chapter with the promising title ‘Paul’s use of righteousness language against its Hellenistic background’.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, he only discusses Josephus and the Septuagint, arguing that while Josephus’s righteousness language is in line with a pagan Greek, retributive usage, Paul’s righteousness language is vindicative and corresponds with the Septuagint.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of these reserved evaluations of the usefulness of a Graeco-Roman contribution to the debate, I intend to demonstrate that both on the level of shared semantics and on the level of participation in similar discourses, Paul and his pagan contemporaries had a lot in common. The opposition between faith and law, for instance, is also found in some important contemporary pagan sources. Moreover, if the so-called ‘Radical New Perspective on Paul’ (or, ‘Paul within Judaism’) is correct in its reconstruction of the intended audience of Paul’s ‘justification by faith’ language as consisting entirely of non-Jews, then it is highly relevant to see whether his message fitted their own non-Jewish narratives. As we will see in this chapter, however, it is precisely the pagan discourse of unwritten law that enables Paul to think of righteousness in a manner which transcends all written law including the Mosaic Law, thereby rendering the Radical New Perspective’s suggestion of Paul offering a separate ‘route’ for Jews less likely.

But before I develop this argument any further, I will briefly summarize over which particular issues that arise in the interpretation of Paul’s justification language the scholarly community is divided (§3.2). Hereafter, I discuss Graeco-Roman discourses in which *pistis*-, *dikaiosynē*-, and *nomos*-related lexemes (and their Latin equivalents) play an important role (§3.3). Finally, we return to Paul in order to see how we can understand his faith-, justice-, and law-language in light of the pagan discourses discussed (§3.4).

### 3.2 ‘Justification by Faith’: an Outline of the Debated Issues

Particularly in the letters to the Romans and to the Galatians, the use of *pistis* language occurs predominantly in close connection to instances of *dikaiosynē*

<sup>9</sup> Seifrid 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Seifrid 2004, 45, 52.

(including the verb *δικαιόω*, ‘to justify’, ‘to make righteous’) and *nomos* vocabulary. These passages have come to be known as constituting the doctrine of ‘justification by faith’.

In the traditional, particularly Lutheran interpretation,<sup>11</sup> what is at stake for Paul is the salvation of the individual, a sinful person who is declared righteous and hence vindicated in the eyes of God based on nothing more or less than his or her faith in Christ. Consequently, in this view, Paul is arguing against legalism and self-righteousness, i.e. justification based on ‘works of the law’, as it was supposedly propagated by the Judaism of Paul’s days. In the time of Luther, these ‘works of the law’ resonated with a form of legalism that was perceived as corrupting the Catholic Church: people could work and even buy their way into heaven. Consequently, God’s grace was perceived as conditional. To Luther, it was clear that Paul’s experience underlying his doctrine of justification by faith must have been the same as his own agonizing struggle: how to deal with his sinfulness and inability to please God by works. In response to the legalism of the church and to his personal existential agony, Luther propagated ‘justification by faith alone’ as the core message of Christianity. It is interesting to point out that such an interpretation appeals not only to broad strands of Protestantism, but also to existentialist philosophy in that this act or ‘leap’ of faith is located in the individual subject.<sup>12</sup>

The objections voiced in New Testament scholarship against this traditional, Lutheran interpretation may be summarized as being directed at four aspects: firstly, against the anachronism of a (widespread) existence of such a form of legalism in the Judaism of Paul’s days; secondly and somewhat adversely, against the supposed absence of justification based on works in Paul or the New Testament; thirdly, against the so-called ‘anthropological’ understanding of justification as something procured by human faith in Christ; and fourthly, against the timeless and individual nature of salvation so understood.<sup>13</sup> In other words, the objections concern the place and meaning of *law*,

11 For convenience’s sake, I adopt the adjective ‘Lutheran’ for his broad, traditional interpretation. However, Martin Luther’s own position may have been more nuanced, and furthermore, many present-day Lutheran scholars no longer represent this particular position (see i.a. the Finnish ‘new perspective on Luther’, developed in the 1970s and 1980s by Tyomo Mannermaa and others, according to which Luther spoke in participationalist terms and deemed union with Christ central to imputed righteousness).

12 According to Bultmann (1951, 270–285), a righteous status is bestowed by God as a gift upon the faith-decision of the individual.

13 Perhaps the most fundamental criticism is directed against the supposed centrality of justification by faith. See e.g. Dunn 1998, 133: ‘it would be a mistake to take any one of Paul’s metaphors and exalt it into some primary or normative status so that all the others

of *works*, of *faith*, and of *salvation* in the thought of Paul and his interlocutors. Hence, I distinguish four ‘axes’ along which the discussions unfold in previous and present-day New Testament scholarship. The same ‘axes’ will be evaluated one by one below (§3.4) yet in a different order, in my analysis of Paul’s ‘justification by faith’ passages in light of Graeco-Roman discourses on justice and faith.

In this section (§3.2), I will briefly sketch the contours of the scholarly debate on the meaning of Paul’s justification by faith axiom according to these four axes. For my purposes, is not necessary to delve too deep into the historical development of the positions involved. It is worth stating explicitly that these axes represent abstractions and, hence, simplifications of the scholarly landscape and as such do not do justice to the nuanced expositions of the individual interpreter. I will engage with some particular scholars in more detail below when I discuss specific texts from Paul’s letters (§3.4). Furthermore, I want to note that the choices on different subjects are not completely unconnected: a particular position on one axis is also more likely combined with another position on a second axis, e.g. a New Perspective interpretation of the law usually coincides with a participational approach to *pistis Christou* as ‘faithfulness of Christ’. Similarly, emphasizing participation in Christ usually coincides with highlighting ethical transformation as part of the justification process. Still, this does not limit the possibilities to only two or three options, as there are exceptions to these general combinations.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.2.1 *Law: Unconditional or Universal Justice?*

As for the meaning of law, the issue at stake here is what exactly is problematic in the eyes of Paul as regards the Mosaic Law. Did Paul quarrel with his opponents over the conditional character or the exclusivism of its grace? Already in the first half of the nineteenth century, Ferdinand Christiaan Baur argued that the law posed a problem to Pauline Christianity, not because of its role in a Jewish attempt to earn salvation, but because of its role in promoting Jewish exclusivism. Paul was ‘the first to lay down expressly and distinctly the

---

must be fitted into its mould.’ I completely agree with this correction: for Paul, it is only one metaphor amongst others.

14 E.P. Sanders, for instance, the ‘founding father’ of the New Perspective on Paul, employs ‘faith in Christ’ language, although he explains this ‘participationally’ (Sanders 1977, 551): ‘The discussions of “law” and “faith” are very concrete; they are designed to show that not those who keep the covenant, but only those who have faith in Christ and are ‘in’ him, receive the biblical promises.’



principle of Christian universalism as a thing essentially opposed to Jewish particularism.<sup>15</sup>

A major development in the Pauline scholarship of the past decades known as ‘the New Perspective on Paul’ advocates a similar position, on the basis of an elaborate study of first-century Judaism. Its main contention is that Jews of Paul’s time did not consider upholding commandments but incorporation in the covenantal relation with God as means of salvation. Every time Paul speaks of ‘works of the law’, it seems to concern especially those laws that function to distinguish the people of the covenant from non-Jews, such as circumcision, but by extension also food laws, Sabbath observance, and similar boundary or identity markers. The ‘works of the law’ exclude non-Jews from participation in the covenant. Paul’s problem is, therefore, not with Jewish legalism, but with Jewish ethnocentrism or exclusivism as God’s chosen people.<sup>16</sup>

Faith(fulness), according to this New Perspective, replaces the Mosaic Law as a new identity marker, open to all ethnicities and to all genders and social positions as well.<sup>17</sup> It offers a new means of ‘getting in’ the covenant. Faith is the means to the end of a universal religion. Religious universalism, of course, comes in various shapes and sizes. Jon D. Levenson distinguishes various levels, ranging from universalism of the deity as the one and only God of the universe to moral universalism under a single set of rules and from the willingness to accept proselytes to eschatological universalism in anticipation of a unified realm or system.<sup>18</sup> It is worth acknowledging with Levenson that all of these universalisms include some form of particularism, for there may be different moral rules for different subsets of humanity. There may be ‘symbiotic relationships’ with different cultures within a self-proclaimed universal religion, and even a complete, eschatological universalism presupposes

---

15 Baur 1878, 47.

16 Main proponents of this view include E.P. Sanders, James D.G. Dunn, and N.T. Wright. A pithy phrasing of its main contention can e.g. be found in Dunn & Suggate 1994, 25: ‘The doctrine of justification by faith came to expression in these key letters of Paul (*Galatians* and *Romans*) as his attempt to prove that God’s covenant blessings were for gentiles as well as for Jews, that God was ready to accept gentiles as gentiles, without requiring them first to become Jews. The Christian doctrine of justification by faith begins as Paul’s protest not as an individual sinner against a Jewish legalism, but as Paul’s protest on behalf of gentiles against Jewish exclusivism.’

17 E.g. Dunn 1983, 113: ‘faith in Jesus as Christ becomes the primary identity marker which renders the others superfluous.’ Cf. at 115: ‘What he is concerned to exclude is the *racial* not the ritual expression of faith; it is *nationalism* which he denies not *activism*.’ Cf. Strecker 2005, esp. 230–231.

18 Levenson 1996, 143–145.

a present age particularism.<sup>19</sup> Pauline *pistis* conceived as an ‘entrance ticket’ and ‘identity marker’ presupposes one God yet seems to be particularly characterized by its universal proselytizing message: it is proclaimed to all. At the same time, it announces a new, universal age and reign that is determined by this option of justification that has become available by the coming of *pistis*.

Even though the New Perspective presented itself as a correction to the liability to anti-Semitism of the traditional view, to some, its criticism of first-century Jewish exclusivism was not much of an improvement. ‘It routinely portrays as characteristically Jewish a collective insistence on ethnic distinctiveness’, as Neil Elliott summarizes the critique.<sup>20</sup> Thus, a different stereotype is created, which indeed seems to be confirmed by a neglect of Jewish sources, apart from Paul himself, that advocate a more universalistic Judaism.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, several present-day scholars, usually denoted as the ‘Radical New Perspective’, propose alternatives that have as common ground the view that Paul addressed only gentiles: the solution of ‘faith’ is merely the solution to the problem of how non-Jews are to be included in some form of covenant with the one God.<sup>22</sup>

An important consequence of this ‘radical’ view of a non-Jewish audience is that Paul did not oppose any aspect of the law so long as it concerned Jews, yet was only vehemently against the law as pertaining to gentiles. Paul’s discourse on law and faith hence perfectly fitted the Jewish discourse of inclusivism—according to which the nations would come together towards Jerusalem—only he differed with others as to what that implied regarding law-observance.<sup>23</sup> While Philo, for instance, believed that ‘each nation would abandon its peculiar ways, and, throwing overboard their ancestral customs, turn to honouring our laws alone’, Paul rhetorically envisages such a move as a new ‘yoke of slavery’.<sup>24</sup> In order to do justice to Paul’s Jewishness, scholars from this Radical New Perspective maintain that justification by faith is the

19 Levenson 1996, 144–145.

20 Elliott 2015, 207.

21 For universalistic (and particularistic) tendencies in the Hebrew Bible, see Levenson 1996, and for universalistic tendencies in rabbinic Judaism, see Hirshman 2000.

22 This was first proposed by Lloyd Gaston and elaborated by John Gager. More recent spokespersons for this perspective include Stanley Stowers, Mark Nanos, and Pamela Eisenbaum. Cf. e.g. Eisenbaum 2009, 244: ‘What the Torah does for Jews, Jesus does for gentiles.’

23 On the congruence between Paul and other (Second Temple) Jewish authors when it comes to the coming together of Israel and the nations, see Sherwood 2012.

24 See Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.44 and Paul, *Galatians* 5.1, respectively.

'path to salvation' for the non-Jew only, whereas the Jew did not need anything outside of the Mosaic Law.

Any effort to uncover non-academic and academic biases of religious or ethnic superiority and so bring to light a Pauline theology that is more favourable to Jews is a valid and indeed an important one.<sup>25</sup> Still, the idea of such separate routes is, naturally, debated and will most likely continue to be so for some time in academic circles.<sup>26</sup> Large parts of these debates, however, include detailed discussions of parts of the Pauline letters which do not contain a lot of *pistis* language (such as Gal 6.11–16, Rom 2.17–29, or Rom 11). Therefore, I will not engage in this debate as a whole, but rather see how my own findings regarding the pagan discourses of justice, faith, and law fit in with either traditional, New Perspective, or Radical New Perspective readings of Paul's 'justification by faith' language.

The main difficulty with this 'radical' position, as far as my own argument in this chapter is concerned, is that the distinction advocated by the Radical New Perspective stands in the way of an 'even more radical' universalism, for their position maintains a major distinction between Jews and non-Jews when it comes to the ways to enter and uphold a covenant with God. A more radical universalism, if it is indeed to be found in Paul, is naturally very much a (Hellenistic-)Jewish invention, so there is no fundamental need to pit Christianity against Judaism here. Ideologically, there may but need not be an anti-Jewish sentiment in this aspect of the position of the New Perspective. The discussion is therefore most fruitfully conducted by arguing for a plausible historical reconstruction of what Paul thought and taught. Such a reconstruction includes exploring the availability of contemporary discourses of ethnic universalism and establishing the likelihood of Paul's participation in these discourses. This chapter aims to contribute to these exact aims.

### 3.2.2 *Works: Declarative or Ethical Justice?*

What is the status of works, of efforts and achievements in Paul? Do they stand in any relation to God's righteousness and judgement? In what is traditionally called the 'Lutheran perspective', there is a somewhat unnatural separation between the gratuitous, undeserved declaration of a person as righteous and the righteous behaviour expected of believers as a result of their justification,

25 David Horrell (2016) rightly addresses these biases (although I do not agree with his reading of 1 *Corinthians* 7 as demonstrating an early Christian ethnicization process; see §8.4.4 *infra*).

26 See e.g. the critical responses by Terence Donaldson (2006, 2015).

often called ‘sanctification’ or ‘Heiligung’. God’s enactment of his righteousness in this scheme is not a retributive justice that weighs the ethical deeds of the accused or an ethical or transformative justification that ‘makes a person righteous’. Rather, it is a vindicative or declarative justice: it declares the sinner righteous for free.<sup>27</sup> This is usually juxtaposed with the ‘Catholic perspective’, according to which ethical deeds are considered if not part of the cause, then at least an important proof of justification: a justified person has become a just person. The verb *dikaioō* would then include a transformational meaning.<sup>28</sup>

The actual positions in the debate are much more nuanced and internally diverse than this simple dichotomy suggests. Historically, a strict juridical-vindicative meaning does not seem to have been upheld by Luther, but rather was only developed by the later Melancthon and, remarkably, also endorsed by Calvin, who is otherwise known for preaching a twofold grace of acceptance and renewal.<sup>29</sup> Yet my main aim here is not to offer a detailed history of interpretation—a noble but too laborious undertaking considering my scope and focus—but rather something closer to a rough sketch of the most contentious issues in the justification debate that can serve to clarify the implications of my own reading of Paul’s justification and faith language in light of ancient discourses.<sup>30</sup>

Whereas the New Perspective redefined the meaning of ‘works of the law’ by limiting its scope to ethnocentric prescriptions and the Radical New Perspective and distinguishing meticulously between Jews and gentiles, there are also contributors who highlight the inseparability of works and justification, and of first-century Judaism and Christianity, with a renewed fervour. Simon Gathercole is critical of the New Perspective’s emphasis on inclusion of the gentiles, as it tends to overlook those passages where Paul argues against those

27 Cf. Bryan 2000, 103: “Justify” (Greek: *dikaioō*) means “to treat as just,” or more simply “to acquit.” For Paul, justification (*dikaioōsis*) is God’s declaration that we are not condemned, even though we are sinners; and through that declaration we are holy (“set apart for God”), for by it we are set in a positive relationship with the One who is Holy.’

28 See e.g. Campbell 1992a. Campbell reads this verb (at 176) ‘in a strongly salvific sense’, ‘with possibility of an even stronger, “transformational” reading, which would derive from the idea of the recreation of the believer in Christ (...) Here both forensic and ethical connotations would be appropriate, within a broader and rather striking reference to ontological transformation.’

29 See Blocher 2004, 491. Calvin uses the metaphor of the light and warmth of the sun to explain the relationship between justification and sanctification: both are distinct yet inseparable operations. See Calvin, *Institutions* 3.11.6.

30 For a more detailed analysis, see i.a. Campbell 1992a, 138–156.

who boast in their obedience to God by performing works of the law.<sup>31</sup> This is an ethnic-yet-also-individual boast which, so he amply demonstrates, was present in Second Temple Judaism. He detects a distinction in Paul's thought between a justification of the ungodly in the present and a future judgement on the basis of works.<sup>32</sup> Also according to Chris VanLandingham, Paul is completely in line with the Judaism of his day in being convinced of God's damnation based on bad deeds and salvation based on good deeds.<sup>33</sup> In this light, 'justification' is no guarantee for being acquitted at the final judgement. VanLandingham goes further than Gathercole, as he argues that Abraham merited his righteousness in exchange for his *pistis*.<sup>34</sup>

My question concerns the direction in which the comparison with Hellenistic-Roman semantics and discourses will lead us: how is the combination of justice and ethics conceptualized, and can we find traces of similar conceptualizations in Paul's thought? The answer that I propose in this chapter involves a closer connection between 'works' and 'faith' and the suggestion that the 'law of faith' is Paul's version of an internal, unwritten law which enables Christ-followers to participate in Christ's faithfulness (see §3.4.2). And this terminology, 'participation', brings us to a third axis along which the debate on Paul's 'justification by faith' language unfolds.

### 3.2.3 *Faith: Anthropological or Participational Justice?*<sup>35</sup>

A third axis across different interpretations is the meaning of *pistis* in the context of Paul's *dik*-language. If the justice of God is considered to be 'through *pistis* in/of Christ' (Rom 3.22: διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), is this justice enacted

31 Gathercole 2002a, 266: 'Paul's dialogue partner did indeed hold to a theology of final salvation for the righteous on the basis of works. The principal implication of this is that New Perspective exegeses of *Romans* 2.1–4.8 attributes to Paul far too great an emphasis on the inclusion of the gentiles.'

32 Gathercole 2002a, 265: 'on initial examination, Paul is operating with two somewhat distinct perspectives on justification: the first occupying initial justification and the justification of the ungodly (...) and the second referring to God's final vindication of the one who has done good and (...) fulfilled Torah.'

33 VanLandingham 2006, 15: 'both corpora agree that an individual's behavior during his or her lifetime provides the criterion for this judgment: good behavior is rewarded with eternal life, bad behavior with damnation.' Cf. also the critical review of VanLandingham's position by Michael Bird (2008).

34 VanLandingham 2006, 293–295.

35 Other names used for this polarity include 'individual', 'personal', or even, confusingly, 'universal' (because it is addressed to all individuals across time) versus 'Christological', 'eschatological', 'historical', 'pneumatological', or 'transformative'.

through people's faith in Christ or through (participation in) Christ's faithfulness? The discussion is interwoven with another shibboleth in Pauline studies: the *pistis Christou* debate. In the Greek genitive construction, Christ can be (amongst other options) the subject or the object of *pistis*. Moreover, *pistis* can bear more transitive meanings such as 'faith in' or 'trust in', as well as more intransitive meanings such as 'faithfulness' and 'trustworthiness'. In an anthropological or individual reading, which corresponds to the traditional Lutheran perspective, the basis for God's justifying act is found in the faith of the believer, which can be variously construed as a condition, a subjective quality, a personal response to the gospel, and/or a divine gift.<sup>36</sup> In a participational approach, Christ's faithfulness provides a model for those belonging to Christ to participate in and be transformed by.<sup>37</sup> Thus, put in simple—perhaps overly simple—terms, the way for righteousness to take hold is sought either in the faith of the believer or in the faithfulness of Christ. For a more elaborate treatment of the *pistis Christou* discussion including my own position, see chapter 6 below. In the context of this chapter, it suffices to say that both options have enough lexical credibility to offer, which leaves us with some exegetical space.

The opposition between faith in Christ and faithfulness of Christ need not necessarily be drawn in terms of Christocentrism versus anthropocentrism. As Jonathan Linebaugh has shown, notwithstanding Luther's interpretation of *pistis Christou* in *Galatians* 2.16 and 2.20 as faith *in* Christ, Luther himself did not understand faith as some sort of human contribution to salvation but was thoroughly Christocentric in his approach.<sup>38</sup> According to the contributions of the so-called Finnish Luther studies or the 'New Perspective on Luther', Luther's language of justification was imbued with the metaphor of participation and union with Christ.<sup>39</sup> This leads to conceptions of faith that imply a form of deification:

---

36 See Heliso 2007, 18.

37 For a survey of scholarly interpretations that argue for this interpretation, see Heliso 2007, 19–26 (focused on the interpretation of Rom 1.17), and for a more systematic exposition of a participational approach, see Campbell 2005, 38–42. The cautious conclusion of Heliso, based on her Hellenistic-Jewish material sounds: 'we judge that the Christological reading should be afforded more weight within Pauline scholarship than has been the case thus far' (p. 254).

38 Linebaugh 2013b.

39 Of groundbreaking importance was the monograph by Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith* (2005, translation of the 1989 German original). More recent overviews are offered in Vainio 2010a.

Faith becomes essentially a divine act in human person. (...) The faith that saves is a new divine reality in the human being, Christ, who takes over both the intellect and other faculties in the soul. (Vainio 2010b, 142–143)

Whether or not they would also phrase it in such drastic terms, present-day adherents to what I here call an ‘anthropological’ interpretation often vehemently oppose the polarity in itself, since ‘the reference to Christ is absolutely fundamental in both cases.’<sup>40</sup> As we will see in this chapter, the discourses of the Golden Age and unwritten law also present us with frames which favour a participational or mimetic approach while giving ample space to the meaning of *pisteuō* as ‘having faith in Christ’.

### 3.2.4 *Salvation: Timeless-Individual or Cosmic-Historical Justice?*

Closely related to this issue of faith is the question of how the Christ-event procures salvation. If Paul’s message is deemed as concerning the personal salvation of every human being, the importance of the historical embedding or the cosmic intervention of the Christ-event is often minimized. An extreme variant of this position is voiced by Rudolf Bultmann: ‘The crucial history is not the history of the world, of Israel and other peoples, but the history that each individual experiences.’<sup>41</sup> Because of the timeless nature of Paul’s message as construed by Bultmann and others, it is criticized for being ahistorical or not eschatological enough. In 1963, Krister Stendahl drew the famous analogy of this interpretation with ‘the introspective conscience of the West’: because Augustine and Luther were so caught up in finding a solution to their own incapability to uphold the law, we ended up assuming a similar individualistic problem behind Paul’s message.<sup>42</sup> Instead, Stendahl argues that Paul had ‘a rather “robust” conscience’ (see e.g. Phil 3.6, 1 Cor 4.4, Rom 9.1) and was concerned with the coming of the Messiah and its implications for the status of the Mosaic Law and the relation between Jews and gentiles.<sup>43</sup>

Alternative interpretations to Bultmann’s timeless ‘mysticism’, more in line with Stendahl, are known under many related labels, such as being ‘salvation-historical’, ‘temporal-dynamic’, ‘corporate’, ‘apocalyptic’, ‘cosmic’, or ‘eschato-

40 Watson 2009, 159.

41 Bultmann 1984, 102: ‘Die entscheidende Geschichte ist nicht die Weltgeschichte, die Geschichte Israels und der anderen Völker, sondern die Geschichte, die jeder Einzelne selbst erfährt.’

42 Stendahl 1963.

43 Stendahl 1963, 200 (quoted), 204.

logical'.<sup>44</sup> The consequences of these more abstract corporate schemes for understanding *pistis* were emphatically phrased by Herman Binder in his *Der Glaube bei Paulus* (1968). He rejects the individualistic-psychologized turn in the interpretation of justification and redefines faith as a trans-subjective eschatological power that was introduced into the world with Jesus's crucifixion and marked the beginning of a new era.<sup>45</sup> In the context of this study, however, it is interesting to note that Binder traces the individualistic tendency back to Greek thought, with its (allegedly) strict separation between subject and object, and concludes that Paul must have developed his *pistis* concept in contrast with Greek thought and solely from Old Testament ideas (esp. Hab 2.4).<sup>46</sup> In fact, as I will argue in this chapter, it is precisely from a Graeco-Roman perspective that Paul's justification by faith language appears in a cosmic, collective light (a more elaborate reply to Binder and others is given in §3.4.1 below).

The collective, non-individual nature of salvation is also emphasized by proponents of the Radical New Perspective. Stanley Stowers, for instance, maintains that 'the fact that everyone sins in the ordinary sense is not Paul's concern.'<sup>47</sup> So far, I concur, yet the alternative Stowers offers will be discussed more critically in this chapter:

Rather than an account of timeless human nature, *Romans* assumes a certain reading of *Genesis* and the rest of the Pentateuch that makes gentiles both ignorant of God and at least potentially knowledgeable of the Mosaic Law. (Stowers 1994, 113)

Stowers argues for reading all occurrences of *nomos* in Paul as referring to the Law of Moses and hence dismisses the idea that Paul might use the word to refer to natural law.<sup>48</sup> His reluctance is understandable, given that natural law is often used to underpin a theology of individual guilt of all human beings, which, I agree, is far from Paul's intentions in *Romans* 1–2, even if a collective inexcusability is part of Paul's argument (see §3.4.2 below). Nevertheless, Stowers leaves room for interpreting some passages (Rom 12.2–21; Phil 1.9–10)

---

44 Some of these designations are coined in Schliesser 2007, 52–53 and 278 respectively. Herman Ridderbos favoured 'corporate' or 'redemption-historical' (e.g. 1953, 150); Martinus de Boer (2011) is known for his 'apocalyptic' emphasis in interpreting Paul's letters.

45 Binder 1968.

46 Binder 1968, 30, see §3.4.1 below.

47 Stowers 1994, 113.

48 Stowers 1994, 112.



on moral discernment along the lines of early Stoic theory on natural law.<sup>49</sup> Based on comparison with Graeco-Roman discourses on justice, faith, and law, I am convinced that we need not be overly careful in our selection of Pauline passages that draw on the discourse of natural law.

This chapter aims to show that Paul draws on various philosophical traditions of internal, natural-universal, and living law, to show that in this new, historical age, written law is superseded by and taken up in what he calls variously the 'law of Christ', the 'law of the Spirit of life', or the 'law of faith'. The next section (§3.3) offers an overview of the related discourses one encounters when searching for combinations of faith-, law-, and justice-language in Graeco-Roman sources in the Hellenistic-Roman period.

### 3.3 The Golden Age and Unwritten Law: Juridical Usage of *Pistis* in Graeco-Roman Discourses

In what contexts were the lexemes central to this semantic domain (*pist-*, *dik-*, and *nom-*lexemes and their Latin equivalents *fid-*, *ius-*, and *lex-/leg-*) commonly used together around the time of Paul, that is, from the first century BC until the second century AD? By looking at the co-occurrence of words formed from the lemmas, such as nouns, adjectives or verbs, making use of the proximity search option of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae and the Library of Latin Texts, we can get an overview of frequent contexts and more specific literary discourses present for Paul and his contemporaries. Thus, we can better understand what connotations would have registered with Paul's non-Jewish audience and perhaps infer how Paul could have made use of existing meanings, concepts, and discourses. In this chapter, I consider the discourse of the Golden Age and different philosophical conceptions of unwritten law (a topos or perhaps a collection of *topoi* to which names such as internal law, divine law, and universal law, natural law, living law, and embodied law belong).

In this part of the chapter (§3.3), I first outline the typical usage of the lexemes involved (§3.3.1). Next, I will consider the narrative of the Golden Age, in which justice—and faith-language frequently occurs (§3.3.2 and §3.3.3). Finally, I discuss some major philosophical contributions to a question involved in these narratives: what is the role of law in a just society? The answers all pertain to some sort of unwritten law: the Platonic concept of an internal, divine law (§3.3.4), the Stoic concept of a common, universal, cosmic law (§3.3.5), and the Hellenistic-Roman originally Pythagorean topos of

49 See Stowers 1994, 111: 'it is conceivable'.

the just and exemplary leader who is the living embodiment of the divine law (§3.3.6).

### 3.3.1 *Justice and Faithfulness: the Ideal Civic Virtues*

The combination of faith- and justice-language (expressed in *pist-/fid-* and *dik-/ius-*lexemes) in non-Jewish and non-Christian texts around the time of Paul is predominantly found in contexts where they represent highly regarded virtues.<sup>50</sup> More specifically, they are usually seen as civic virtues *par excellence*, that is, the virtues one ought to possess as a socially embedded member of the polis or state. As such, they appear to be appropriate to both rulers and ruled. In this subsection, examples from a variety of Greek and Latin authors are briefly put forward to illustrate this usage, before attention turns to the more specific discourse of the Golden Age (§3.3.2 and §3.3.3) and the different philosophical redefinitions of the concept of law (§3.3.4, §3.3.5, and §3.3.6).

Because of his impact on subsequent usage, it is prudent to start our discussion of faith and justice as civic virtues with Plato. Already in Plato's *Laws*, the worthy legislator is said to legislate in accordance with the highest good, and this is explicated by means of Theognis's words as 'fidelity in the face of terrors' (πιστότης ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς) and 'complete righteousness' (δικαιοσύνην ἄν τελέαν).<sup>51</sup> It was probably this specific text that also led the second-century Platonist Apuleius to describe Plato's take on justice with reference to *fidelitas*:

That divine author sometimes calls her 'justice' (*modo iustitiam nominat*), sometimes embraces her with the title of universal virtue (*nunc universae virtutis nuncupatione conplectitur*) or describes her with the word 'faithfulness' (*et item fidelitatis vocabulo nuncupat*). (Apuleius, *On Plato and his Doctrine* 2.7)<sup>52</sup>

Here, both justice and faithfulness are cited as indications of that virtue that is universal or encompassing all others.

The preponderant usage of the *pist-* and *dik-*lexemes as personal, inner virtues is sometimes argued to be a relatively late semantic development, originating in the sixth or fifth century BC. Originally, especially the noun

50 However, these lists of virtues are usually not of the formal or exhaustive type, as David Konstan also emphasizes (Konstan 2018, 252–253): '*pistis* certainly turns up in the company of moral qualities, but relatively rarely, I think, in proper lists of *aretai*, no doubt in part because these had come to be grouped in a few canonical sets.'

51 Plato, *Laws* 630c.

52 The translation is my own.

*dikē* and adjective *dikaïos* were related to proper external behaviour, to the maintenance of reciprocal relations of right.<sup>53</sup> According to Eric Havelock, the coinage of the noun *dikaïosynē* and its employment by Plato as righteousness in the full, ethical sense marked the emergence of two contrasting semantic fields:

a conception of propriety based on the maintenance of reciprocal rights and requiring also the right of redress and hence of punishment as the mechanism of enforcement on the one hand—and on the other a more ambitious, generous, and ultimately inward-looking conception which we can conveniently identify as ‘morality’ in the largest sense, or ‘righteousness’.<sup>54</sup>

The disclosure of this more moral and internal meaning in the fifth century BC<sup>55</sup> did not necessarily lead to a contrast between *dikaïosynē* as an inner, personal virtue and as external, societal justice. Rather, both in the personal and the societal sphere, it was conceived in this more ambitious, ethical manner.<sup>56</sup> In Plato’s *Republic*, the analogy between state and soul offers a recurring, synthesizing framework to the discussed topics.<sup>57</sup> At the end of the work, the ‘Myth of Er’ redefines more archaic depictions of the afterlife by making the virtue of justice the one and only yardstick for a good or bad life and hence for the conditions of the afterlife.<sup>58</sup> Thus, it is worth noting that ethical justice was not in any way at odds with distributive justice in a more juridical or eschatological sense. Instead, the transfiguration of Homeric afterlife conceptions into

53 Havelock 1969, 51.

54 Havelock 1969, 68.

55 Schrenck 1968, 178–225 locates this development already in Theognis’s use of *dikē*. Cf. Theognis, *Elegiac Poems* 147, also apud Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.1.15 (1129b30): ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνη συλλήβδην πᾶσ’ ἀρετῆ (‘in justice all virtue is subsumed’).

56 Cf. Ladikos 2006, 74: ‘Plato completed the internalization of justice as a quality of a man by placing it as a virtue in the psyche—a concept whose definition was not available to pre-Socratic authors, employing this word to symbolize the human personality. In doing so the semantic field of justice became richer and more complex by including the double reference to the polis (πόλις) and to the individual.’

57 See e.g. *Republic* 442d: “‘Temperance (Σωφροσύνη),” he said, “is certainly nothing other than this, in the state and in the individual (πόλεως τε καὶ ιδιώτου).”

58 See esp. Plato, *Republic* 618d–619a: ‘The result of all this is that he can, by taking thought, choose, with regard to the nature of the soul, the worse and better life, calling the worse the one which will lead to becoming more unjust (εἰς τὸ ἀδικιωτέραν), the better the one which will lead to becoming more just (εἰς τὸ δικαιοτέραν). All the rest he’ll say goodbye to, for we have seen that this is the supreme choice in life and death.’

a virtue-based judgement coincides with the reinterpretation of *dikē* language as deeply ethical and inward morality. Both in the soul and in the state, *dikē* language gained a more transformational, ethical meaning.<sup>59</sup>

As a virtue, *dikaiosynē* is intimately linked by Plato to another virtue, *sōphrosynē*, denoting the differentiation, subordination, and harmony between the faculties of the soul or the different groups in society.<sup>60</sup> Thus, as Curtis Larson argues, the ‘reinterpretation of justice in terms of temperance’ was a response to the ethical and political relativism or cynicism of Plato’s day.<sup>61</sup> Because of the impact of this semantic development on the subsequent usage, Larson points in the precise direction I am exploring in this chapter:

Manifestly the meaning of δικαιοσύνη is one of the central pillars in the teachings of Paul. If this Platonic fusion tendency has deeply colored the term Paul used, then New Testament students must join classical scholars and philosophers in tracing the profound effects of Plato’s work. (Larson 1951, 414)

Therefore, even though from our synchronic, semantic perspective Plato is beyond the scope of what is relevant to understanding Paul’s language, it is necessary to trace how the concepts of justice, faithfulness, and (in §3.3.4) law were semantically influenced by Plato.

So, what characterizes the combined usage of *pistis/fides* and *dikē/iustitia* in the period under scrutiny (first century BC—second century AD)? In the first place, they are mentioned frequently as the ultimate qualities of a ruler.<sup>62</sup> In the first century BC, the historian Diodorus Siculus designated *dikaiosynē* and *pistis* as the virtues of a good, accountable steward of a city-state: ‘all

59 For this connection regarding ethics between the individual and society, see also Seneca, *Epistles* 66.10: ‘The good, in every instance, is subject to these same laws. The advantage of the state and that of the individual are yoked together (*iuncta est privata et publica utilitas*).’ For a similar argument as regards the Hebrew usage of justice/righteousness language, see Irons 2014.

60 Larson 1951, 397. See e.g. Plato, *Gorgias* 507a–b, where *sōphrosynē* is considered to be justice when it pertains to humans: ‘The sensible man (ὁ (...) σώφρων) will do what is fitting as regards both gods and men; (...) when he does what is fitting as regards men, his actions will be just, and as regards the gods, pious (περὶ μὲν ἀνθρώπους τὰ προσήκοντα πράττων δίκαι’ ἂν πράττοι, περὶ δὲ θεοῦς δόσια).’

61 Larson 1951, 414: ‘This re-interpretation of justice in terms of temperance (for the movement is mainly in this direction rather than vice versa) is a part of Plato’s attack on the ethical and political relativism which were breeding cynicism.’

62 Examples of this can also be found across the Septuagint, see for instance 1 *Samuel* 26.23 (David about Saul), 1 *Maccabees* 14.35 (about Simon).

present were filled with admiration of both his justice and good faith' (ὥστε ἅπαντας τοὺς παρόντας θαυμάζειν τήν τε δικαιοσύνην καὶ τήν πίστιν).<sup>63</sup> According to the second-century Platonist Plutarch, the Roman consul Aemilius Paulus refrained from pursuing a career with private law cases or ingratiating the people. Instead, 'he sought to acquire for himself what was better than both, namely, a reputation arising from valour, justice, and trustworthiness (τὴν ἀπ' ἀνδρείας καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ πίστεως δόξαν), in which he at once surpassed his contemporaries.'<sup>64</sup>

Yet these virtues are by no means exclusive to leaders. Cicero describes the archetype of the virtuous man in general as possessing the utmost fairness, ultimate justice, and singular faith (*aequissimus, summa iustitia, singulari fide*).<sup>65</sup> In his oration *On Distrust* (74: ΠΕΡΙ ΑΠΙΣΤΙΑΣ), Dio Chrysostom expresses the wish that 'it would indeed be a blessing if, just as one becomes successively a lad, a stripling, a youth, and an old man by the passing of time, one might also in the same way become wise and just and trustworthy (καὶ φρόνιμον οὕτως καὶ δίκαιον καὶ πιστόν).'<sup>66</sup> The thrust of the oration is, however, that faithlessness is the norm (on this treatise, see §8.3 below). The Stoic Epictetus also repeatedly names moral respect (αἰδώς), faithfulness (πίστις), and being just or righteous (δικαιοσύνη) as the virtues in which any person should excel.<sup>67</sup> He even remarks that humans are born to faithfulness (ὁ ἄνθρωπος πρὸς πίστιν γέγονεν).<sup>68</sup> Being faithful and just is a prerequisite for friendship,<sup>69</sup> and, what is more, reverence, faithfulness, and justice (αἰδώς, πίστις, δικαιοσύνη) are

63 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 11.66: 'And when they had returned to Rhegium and required of their guardian an accounting of his administration, Micythus, who was an upright man (ἀνὴρ ὦν ἀγαθός), gathered together the old family friends of the children and rendered so honest an accounting that all present were filled with admiration of both his justice and good faith (ὥστε ἅπαντας τοὺς παρόντας θαυμάζειν τήν τε δικαιοσύνην καὶ τήν πίστιν); and the children, regretting the steps they had taken, begged Micythus to take back the administration and to conduct the affairs of the state with a father's power and position.'

64 Plutarch, *Aemilius Paullus* 2.6.

65 Cicero, *On the Republic* 3.27; Loeb translates *fide* here with 'honour'. Cf. also *On the Republic* 1.2, 2.61, 3.8, and *De officiis* 1.26.

66 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 74.10.

67 Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 24.4–5 (πιστόν καὶ αἰδήμονα); *Discourses* 2.4.1–4 (τὸν πιστόν, τὸν αἰδήμονα, τὸν ὅσιον); *Discourses* 2.22.29–30 (ὅτι πιστοί, ὅτι δίκαιοι; ὅπου πίστις, ὅπου αἰδώς, ὅπου δόσις τοῦ καλοῦ); *Discourses* 3.14.13–14 (αἰδώς, πίστις, δικαιοσύνη).

68 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.4.1.

69 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.22.29–30: 'you may confidently declare them "friends", just as you may declare them "faithful" and "just" (ὅτι πιστοί, ὅτι δίκαιοι). For where else is friendship to be found than where there is fidelity, respect, a devotion to things honourable (ὅπου πίστις, ὅπου αἰδώς, ὅπου δόσις τοῦ καλοῦ) and to naught beside?'

the three qualities that distinguish a human being from any other creature.<sup>70</sup> One of the spokespersons in Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love* even grants 'masculine virtues', including *pistis* and *dikaiosynē*, to women:

So it is ridiculous to maintain that women have no participation in virtue. What need is there to discuss their prudence and intelligence, or their loyalty and justice (περὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ συνέσεως αὐτῶν, ἔτι δὲ πίστει καὶ δικαιοσύνης), when many women have exhibited a daring and great-hearted courage which is truly masculine? (Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 769B)

The close paring of *pistis* and *dikaiosynē* as prominent virtues in all these cases, sometimes accompanied by a third or fourth term that denotes a social quality, is remarkable.

Yet, in all instances, *pistis/fides* is arguably related to maintaining enduring relationships. Cicero explicitly notes that *fides* belongs to a subcategory of virtues, namely those that give pleasure to and are beneficial to not only the possessor, but to the human race (the context is topics suitable for panegyric oratory):

For there are some virtues that are manifested as qualities of people's behaviour and by a sort of kindness and beneficence, while others consist in intellectual ability or in high-mindedness and strength of character; inasmuch as mercy, justice, kindness, fidelity, courage in common dangers (*clementia, iustitia, benignitas, fides, fortitudo in periculis communibus*) are acceptable topics in a panegyric, since all these virtues are thought to be beneficial not so much to their possessors as to the human race in general (*generi hominum fructuosae putantur*), whereas wisdom, and magnanimity that counts all human fortunes slight and worthless, and strength and originality of intellect, and eloquence itself are not less admired if it is true but give less pleasure, because they seem to grace and to safeguard the subjects of our panegyrics themselves rather than the persons before whom they are delivered. (Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.343–344)

<sup>70</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.14.13–14: 'Come now, is there, then, nothing in man like running in the case of a horse, whereby the worse and the better will be recognized? Isn't there such a thing as reverence, faith, justice (αἰδώς, πίστις, δικαιοσύνη)? Prove yourself superior in these points, in order to be superior as a human being.'

In Cicero's estimation, then, rather than it being a mere personal virtue, *fides* together with *iustitia*, *clementia* ('grace, clemency'), and some other virtues are thought of as a civic virtue *par excellence*. *Fides* is other-regarding or relational in nature.<sup>71</sup>

The connection between *iustitia* and *fides* is explicitly discussed in Cicero's *De officiis* (*On Duties*). Cicero calls trust or good faith the foundation of justice and underlines this statement with a reflection on the definition and etymology of *fides*:

The foundation of justice, moreover, is trust (*Fundamentum autem est iustitiae fides*), that is, truth and fidelity to promises and agreements (*dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas*). And therefore we may follow the Stoics, who diligently investigate the etymology of words; and we may accept their statement that trust is so called because what is promised is made good (*credamusque, quia fiat quod dictum est, appellatam fidem*) although some may find this derivation rather farfetched. (Cicero, *De officiis* 1.23)

This Stoic conception of *fides* as fidelity to what has been said or agreed upon shows us why it was seen as foundational for justice. If *fides*, as a civic virtue, failed, so would the state itself. Cicero notes in another work that 'the disappearance of piety towards the gods will entail the disappearance of *fides* and social union among men as well, and of justice itself, the queen of all the virtues'.<sup>72</sup> In a similar discussion of decay, phrased in an eloquent anti-strophe, the unknown author of the *Ad Herennium* (written in the same period and formerly attributed to Cicero) acknowledges: 'Since the time when from our state concord (*concordia*) disappeared, liberty (*libertas*) disappeared, good faith (*fides*) disappeared, friendship (*amicitia*) disappeared, the common weal (*res publica*) disappeared.'<sup>73</sup> The honouring of agreements, both amongst citizens and between the state and people abroad or conquered, was widely regarded as a foundational principle for Roman justice, with *Punica fides*, the trustworthiness of a Carthaginian, as its proverbial, idiomatic reverse.<sup>74</sup>

71 This subject will be more thoroughly discussed in §7.3.2 *infra*.

72 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.4: *atque haut scio an pietate adversus deos sublata fides etiam et societas generis humani et una excellentissima virtus, iustitia, tollatur*.

73 *Ad Herennium* 4.13.19.

74 On this border-transcending quality of Roman *fides* and also on *Punica fides*, see *infra*, §7.3.2.

Yet this external, societal principle of *fides* is deeply embedded in the personal virtue. It is in his *Punica* that Silius Italicus incorporates an address to Fides as ‘Goddess more ancient than Jupiter, glory of gods and men, without whom neither sea nor land finds peace, sister of Justice, silent divinity in the heart of man.’<sup>75</sup> Epictetus, too, argues that if the personal virtue of *pistis* fails, so will every interhuman bond, which eventually ruins the polis, or the political life, as a whole.<sup>76</sup> In fact, it is the prototype of a bad king, who confines good faith or loyalty to the private sphere, as we learn from a scene in Seneca’s *Thyestes*:

ASSISTANT: Let a king want what is honorable: everyone will want the same. ATREUS: Where a sovereign is permitted only what is honorable, he rules on sufferance. ASSISTANT: Where there is no shame, no concern for the law, no righteousness, goodness, loyalty, rule is unstable (*Ubi non est pudor nec cura iuris sanctitas pietas fides, instabile regnum est*). ATREUS: Righteousness, goodness, loyalty are private values (*Sanctitas pietas fides privata bona sunt*): kings should go where they please. (Seneca, *Thyestes* 213–218)

Whereas the royal assistant (Satelles) here voices the ideal of the king as embodiment of the law (*nomos empsychos*, see §3.3.6 below), Atreus embraces the opposite view of kingship, or rather tyranny, whereby the ruler stands above the law.<sup>77</sup> The first view is immediately linked to the public value of concern for the law, righteousness, goodness, and *fides*. *Pistis/fides* is thus closely connected with public welfare and stability of government. And furthermore, the conception of *pistis* as an interior or personal virtue is closely connected to the possibility of justice on a broader societal scale. In modern terms, *pistis/fides* functioned as a Roman identity marker.<sup>78</sup>

75 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.484–486. On Silius Italicus’s *Punica*, see also §3.3.2, §6.3.5 and §7.3.2 *infra*. On the worship of Fides, see *infra*, §7.3.1.

76 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.4.2–3: ‘But, goes on Epictetus, if we abandon this fidelity to which we are by nature born, and make designs against our neighbour’s wife, what are we doing? Why, what but ruining and destroying? Whom? The man of fidelity, of self-respect, or piety. Is that all? Are we not overthrowing also neighbourly feeling, friendship, the state (γειτνίασιν δ’ οὐκ ἀναιρούμεν, φιλίαν δ’ οὐ, πόλιν δ’ οὐ)?’ Cf. Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 24.4–5.

77 See also Rose 1986, 118: ‘Atreus thus exemplifies the despot, and he clarifies this position by rejecting or redefining the criteria of benign kingship defended by the Satelles.’

78 Cf. Strecker 2005, 231: ‘Die *fides* fungierte in der antiken Welt offenbar über einen weiten Zeitraum hinweg und zumal um 1. Jh. n.Chr. innerhalb wie außerhalb Roms als eine Art *identity marker* römischer Kultur und Herrschaft.’



Justice and *pistis* thus often occur as parallel virtues of a ruler or a citizen, yet they can also be used to denote the proper disposition of people towards the ruler or vice versa. In this case, *pistis* takes the meaning of confidence in a faithful or just leader or in trustworthy leadership.<sup>79</sup> Good examples can be found in Plutarch's *Vitae*. In his biography of the Theban ruler Pelopidas, he mentions how Pelopidas, after settling an international dispute, was gladly entrusted with important hostages. This showed the Greeks 'what an advance the Theban state had made in the respect paid to its power and the trust placed in its justice (τῇ δόξῃ τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ τῇ πίστει τῆς δικαιοσύνης).'<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, in Plutarch's biography of the Stoic politician Cato the Younger, he compares the merits of several cardinal virtues and argues that justice is envied most because of its *pistis* and the *pistis* it manages to evoke among the masses:

For the fame and trustworthiness of no virtue, creates more envy than that of justice (οὐδεμίας γὰρ ἀρετῆς δόξα καὶ πίστις ἐπιφθόνους ποιεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς δικαιοσύνης), because both power and trust follow it (καὶ δύναμις αὐτῇ καὶ πίστις ἔπεται) chiefly among the common folk. These do not merely honour the just, as they do the brave, nor admire them merely, as they do the wise, but they actually love the just (τοὺς δικαίους), and put confidence and trust in them (πιστεύουσιν). As for the brave and wise, however, they fear the one and distrust (ἀπιστοῦσι) the other; and besides, they think that these excel by a natural gift rather than by their own volition, considering bravery to be a certain intensity, and wisdom a certain vigour, of soul, whereas any one who wishes can be just forthwith, and the greatest disgrace is visited upon injustice, as being inexcusable baseness (μάλιστα τὴν ἀδικίαν ὡς κακίαν ἀπροφάσιστον αἰσχύνονται). (Plutarch, *Cato the Younger* 44.7–8)<sup>81</sup>

The main point here is that the virtue of justice as exemplified in the ideal statesman invokes trust among the people (πιστεύουσιν), whereas courage in leaders is feared and wisdom mistrusted (ἀπιστοῦσι). Trustworthy justice and the fitting response of faith or commitment function as the two complementary sides of the same coin, enabling a stable society.

Another interesting observation by Plutarch in this last text quoted involves people's assumption that leaders exercise control over their own righteousness

79 See also §7.3.4 *infra*.

80 Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 26.4.

81 Cf. on this passage Morgan 2015, 453.

and thus can be held responsible for it. In contrast to being brave or wise, being just is a moral quality that is within everyone's grasp. Justice is furthermore to be preferred above force, as Plutarch argues in another treatise on the specific topic of statesmanship:

But as it is, people punish bees with smoke and lead unruly horses and runaway dogs by force of bits and dog-collars; but nothing makes a man willingly tractable and gentle to another man except trust in his goodwill and belief in his nobility and justice (ἢ πίστις εὐνοίας καὶ καλοκαγαθίας δόξα καὶ δικαιοσύνης παρίστησιν). And therefore Demosthenes is right in declaring that the greatest safeguard States possess against tyrants is distrust (μέγιστον ἀποφαίνεται πρὸς τοὺς τυράννους φυλακτῆριον ἀπιστίαν ταῖς πόλεσι); for that part of the soul with which we trust is most easily taken captive. (...) The first and most important advantage inherent in the reputation of statesmen is this: the trust in them which affords them an entrance into public affairs (ἢ πάροδον ἐπὶ τὰς πράξεις διδοῦσα πίστις). (Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* 821B–C)

Here, Plutarch explicitly relates trust (*pistis*) to just rulers and mistrust (*apistia*) to tyrants who rule by force. Furthermore, he regards gaining the people's trust as one of the first priorities of the ruler.

In all these different situations across different authors, the public value of *pistis/fides* goes unquestioned. I will elaborate upon the importance of *pistis* in the social and political contexts of the Fides-cult, benefaction, and patronage in chapter 7. But for now, these findings already point us in the direction in which this chapter heads, namely the relationship between individual and societal virtues, between personal righteousness or faith and communal justice or trust. In my survey of the language of the semantic field of *pistis*, *dikaiosynē*, and *nomos*, I noticed one specific Graeco-Roman discourse in which these terms were particularly common. They appear remarkably often in stories about the Golden Age. Therefore, the next two sections discuss the 'ingredients' of such stories, either referring to the past (§3.3.2 on protologies) or to the present and future (§3.3.3 on eschatologies). Thereafter, the final three subsections are devoted to philosophical conceptualizations of unwritten law, a topos often addressed in the discourse of the Golden Age.

### 3.3.2 *The Golden Age of Faith and Justice and Their Retreat from the Earth*

In the sources traced by co-occurrence of faith, justice, and law vocabulary, there is a particular theme or discourse that stands out which often goes by

the name of a 'Golden Age'.<sup>82</sup> Though the first partition of human history in ages named after metals as we find it in Hesiod's myth of the Five Ages may have had a rather descriptive, historical purpose, in the Hellenistic period, 'the myth had gradually crystallized into a philosophical and theological doctrine'.<sup>83</sup> In most Graeco-Roman accounts of the earliest history of humanity, the very first phase was golden in the sense that it was a good and prosperous phase, in which the gods themselves were involved and intimately known. In descriptions of this age, vocabulary from the semantic domain of faith and justice abounds.

According to Dio of Prusa, 'these earlier men were not living dispersed far away from the divine being or beyond his borders apart by themselves, but had (...) grown up in his company and had remained close to him in every way'.<sup>84</sup> This initial phase is described by Dio in cognitive and universal terms. The knowledge of the gods was common 'to the Greeks and Barbarians alike', innate in 'every creature endowed with reason' (ἐν παντὶ τῷ λογικῷ) without the aid of human teachers or deceitful priests.<sup>85</sup> 'How, then, could they have remained ignorant (ἀγνώτες) and conceived no inkling of him who had sowed and planted and was now preserving and nourishing them?' he exhorts.<sup>86</sup> In Latin literature, we could refer to the fifteenth satire of Juvenal, where he states that at the beginning of the world (*mundi principio*) the creator gave life (*animae*) to the animals, but also a mind to humans (*nobis animum quoque*) so that civilization could develop out of solidarity or 'combined confidence' (*conlata fiducia*).<sup>87</sup>

The Epicureans were somewhat more ambiguous when it comes to how 'golden' the first days were. Lucretius describes a rough start and gradual progress of the human race, yet he seems to envision that the early people did have clear perceptions of the gods, waking or in dreams.<sup>88</sup> Epicurus's *Letter to Menoeceus* indeed speaks of a 'common knowledge' (ἡ κοινὴ τοῦ θεοῦ νόησις) which is quite clear (ἐναργής), but differs nonetheless considerably from what

82 Specifically, the proximity of lexemes formed by the stems of *πιστ-/fid-*, *δικ-/ius-*, and *νομ-/lex(leg-)*.

83 See Ryberg 1958, 113. For the myth of the five ages, see Hesiod, *Works and Days* 106–201.

84 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.28.

85 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.27. See also 12.28: 'The people could not remain void of understanding (ἀξύνετοι), since they received discernment (σύνεσις) and reasoning power (λόγος), illuminated by natural phenomena, and animals.'

86 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.29.

87 Juvenal, *Satires* 15.147–158. On Juvenal and Lucretius's accounts of the dawn of civilization, see Konstan 2001, 122–123.

88 See Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 5.925–1457, in particular 1169–1171. Cf. Van Nuffelen 2011, 184.

most people think: these popular conceptions do not count as true preconceptions or, in technical terms, *prolepseis*.<sup>89</sup> Overall, however, the Epicureans argued that these preconceptions provided a basis for correct religious knowledge, that could be uncovered with the help of philosophy.<sup>90</sup>

Such protological accounts often involve specific gods: most often Cronus (Saturn) and sometimes Zeus (Jupiter). For our present purposes, it is interesting to note how often this divine age is described in terms of justice and faith. The poet Hesiod speaks of a law given to humanity by Cronus, yet this law is in fact 'justice' itself:

This is the law that Cronus's 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 (ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἔδωκε Δίκην), which is the best by far. (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 276–280)

Plato also refers to this mythical age of Cronus by mouth of the Athenian stranger in the *Laws*, an age in which the blissful life of humans was 'furnished with everything in abundance' (713b–c).<sup>91</sup> The cause of this prosperity was the wise decision of Cronus to appoint demigods as rulers, instead of fickle humans who are themselves ruled by arrogance (ὑβρις) and injustice (ἀδικία, 713d).<sup>92</sup>

But also in times closer to Paul's, Cronus and his son are remembered as kings in the ancient days of good faith justice, such as in this answer of Plutarch to a question about why the temple of Saturn is the place to store records of contracts:

Is it because the opinion and tradition prevailed that when Saturn was king there was no greed or injustice among men, but good faith and justice (οὐκ εἶναι πλεονεξίαν ἐν ἀνθρώποις οὐδ' ἀδικίαν Κρόνου βασιλεύοντος, ἀλλὰ πίστιν καὶ δικαιοσύνην)? (Plutarch, *Roman Questions* 275A (42))

89 Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* 123–124. Similar ideas are found in Philodemus's works, see Obbink 2002, 217.

90 See Algra 2007, 14. Cf. on the role of the philosophical *theologia* §2.3.4 above and on Epicurean use of *pistis* §5.3.4 below.

91 For a more elaborate discussion of this passage, see §3.3.5 *infra*.

92 In another dialogue, *Protagoras*, the initial situation was less than ideal according to the protagonist, because of wild beast attacks, so Zeus sent Hermes to bring humanity reverence and justice by means of which they could live in cities. See Plato, *Protagoras* 322c: Ζεὺς οὖν δέισας περὶ τῷ γένει ἡμῶν μὴ ἀπόλοιτο πᾶν, Ἑρμῆν πέμπει ἄγοντα εἰς ἀνθρώπους αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην.

In particular, *pistis* and *dikaiosynē*, the very terms under consideration in this chapter, are mentioned here as characteristic virtues of Saturn's rule, with *pistis* being used in the sense of the fundamental societal virtue of mutual trust, of *bona fides* (on which, see chapter 7).

The age of Saturn is known as an age in which no laws were needed. At Aeneas's arrival at the palace of Latinus in Vergil's *Aeneid*, the king refers to the people of Latium as 'Saturn's race, righteous not by bond or laws (*Saturni gentem haud vincolo nec legibus aequam*), but self-controlled of their own free will and by the custom of their ancient god (*sponte sua veterisque dei se more tenentem*).<sup>93</sup> Similarly, according to Ovid, Saturn's Golden Age was a time in which no law was needed because people kept faith and did the right thing out of their own will:

Golden was that first age, which, with no one to compel, without a law, of its own will, kept faith and did the right (*sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat*). There was no fear of punishment, no threatening words were to be read on brazen tablets; no suppliant throng gazed fearfully upon its judge's face (*nec supplex turba timebat iudicis ora sui*); but without defenders lived secure. (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.89–93)

Again, it is the natural state of *fides* that is praised and, interestingly, is set in opposition to the later imposition of laws and judgments. This Roman antithesis between faith and law is highly relevant for understanding Paul's antithesis—an argument I will elaborate below (§§3.4.2–3) but also in chapter 7 where I discuss the transjuridical nature of *pistis/fides*.

In the labelling of the first period as 'golden', the second as 'silver', the third as 'bronze', and the fourth or fifth as 'iron', it is possible to detect the common diagnoses of how, after this age of divine rule, degeneration set in. The fortune of the first period of human history often functions to throw the bemoaned present state into relief. 'But now there is greater harmony among snakes', Juvenal laments.<sup>94</sup> Dio of Prusa speaks of the earliest and most ancient men who were *not* ignorant of or indifferent towards the gods, implying a later decline.<sup>95</sup> In an account of a recent degeneration in Athens after the Persian wars, Plato describes successive stages. First music brought democratic

93 Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.203.

94 Juvenal, *Satires* 15.159.

95 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.27: οὐκ ἐὼντα κατανοστήξαι καὶ ἀμελήσαι τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους καὶ παλαισιτάτους.

freedom together with a contempt for the law and for wisdom, which led to insubordination towards rulers, next to parents, penultimately to the law, and finally ‘the last stage of all is to lose all respect for oaths or pledges or divinities (ὄρκων καὶ καὶ πίστεων καὶ τὸ παράπαν θεῶν μὴ φροντίζειν),—wherein men display and reproduce the character of the Titans of story’.<sup>96</sup> Here it is indeed lawlessness and thoughtlessness towards agreements (a reified use of *pistis*) and gods that represent the worst state of decline.

The idea that all was better in a vanished past, before decadence set in, can even be considered ‘orthodox dogma’ in the works of Roman historians. In 1961, E.A. Judge published an essay on ‘The Roman Theory of Historical Degeneration’, in which he discerns this theme across the works of Piso Frugi, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Annaeus Florus, Tacitus, and Sallust.<sup>97</sup> All these authors share some notion of historical degeneration, Judge argues, not because there indeed was such a moral decay, but because it was ‘a political instrument employed by the leaders of the day to discredit their opponents’.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, I will refer to several examples of such propagandistic historiography here; however, the theme seems to go beyond this opportunistic purpose so that we can speak of a discourse that was appropriated and adapted to suit diverse needs in different genres.

The second, silver age is interesting, as it represents a certain in-between situation. According to Hesiod, the second race was already quite miserable. They lived shorter, for one, as they ‘could not restrain themselves from wicked outrage (ὑβριν (...) ἀπάσθαλον) against each other, nor were they willing to honour (θεραπεύειν) the immortals.’<sup>99</sup> This period seems not all that different from the fifth and final stage, in which it is again *hybris* that is praised: ‘they will give more honour to the doer of evil and the outrage man (ὑβριν ἀνέρα); justice will be in their hands, and reverence will not exist (δίκη δ’ ἐν χερσὶ καὶ αἰδῶς οὐκ ἔσται).’<sup>100</sup>

Seneca’s description of this second age is somewhat lighter: in the silver age, the fruits of nature abounded so that there was no need for avarice or toil, and all lived in perfect harmony and loved the other as his/herself (*par erat alterius ac sui cura*).<sup>101</sup> The humans of these days were ‘high-spirited men and so to speak fresh from the gods’ (90.44: *alti spiritus viros et, ut ita dicam, a dis*

96 Plato, *Laws* 701b–c.

97 Judge 2008f (first published in *Hermes* 58 (1961), 5–8), 57.

98 Judge 2008f, 54.

99 Hesiod, *Works and Days* 134–135.

100 Hesiod, *Works and Days* 191–193.

101 Seneca, *Epistles* 90.40.

*recentes*). At the same time, nature was no longer like a parent but took on the somewhat more distant role of guardian (90.38: *tutela* or the variant reading *tutelam*). Moreover, the people were not wise or virtuous, as ‘nature does not bestow virtue; it is an art to become good’ (90.44). Hence, ‘it was by reason of their ignorance of things that the men of those days were innocent; and it makes a great deal of difference whether one wills not to sin or has not the knowledge to sin (*utrum peccare aliquis nolit an nescia*)’ (90.46).

The degeneration narrative is often depicted as a retreat of the gods and personified virtues from the earth.<sup>102</sup> In Hesiod, it is a hypostasized Aidōs, i.e. reverence or decency in the form of shame following from an evil deed, together with Nemesis, i.e. retribution or indignation as a form of social control, abandoning mankind (199: *πολιπόντ’ ἀνθρώπους*), marking the worst of all stages in humanity’s evolution.<sup>103</sup> In the *Phaenomena* of the poet Aratus—whose work the apostle Paul quotes according to the author of *Acts*<sup>104</sup>—this role is played by the constellation Virgin, who is there identified as Astraea (the goddess of innocence), also known as Dikē (the goddess of judgement). She stood by humanity in the Golden Age, lingering to warn men throughout the Silver Age, but left for the sky when the vile Race of Bronze arose.<sup>105</sup> Closer to Paul’s time, Catullus also speaks of the somewhat unclear chicken-and-egg moment when justice was ‘chased away from the minds of men’ and the gods also ‘averted their righteous mind’.<sup>106</sup>

*Pistis/fides* is also frequently mentioned as part of this trope of a divine retreat or aversion linked to human moral degeneration. An interesting

102 In Hellenistic-Jewish material, we have similar accounts of a personified Wisdom leaving: cf. 1 *Enoch* 42.2 (‘Wisdom returned to her place, and took her seat among the angels’) and cf. 44.5; 4 *Ezra* 5.10 (‘Then shall intelligence hide herself and wisdom withdraw to its chamber’); Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 2.40 (‘But when it [Wisdom] sees them perversely increase in the opposite direction and being altogether uncontrolled and wilful, it returns to its own place’).

103 Hesiod, *Works and Days* 174–201.

104 *Acts* 17.28b, quoting Aratus, *Phaenomena* 5 (τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος εἰμὲν). Aratus’s poetry was frequently translated from at least the first century onwards. See Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 20, n. 7, following Gatz 1967, 58–63.

105 Aratus, *Phaenomena* 96–136; esp. vv. 133–136: ‘then verily did Justice loathe that race of men and fly heavenward and took up that abode, where even now in the night time the Maiden is seen of men.’

106 Catullus, *Poems* 64.397–408, esp. vv. 397–398, 405–406: ‘But when the earth was dyed with hideous crime, and all men banished justice from their greedy souls (*iustitiamque omnes cupida de mente fugarunt*) (...) then all right and wrong, confounded in impious madness, turned from us the righteous mind of the gods (*iustificam nobis mentem avertere deorum*).’

example of the goddess Pistis leaving, together with Sōphrosynē and the Graces, is offered by the poet Theognis of Megara. He describes—or as some would rather have it, ‘complains pathetically’—how righteous oaths were no longer trustworthy (*pistos*) upon this departure and piety towards the gods disappeared.<sup>107</sup>

Hope is the only good god remaining among mankind; the others have left and gone to Olympus. Trust, a mighty god, has gone (ὤιχετο μὲν Πίστις, μεγάλη θεός), Restraint (Σωφροσύνη) has gone from men, and the Graces (Χάριτες), my friend, have abandoned earth. Men’s judicial oaths are no longer to be trusted (ὄρκοι δ’ οὐκέτι πιστοὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δίκαιοι), nor does anyone revere the immortal gods; the race of pious men has perished and men no longer recognize established rules of conduct or acts of piety. (Theognis, *Elegiac Poems* 1135–1142)

This is, naturally, a very early tradition, and outside the centuries on which this study focuses, yet it is echoed again and again up until the early imperial period. In an ode to Fortune, Horace refers to Hope and Faith as Fortune’s attendants (*te Spes et albo rara Fides colit velata panno*). By adding the adjective ‘rara’, however, he emphasizes the frequent absence of this goddess from the earth.<sup>108</sup> Ovid mentions the flight of modesty, truth, and faith in the Iron Age (*omne nefas: fugere pudor verumque fidesque*).<sup>109</sup>

The scene of this flight is not always the distant, legendary past, but it also functions as a trope to describe more recent historical events. In Petronius’s *Satyricon*, it is the civil war between Caesar and Pompey that prompted the divine retreat:

A host of gentle deities (*mitis turba deum*) throughout the world abandon (*deserit*) the frenzied earth in loathing, and turn aside (*avertitur*) from the doomed army of mankind. Peace (*Pax*) first of all, with her snow-white arms bruised, hides her vanquished head beneath her helmet, and

107 See Schunack 1999, 299: ‘Signifikant ist die—freilich pathetische—Klage um das Schwinden aristokratischer, ständischer *aretē* bei Theognis.’

108 Horace, *Odes* 1.35.21. ‘White’ probably refers to the practice of hands covered in white cloth during ceremonies at the temple of Fides, see §7.3.1. See for *rara fides* also ED142066 (Epigraphic Database Rome, part of EAGLE), Martial, *Epigrams* 10.78.1–3: ‘Macer, you will go to Salonae by the sea. With you will go rare good faith and love of right (*ibit rara fides amorque recti*), and power, which, when it takes honour for its companion, always comes home the poorer.’

109 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.129.



leaves the world and turns in flight to the inexorable realm of Dis. At her side goes capitulated Faith and Justice with loosened hair (*submissa Fides et crine soluto Iustitia*), and Concord weeping with her cloak rent in pieces. (Petronius, *Satyricon* 124.246–253)<sup>110</sup>

Peace, Faith, Justice, and Concord are the ‘gentle’ deities who, after being violated by civil war, quietly turn aside and abandon the earth. The same abandonment seems to be suggested by Propertius, who writes about a lover at closed doors—doors that may very well turn out to be the doors of the Fides temple at the Capitol—turning the unfaithful (*perfida*) lover into the goddess herself and the poem into a veiled commentary on the political instability of the time.<sup>111</sup>

In the late first-century play *Octavia* about the turn for the worst in the reign of Nero, the virgin Astraea’s flight from earth is also linked to the moral deviance that is inherited by and coming to a climax in the present age:

The vices accumulated over time, over so many ages, are flooding out over us; we are burdened by an oppressive era in which crime reigns, unrighteousness runs mad, lust rules, gaining power through sexual degradation, and triumphant extravagance has long been plundering the world’s immense resources with greedy hands, in order to squander them. (Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia* 429–434)

In fact, *fides* is an important theme across the play, in which Octavia presents herself as an Electra-style heroine: Electra’s piety rescued Orestes and her *fides* protected him.<sup>112</sup>

The divine departure is also thematized in Silius Italicus’s epic on the Punic wars from roughly the same period. The goddess Fides, in an excellent example of *prosopopoeia*, laments the state of affairs on earth and explains why she had to leave:

110 The Loeb translation of *submissa Fides* as ‘humble Faith’ seems inadequate here, since the other deities are clearly portrayed as being mistreated.

111 Propertius, *Elegies* 1.16 (*Monobiblos*). This is argued by Anthony Corbeill (2005). Particularly the ‘veiled hands’ (1.16.45: *debitaque occultis vota tuli manibus*) and the renewed appropriation of *fides* by August (who may then be *Fides*’s new lover, see *Elegies* 1.16.34) point in this direction.

112 Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia* 63–64: ‘who was rescued and hidden from the foe by your loyal devotion’ (*tua quem pietas hosti rapuit textique fides*). The importance of *fides* in this play was also stressed in a paper by Emma Buckley, presented at the ‘Fides in Flavian Literature’ conference (Nijmegen, 6–7 June 2015), published in 2019.

I see it indeed, and the breaking of treaties (*foedera rumpi*) is not disregarded by me: the day is fixed that shall hereafter punish such evil deeds. But, when I hastened to leave the sin-stained earth (*pollutas (...) terras*), I was forced to settle here and change my habitation, because the human race was so fertile in wickedness (*in fraudes*); (...) Force is worshipped, and the sword usurps the place of justice, and virtue has given place to crime. Behold the nations! No man is innocent; fellowship in guilt alone preserves peace. (Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.494–506)

The departure of *Fides* is here again connected to the overall wickedness of the people and the lack of virtue and justice on earth. The inexcusability of all and the fixed day of divine justice are the envisioned as a background to the departure of Faithfulness: as we will see below (§3.4.1), these themes play an important role in Paul as well.

In Apuleius's mid-second-century novel *Metamorphoses*, also known as *The Golden Ass*, the absence of *fides* seems to have turned into a more general lament, as one of the characters exclaims: 'it is with good reason that loyalty is nowhere to be found in this life (*merito nullam fidem in vita nostra reperiri*), because she has gone to live among the ghosts now and the dead, out of disgust at our disloyalty (*odio perfidiae nostrae*).'<sup>113</sup> Whether it was the virtue or the goddess who left first, the common theme across these narratives is that the absence of piety or of the gods themselves is closely linked to the disappearance of the virtues of justice and faithfulness from the earth.

### 3.3.3 *The Return of the Golden Age and Eschatological Universalism*

These pessimistic 'decline of civilization' narratives were not all that these or other Greek and Roman authors had in store. Theognis points to Hope as humanity's last resort.<sup>114</sup> Even more hopeful stories have also been handed down to us telling tales of a return of the earliest Golden Age set either in the past, present, or future. And here as well, we see the fascinating combination of piety towards the gods, justice, and faithfulness recurring throughout different sources.

The Golden Age is to return, various sources agree, when a king like Saturn sits on the throne. In Homer's *Iliad*, Odysseus warns the Achaeans that 'no good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord, one king, to whom the son of crooked-counselling Cronus (Κρόνου πάις) has given the sceptre and

<sup>113</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.21.

<sup>114</sup> Theognis, *Elegiac Poems* 1143–1146.

judgments, so that he may take counsel for his people.<sup>115</sup> This Homeric maxim of a divine appointment of kings by Saturn's son Zeus is brought to the fore nearly a millennium later by Celsus, who uses it to reproach a Christian attitude towards government.<sup>116</sup>

One well-attested setting of such a prosperous period under a Saturnine king in the early Roman history is the reign of Numa, the second king of Rome, famous for his religious laws. Numa functions as the ultimate faithful and just ruler across various authors. According to Plutarch, he was not only just and trustworthy himself, he also created an atmosphere of mutual trust amongst the people, for 'he would not consent to distrust those who trusted him (οὔτε γὰρ ἀπιστεῖν πιστεύουσιν), nor to reign over those who distrusted him (οὔτε βασιλεύειν ἀπιστούντων ἡξίου).'<sup>117</sup> Cicero describes how Numa

implanted in them a love for peace and tranquillity, which enable justice and good faith to flourish most easily (*quibus facillime iustitia et fides conualescit*), and under whose protection the cultivation of the land and the enjoyment of its products are most secure. (Cicero, *On the Republic* 2.26)

*Iustitia* and *fides* are paired here as the outcome of a peaceful reign.

A more elaborate account, focusing on justice (δικαιοσύνη) and temperance (σωφροσύνη), but especially emphasizing the importance of *pistis* to Numa's kingship, is given by the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus. He credits Numa with bringing the State 'to frugality and moderation' (εὐτέλειαν καὶ σωφροσύνην) and for encouraging 'the observance of justice in the matter of contracts' (εἰς δὲ τὴν περὶ τὰ συμβόλαια δικαιοσύνην) in a new, innovative way. He felt that contracts without witnesses rest purely on 'the faith of the parties involved' (τὴν τῶν συμβαλόντων πίστιν). Therefore,

he thought it incumbent on him to make this faith the chief object of his care and to render it worthy of divine worship. For he felt that Justice (Δίκη), Themis, Nemesis, and those the Greeks call Erinyes, with other concepts of the kind, had been sufficiently revered and worshipped as gods by the men of former times, but that Faith, than which there is nothing greater nor more sacred among men (Πίστιν δέ, ἥς οὔτε μείζον οὔτε ἱερώτερον πάθος ἐν ἀνθρώποις οὐδέν), was not yet worshipped either by

115 Homer, *Iliad* 2.204–206.

116 See Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.68.

117 Plutarch, *Numa* 7.4.

states in their public capacity or by private persons. As the result of these reflexions he, first of all men, erected a temple to the Public Faith (ἱερὸν ἰδρύσατο Πίστεως δημοσίας) and instituted sacrifices in her honour at the public expense in the same manner as to the rest of the gods. And in truth the result was bound to be that this attitude of good faith and constancy (ἦθος πιστὸν καὶ βέβαιον) on the part of the State toward all men would in the course of time render the behavior of the individual citizens similar. (...) And the magistrates and courts of justice based their decisions in most causes on the oaths of the parties attesting by their faith (τοῖς ἐκ τῆς πίστεως ὅρκοις). Such regulations, devised by Numa at that time to encourage moderation and enforce justice (σωφροσύνης τε παρακλητικὰ καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἀναγκαστήρια), rendered the Roman State more orderly than the best regulated household. (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.75.1–4)

In this rich description of a glorious Roman past, the part played by *pistis* is connected to the human virtue of keeping agreements, oaths, pledges, and contracts, a virtue vital for living in a righteous community. I will explore this specific context further in chapter 7. For now, it suffices to point out that for the Romans the Golden Age of Numa functioned as an identity marker on the border of mythology and history, in which justice and faith(fulness) were valued most emphatically.

With Numa, however, we are still talking about the Roman past, even though his reign could be considered a return of the earliest glory of humanity, and how this Numa-narrative may have functioned as example and mirror to the present. Can we also find traces of a more eschatological discourse in which the ancient days of justice and faith are re-enacted in the present or expected to return? And what should such a return look like?<sup>118</sup>

The most obvious place to look for such an eschatological narrative is Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*. Indeed, the Augustan poet explicitly refers to the return of the reign of Saturn in the present:

Now is come the last age of Cumaean song; the great line of the centuries begins anew. Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns (*iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna*); now a new generation descends from heaven on high. (Vergil, *Eclogues* 4.4–7)

118 On this theme of the return of a Golden Age, cf. also the research conducted on this theme by Karin Neutel (2015), esp. chapter 1.3 'The Ideal of Unity' (42–66).

The Virgin Vergil imagines as returning is the same Dikē the poet Aratus described as the goddess who had left the earth after the Silver Age. What stands out is that Vergil not only speaks of a new age, but also of a new generation. This conflation of time and people is also found in Ovid and goes back to Hesiod's use of the term *genos* (γένος) to denote the subsequent generations.<sup>119</sup>

According to Wallace-Hadrill, this return of the Golden Age was an innovation inspired by *Isaiah* via the Jewish eschatology in book 3 of the *Sibylline Oracles*.<sup>120</sup> In this complex composition, descriptions of the Golden Age come together with utopian, eschatological expectations.<sup>121</sup> As the dating of the different parts of the *Sibylline Oracles* is uncertain, and suggestions range from the second century BC to the seventh AD, 'the case must rest with the admission of the possibility that some Messianic prophecies might have been included in the Sibylline collection and might have been used by Vergil, probably in any case without his being aware of their specific origin.'<sup>122</sup> In any case, there are enough sources that attest to the fact that some earlier version of the oracles was known and preserved in Rome, which the consul wanted to have reassembled after the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, where they were kept, was burned in 83 BC.<sup>123</sup>

The same theme of a return of the Golden Age is picked up again with a more specific historical foundation in Vergil's *Aeneid*. In the first book, it is foretold how one day the Romans shall wield great power and 'then wars shall cease and savage ages soften; hoary Faith (*cana Fides*) and Vesta, Quirinus with his brother Remus, shall give laws.'<sup>124</sup> The connection between Fides and the eventual laws of the returned Golden Age is noteworthy here. In the sixth book of the same work, when Aeneas meets Anchises in the Hades, Augustus is presented as Saturn's successor: 'And this in truth is he whom you so often hear

119 Hesiod, *Works and Days* 109: χρύσειον (...) πρώτιστα γένος; 127: δεύτερον (...) γένος (...) ἀργύρειον, 143: τρίτον ἄλλο γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων χάλκειον; 157–158: ἄλλο [156: γένος] τέταρτον (...) δικαιότερον καὶ ἄρειον; 176: νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρειον. Cf. Ryberg 1958, 114: 'The use of terms meaning "race" rather than "age", *nova progenies* and *gens aurea*, specifically echo the *chryseon genos*.'

120 Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 21. On Vergil and the *Sibylline Oracles*, see also Neutel 2015, 62–64.

121 Neutel 2015, 63: 'As this passage confirms, there appears to have been an interesting process of exchange in this period between eschatological prophecy, the tradition of the Golden Age and thought on utopian or ideal communities.'

122 Ryberg 1958, 116.

123 On the *Sibylline Oracles* in Rome and this particular episode, see Erich S. Gruen's entry in *Oxford Classical Dictionary* on the 'Sibylline Oracles'.

124 Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.292–293. There is debate as to whether the context of this passage already refers to Caesar Augustus or rather to Julius Caesar: see Harrison 1996.

promised you, Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will again establish a Golden Age in Latium amid fields once ruled by Saturn.<sup>125</sup> In an analysis of Vergil's participation in the Golden Age discourse, Inez Scott Ryberg argues that his appropriation of the theme seems to have developed over time. It developed from the concept of Hesiodic primitivism, via the idea that the Golden Age is 'timeless and still accessible to anyone who chooses it' in the *Georgics*, towards this idea of a return of the Golden Age under specific just Roman rule in the *Aeneid*.<sup>126</sup> In this latter adaptation of the motive, Vergil seems to have set a trend that was continued throughout the early empire.

Vergil's colleague and friend at the Augustan court, Horace, describes the present 'new age' in the same glorious vein and counts Fides among the returnees:

Now Good Faith, Peace, and Honour, along with old-fashioned Modesty and Virtue, who has been so long neglected, venture to return (*iam Fides et Pax et Honos Pudorque priscus et neglecta redire Virtus audit*), and blessed Plenty with her full horn is seen by all. (Horace, *Carmen Saeculare* 57–60)

This text is part of the festive poem composed by Horace for the occasion of the *Ludi Saeculares*, a festival reintroduced by Augustus in 17 BC to celebrate Rome's founding and the beginning of a new *saeculum*, which was understood as a period of roughly 110 years. The message is clear: with the rise of Octavian, a new age of prosperity has set in, and only now does Fides dare to return, after a long period in which faith among people and among leaders and subjects was hard to find.<sup>127</sup>

Viewed from the perspective of Roman politics and propaganda, the claim that the Golden Age is re-enacted in the present can be considered an important element of imperial ideology that was purposefully spread throughout the realm.<sup>128</sup> This ideology of a *pax Augusta* is connected to the image of Pistis or Fides returning from exile, even beyond direct references to the Golden Age, as for example in the euphoric words of the first-century historian Velleius

125 Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.791–794. Whereas the *Aeneid* is explicitly referring to Augustus here, the fourth Eclogue refers to the consulship of Gaius Asinius Pollio (40 BC) and to a child whose identity is disputed.

126 Ryberg 1958, 131, citation from 125.

127 On *fides* as part of Augustan propaganda and political agenda, see §7.3.5 *infra*.

128 In a list of 'Aspects of Roman imperial Ideology and Propaganda', Fredrick J. Long (2013, 271) includes '3. Its realization of old golden age'.

Paterculus, who lauds the political administration of Tiberius in the following manner:

Faith has been called back to the forum (*Revocata in forum fides*), strife has been banished from the forum, canvassing for office from the Campus Martius, discord from the senate-house; justice, equity, and industry, long buried in oblivion, have been restored to the state (...) when were the blessings of peace greater? The *pax Augusta*, which has spread to the regions of the east and of the west and to the bounds of the north and of the south, preserves every corner of the world safe from the fear of brigandage. (Velleius, *Compendium of Roman History* 2.126.2–3)

The ‘return of the virtues’ topos recurs in Flavian literature, not long after the probable death of Paul. In the tragedy *Octavia*, the character Seneca is reminiscing about the days of Saturn, when Iustitia and Fides reigned, but also predicts that those days may soon return:

we are now approaching that final day which will crush this sacrilegious race beneath the collapsing sky. That will allow a reborn and better cosmos to bring forth once again a new progeny, such as it bore in youth when Saturn held the throne of heaven. In those days that virgin goddess of great power, Justice, descended with holy Faithfulness from heaven, and ruled the human race mildly on earth (*tunc illa virgo, numinis magni dea, Iustitia, caelo missa cum sancta Fide, terra regebat mitis humanum genus*). The nations knew no wars, no grim trumpet’s blare, no weapons, nor the practice of surrounding cities with walls; travel was open to all, everything was held in common (*communis usus omnium rerum fuit*). (Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia* 391–403)

Again, the overall condition of humanity is one of faithlessness. To cure this illness, Justice and Faith are paired as hypostasized virtues that once descended and will again descend upon the earth, effecting peace, wall-less cities, and communal property. The entrance of the divine duo of Iustitia and Fides is remarkable for anyone who is familiar with Paul’s version of this metahistorical narrative.

The ‘return of Fides’ topos has received some attention in classical scholarship.<sup>129</sup> In her treatment of the topic of *fides* in Roman religion, Giulia

129 See on this topic also Morgan 2015, 134–135; Corbeil 2005, 93.

Piccaluga devotes a good deal of space to this particular motive, which she believes was widespread in the imperial age: ‘un motivo piuttosto diffuso’.<sup>130</sup> Piccaluga marvels at the extraordinary religious novelty of a goddess leaving and returning, a novelty ‘bordering heresy’, so she claims, in a polytheistic and static religious climate.<sup>131</sup> She considers the motive a further amplification of the archaic Greek notion of virtues abandoning the earth, which I touched on in the previous section.<sup>132</sup> Yet even more interestingly, albeit speculatively, she connects the return of Fides to the return of Saturn, another unusual Greek divinity who appears to have left the earth long ago only to paradoxically return when the order of the universe is turned upside down—celebrated in the yearly festival of the Saturnalia.<sup>133</sup> This connection is indeed confirmed by the overlap in narratives concerning Saturn’s Golden Age and Fides leaving or returning. The connection with the Saturnalia, moreover, makes it even more likely that the return of Fides was a well-known, popular theme. It therefore raises questions about whether merely speaking of a return of faith, as Paul did (Gal. 3.25, see §3.4.1 below), sounded like the annunciation of a new world order.

The idea of a nations-transcending community without walls and private property, as we encountered in the *Octavia*, was not an uncommon theme in Roman times. Similar future-oriented, utopian visions can be found in genres that are more explicitly philosophical in nature. At the end of his enormous wall inscription, the Epicurean Diogenes of Oenoanda wrote his vision that ‘then truly the life of the gods will pass to human beings; for all things will be full of justice and mutual love, and there will be no need of fortifications or laws and all the things which we contrive on account of one another.’<sup>134</sup> Here again, ‘laws’ are used in antithesis to justice: in the ideal, divinely inspired society he envisioned, the concept of law had become superfluous. There will

130 Piccaluga 1981, 723–732: ‘Il ritorno’ di Fides’.

131 Piccaluga 1981, 726.

132 Piccaluga 1981, 728.

133 Piccaluga 1981, 729: ‘Da diversi anni sto cercando di sottolineare l’importanza del fatto che questo personaggio [i.e. Saturn]—del quale la tradizione ricorda tanto il favoloso periodo di regno quanto la scomparsa, coincidente col concludersi di tale epoca mitica— a differenza di altre divinità del politeismo romano—la presenza e l’influenza delle quali nel settore esistenziale poggiante su di esse sono concepite come costantemente attive— venga rimesso in funzione solo in occasione della sua festa, allorchè, tornando egli “come re”, si instaura in città la particolare atmosfera dei Saturnalia, vale a dire, torna, sia pure per quel breve lasso di tempo, anche la realtà saturnia, con tutti gli specifici “valori” che la presentano come nuova e paradisiaca rispetto a quella attuale.’

134 Diogenes of Oenoanda, *Fragment* 56.



be one community, without those devices which are meant to keep the peace with others on the inside (laws) or on the outside (fortifications).

This vision of ultimate justice enabling a peaceful society is not restricted to Epicureanism. In his description of Alexander the Great's rule, Plutarch claims that Alexander did not follow Aristotle in offering discriminating treatment to Greeks and Barbarians,<sup>135</sup> but rather the Stoic Zeno, whose ideal *Republic* is summarized by Plutarch with these words:<sup>136</sup>

that all people should not live differentiated by their respective rules of justice (ιδίοις ἕκαστοι διωρισμένοι δικαίοις) into separate cities and communities, but that we should consider them to be of one community and one polity, and that we should have a common life and an order common to us all, (...) This Zeno wrote, giving shape to a dream or, as it were, shadowy picture of a well-ordered and philosophic commonwealth (εὐνομίας φιλοσόφου καὶ πολιτείας). (Plutarch, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* 329A–B)

The topos of 'common law', to which this passage alludes, and its relationship to actual city-laws received considerable attention in Stoicism, and I will explore this theme more fully below (§3.3.5). For now, I want to note how both schools, Epicureans and Stoics, seem to envision an ideal community in which laws and justice are differently configured than they are in the present: either justice and love are so ubiquitous that there is no need for laws at all, or one type of universal justice and order will be applicable to all, to Greeks and Barbarians alike. Notwithstanding the idealized nature of these accounts, the apocalyptic visions of a Golden Age and the idealized accounts of future society with a different type of law function as feasible Graeco-Roman contexts for understanding Paul's treatment of the theme of justice, faith, and law. But before we arrive at Paul, I want to take a closer look at the Stoic treatment of the theme of law and its precursory (and contemporary) ideas in Platonism and Pythagoreanism, focusing on the role of law.

<sup>135</sup> Plutarch, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* 329B: 'For Alexander did not follow Aristotle's advice to treat the Greeks as if he were their leader, and other peoples as if he were their master (τοῖς μὲν Ἕλλησιν ἡγεμονικῶς τοῖς δὲ βαρβάροις δεσποτικῶς χρώμενος).'

<sup>136</sup> On the question whether Plutarch adequately summarizes Zeno's position, cf. Vogt 2007, 86–90; Schofield 1991, 'Appendix A: Zeno and Alexander' (104–111).

### 3.3.4 *The Internal Law: the Platonic Reconfiguration of Law as Mind and Divine Measure*

When thinking about just, faithful rulership; a just, faithful society; and just, faithful persons, it is hard to avoid considering the place and meaning of law. Yet, as we just saw in the Stoic and Epicurean accounts, the relationship between justice and the law is not unproblematic. The same obviously counts for Paul. But before we turn to that, it is helpful to have a clear idea of the problems that were perceived and solutions that were conceived of by his pagan contemporaries within this discourse.

In particular, I will discuss the concept of an internal or divine law in Platonism (in the present subsection) and the concept of natural or common law in the Stoa (§3.3.5). Both concepts make allegorical use of the Golden Age narratives outlined in the previous subsections. Finally, I will briefly consider the notion of the ruler as living or embodied law (§3.3.6). All three of these types of law count in this study as examples of ‘unwritten law’.

In these subsections, *pistis* vocabulary (including cognates) is not as frequent as in the more general Golden Age discourses. Nevertheless, we will see how authors connect the idea of an unwritten law to the Golden Age. Moreover, as I will argue later (§3.4), for Paul, in the context of law, *pistis* functions precisely like unwritten types of law in Hellenistic-Roman discourses, for it is able to transform people ‘internally’, it is ‘universal’ to all nations, and it is ‘living’ in the person of Christ.

The problem with laws prescribed in the Greek *poleis* was articulated by the sophist Hippias, as he is portrayed in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*: “Laws can hardly be thought of much account, Socrates, or observance of them, seeing that the very people who passed them often reject and amend them.”<sup>137</sup> This discussion seems to belong to the lively debate on *nomos* and *physis* in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, which allowed sophists to question the status of the law as a mere human invention. In response, Xenophon’s Socrates argues that being obedient to the laws amounts to being just. It is interesting that this argument is made with recourse to *pistis*-related terms: for one is most likely to ‘trust’ a fellow-citizen or even an enemy who upholds the law.<sup>138</sup> As we saw

<sup>137</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.4.14.

<sup>138</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.4.17: ‘Whom would anyone rather trust (πιστεύσειε) as guardian of his money or sons or daughters? Whom would the whole city think more trustworthy (ἄξιοπιστότερον) than the man of lawful conduct? (...) Whom would enemies rather trust (πιστεύσειαν) in the matter of a truce or treaty or terms of peace? Whom would men rather choose for an ally? And to whom would allies rather entrust (πιστεύσειαν) leadership or command of a garrison, or cities?’

before (§3.3.1), in a social setting, being just was considered tantamount to being trustworthy. And it is to this nexus of trust and justice that, according to Socrates, the law also belongs.

More relevant here, however, is the fact that at this point, after Hippias agrees but still affirms that laws are manmade, Socrates introduces the notion of unwritten laws (4.4.19: ἀγράφους (...) νόμους). These laws are further described as universal and divine: unwritten laws are observed in every place and designed by the gods for humans (4.4.19). While this dialogue ends shortly after an agreement is reached regarding some basic unwritten laws, its occurrence in Xenophon shows the early roots of the idea that there is a transcending set of laws of divine origin, an idea further developed by different schools in the Hellenistic and Roman days.

A similar notion returns in Plato's *Laws*, Plato's second book pertaining to the discussion and design of governments. Yet here it is mostly the internal character of divine law that is foregrounded. The main issue to work out here is what enables the citizens of the mythical city of Magnesia to become virtuous. The actual laws of a city-state are deemed only secondary in achieving this aim, for they are incapable of producing the same results as an internal good nature would; in fact, someone with the right knowledge (*epistēmē*) would not even need them.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, something else is needed, in addition to keeping the just laws, in order to live virtuously. The Athenian stranger, the main spokesperson in the *Laws*, argues for an added rationale that explains the necessity of keeping each law.<sup>140</sup> Laws should be explained by the law-giver and understood by the citizens, just like the better doctor explains to his patients why he offers the treatment he offers by means of persuasion (720d: μετὰ πειθοῦς) and awaits their consent. If persuasion is so understood, Terrence Irwin argues, it is not 'addressed to the non-rational parts of the soul', but rather the laws should 'convey rational instruction that should lead to rational

---

139 Plato, *Laws* 875c–d: 'Yet if ever there should arise a man competent by nature and by a birth right of divine grace to assume such an office, he would have no need of rulers over him; for no law or ordinance is mightier than Knowledge, nor is it right for Reason to be subject or in thrall to anything, but to be lord of all things, if it is really true to its name and free in its inner nature. But at present such a nature exists nowhere at all, except in small degree; wherefore we must choose what is second best, namely, ordinance and law, which see and discern the general principle, but are unable to see every instance in detail.'

140 See for instance Plato, *Laws* 721b–d (the example of a law on marriage). Cf. on the deficiencies of the law Bobonich 2004, 96–97.

understanding'.<sup>141</sup> In sum, the ideal law is conceived of as speaking to the part of human beings that is rational, by means of persuasion.<sup>142</sup>

With this element of persuasion, we also arrive at the concept of an internal law. For according to the Athenian, the law should not remain an external means that persuades the *nous* from without. As we have seen above, he refers to the Golden Age of Cronus, in which mankind was justly ruled by a higher order of demigods (see §3.3.3). The moral and present application of the story, the stranger explains, is that only a godly rule ensures a toll-free life, and that

we ought by every means to imitate (μιμείσθαι) the life of the age of Cronus, as tradition paints it, and both in private and public life, order both our homes and our States (τάς τ' οἰκήσεις καί τὰς πόλεις) in obedience to the immortal element within us, giving to reason's ordering the name of 'law' (τὴν τοῦ νοῦ διανομὴν ἐπονομάζοντα νόμον). (Plato, *Laws* 713e–714a)

I have already elaborated on the significance of referring to a Golden Age in the previous sections, but this passage also shows how, for Plato, the mind is the immortal element that functions as law to be obeyed. This equation is strengthened by the wordplay between νοῦς (mind), διανομή (ordering), and νόμος (law).<sup>143</sup> The mind is presented as the internal law of the individual, and the laws of a city-state are to be modelled accordingly.<sup>144</sup> It is a highly significant development that the Golden Age stories are thus allegorized by effectively internalizing justice as something that can be achieved inside a person and by applying the internal law of reason.

<sup>141</sup> Irwin 2010, 98.

<sup>142</sup> On the connection between persuasion and *pistis*, see chapter 5.

<sup>143</sup> The etymological connection is explicitly presumed elsewhere in the *Laws*: see *Laws* 957c: 'for were it not so, it would be in vain that our divine and admirable law bears a name akin to reason (ἢ μάτην τοῦνομα νῶ προσήκον κεκτήτ' ἂν ὁ θεῖος ἡμῖν καὶ θαυμαστός νόμος).'

<sup>144</sup> Aristotle also connects law and reason and is reluctant to grant too much power to laws in making people virtuous. See *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.9.9 (1180a3–5): 'Accordingly we shall need laws (δεοίμεθ' ἂν νόμων) to regulate the discipline of adults as well, and in fact the whole life of the people generally; for the many are more amenable to compulsion and punishment than to reason and to moral ideals (οἱ γὰρ πολλοὶ ἀνάγκη μᾶλλον ἢ λόγῳ πειθαρχοῦσι καὶ ζημίαις ἢ τῷ καλῷ)'. See also *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.9.17 (1180b23–27): 'So presumably a man who wishes to make other people better whether few or many by discipline, must endeavour to acquire the science of legislation—assuming that it is possible to make us good by laws (εἰ διὰ νόμων ἀγαθοὶ γενοίμεθ' ἂν). For to mold aright the character of any and every person that presents himself is not a task that can be done by anybody, but only (if at all) by the man with scientific knowledge (τινος τοῦ εἰδότης).'

This use of the Golden Age narrative as metaphor appears also to have been common in Cynic thought: Lucian calls the Cynic's ideal life 'the life under Cronus', and Maximus of Tyre draws attention to Diogenes as the one person who lives the life the poets talk of 'when they speak allegorically of a similar kind of life lived under Cronus, king of the gods'.<sup>145</sup> The primitivism inherent to the Golden Age appealed especially to the Cynics' striving towards a simple life in agreement with nature.

Returning to the *Laws*, we might ask how we ought to conceive of this rule of reason. Apart from the level of the individual soul and the level of the state, there is a third level at which the relationship between law and reason receives ample attention by Plato. At a cosmological scale, it is the reason embodied by God, which governs the universe so as to foster virtue and order.<sup>146</sup>

Throughout the *Laws*, as in this particular passage, the ideal constitution is also continually associated with the divine. In the beginning of the dialogue, gods are presented as lawgivers of the cities represented by the Athenian's dialogue partners, Kleinias and Megillus. In book 4, the Athenian argues that Magnesia is not to be called a tyranny, aristocracy, democracy, or monarchy, but 'if the State ought to be named after any such thing, the name it should have borne is that of the God who is the true ruler of rational men' (713a: τὸ τοῦ ἀληθῶς τῶν τὸν νοῦν ἐχόντων δεσπόζοντος θεοῦ ὄνομα). It is no wonder, therefore, that to live according to reason's rule means to act like God. The people of Magnesia are summoned to follow Justice with God and be a punisher of those who abandon the divine law (716a: τῷ δ' αἰεὶ ξυνέπεται Δίκη τῶν ἀπολειπομένων τοῦ θεοῦ νόμου τιμωρός).

Then follows a passage I discussed at the end of the previous chapter, and that I will repeat in a shortened form:

In our eyes God will be 'the measure of all things' (πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον) (...). He, then, that is to become dear to such an one must needs become, so far as he possibly can, of a like character. (Plato, *Laws* 716c)

We saw that to imitate or to be dear to God means to live temperately and with measure, because God is the measure of all things. Hence, living according to

145 Lucian, *The Runaways* 17 and Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 36.1. See also Cole 1967, 151, esp. n. 12.

146 According to Bobonich (2004, 95), the 'emphasis on divine reason as the cause of order in the world is a theme that runs throughout the late dialogues, including the *Laws*, the *Philebus*, the *Statesman*, and the *Timaeus*'.

reason is equated with living according to a divine measure. With this central notion, Plato elaborates on the influential topos that also recurs throughout his other works<sup>147</sup> and that goes by the name of *homoiōsis theōi*, ‘becoming like God’ (see chapter 6 below).<sup>148</sup> In the *Theaetetus*, this process of assimilation is even explicitly linked to God’s righteousness.<sup>149</sup> As we will see below, Paul employs very similar concepts in describing how faith and justice are to be understood and enacted by his audience.

In the wake of Plato, the idea of an unwritten law was taken up again. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle distinguishes between ‘written law in accordance with which a state is administered; by general (κοινόν), the unwritten regulations which appear to be universally recognized (ὅσα ἄγραφα παρὰ πᾶσιν ὁμολογεῖσθαι δοκεῖ).’<sup>150</sup> Later in the same work, Aristotle discusses how to make use of ‘law’ as one of the ‘inartificial proofs’ (*pisteis*: on the usage of *pistis* in this context, see §5.3.1 below). He further defines this ‘general law’ as ‘more in accordance with justice’ (δικαιοτέρους), ‘everlasting and never changing’ (ἀεὶ μένει καὶ οὐδέποτε μεταβάλλει) ‘in accordance with nature’ (κατὰ φύσιν).<sup>151</sup> After referring to Sophocles’s *Antigone* (a famous case for following the unwritten law as it is ‘more just’), he argues that her action was

not contrary to the unwritten law (παρὰ τὸν ἄγραφον [νόμον]): (...) and further, that justice (τὸ δίκαιόν) is real and expedient, but not that which only appears just; nor the written law (νόμος ὁ γεγραμμένος) either, because it does not do the work of the law (οὐ γὰρ ποιεῖ τὸ ἔργον τὸ τοῦ νόμου); that the judge is like an assayer of silver, whose duty is to distinguish (διακρίνει) spurious from genuine justice; that it is the part of a better man to make use of and abide by the unwritten rather than the written law (βελτίονος ἀνδρὸς τὸ τοῖς ἀγράφοις ἢ τοῖς γεγραμμένοις χρῆσθαι καὶ ἐμμένειν). (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.15.6–9 (1375a–b))

147 The main classical *loci* are *Theaetetus* 176b–c, *Republic* 61d–e, and *Timaeus* 41d–47c.

148 In chapter 6 (§6.3.4), I will discuss the concept of *homoiōsis theōi* and its connection to *pistis* elaborately. On this particular passage and the *homoiōsis theōi* motive, see Erler 2002a, 165–166: ‘Here the traditional concept is enriched by the introduction of the notion of measure.’

149 Plato, *Theaetetus* 176c: ‘God is in no wise and in no manner unrighteous (θεὸς οὐδαμῆ οὐδαμῶς ἄδικος), but utterly and perfectly righteous (ὡς οἷόν τε δικαιοτάτος), and there is nothing so like him as that one of us who in turn becomes most nearly perfect in righteousness (δικαιοτάτος).’

150 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.10.3 (1368b7–9).

151 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.15.4–6 (1375a–b).

The critique of written law that it ‘does not do the work of the law’ addresses the same problem Plato encountered: namely, how can the written law establish anything beyond superficial justice? How can laws turn someone into a just person? In Aristotle’s thought, a good man would not even need the law:

But if there is any one man so greatly distinguished in outstanding virtue (...) such a man will naturally be as a god among men (ὥσπερ γὰρ θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις) (...) but there can be no law dealing with such men as those described, for they are themselves a law (αὐτοὶ γὰρ εἰσι νόμος). (Aristotle, *Politics* 3.8.1–2 (1284a4–15))<sup>152</sup>

As we shall discuss below (§3.4.2), such a ‘better man’ seems to belong to Paul’s reasoning as well, such as when he speaks of gentiles who have ‘the work of the law written on their hearts’ (Rom 2.15: τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν).<sup>153</sup> Moreover, it is in accordance with Paul’s reasoning that being led by the Spirit amounts to not being under the law (Gal 5.18) and that when it comes to virtues (including *pistis*), ‘there is no law against such things’ (Gal 5.23).

In later strands of Platonism, the concept of an internal law, guided by the philosophers of old, is still in circulation. Plutarch rebuts the Epicurean argument that without law chaos will rule, stating that

if someone takes away the laws, but leaves us with the teachings of Parmenides, Socrates, Heracleitus, and Plato, we shall be very far from devouring one another and living the life of wild beasts; for we shall fear all that is shameful and shall honour justice (τιμήσομεν δικαιοσύνην) for its intrinsic worth, holding that in the gods we have good governors and in the daemons protectors of our lives, accounting all ‘the gold on earth and under it a poor exchange for virtue’,<sup>154</sup> and doing freely at the bidding of our reason (διὰ τὸν λόγον), as Xenocrates says, what we now do perforce at the command of the law (διὰ τὸν νόμον). (Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 1124D–E)

This loose reference to the age of divine rule and the explicit quotation from the *Laws* confirms the later familiarity with this Platonic concept of internal

152 Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.8.10 (1128a10–11): ‘The cultivated gentleman (χαρῆεις) will therefore regulate his wit, and will be as it were a law to himself (οἶον νόμος ὦν ἑαυτῷ).’

153 Cf. for this parallel also Barr 1994, 54.

154 Plato, *Laws* 728a4–5.

law, here again equated with reason, *logos*. Plutarch also closely connects this higher law to the gods: 'Zeus does not have Justice to sit beside him, but is himself Justice and Right and the oldest and most perfect of laws' (Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 781B). Hence, justice or the ultimate law should not only be internalized by human beings; it is even internal to the gods.

Moreover, we also find references to a lack of trust, distributional justice, and incorrect measuring in one of Cicero's contributions to anti-Epicurean discourse. In a letter to Trebatius, who was reported to have 'been made an Epicurean', he exhorts:

But how are you going to be a champion of civil law (*ius civile*) if everything you do is done for your own sweet sake and not for the community (*omnia tua causa facias, non civium*)? And what becomes of the trust formula (*formula fiducia*) 'in accordance with honest practice proper between honest men (*inter bonos*)'? Who is honest that does nothing except for his own interest? What rule will you lay down for division of goods held jointly, seeing that nothing can be joint among people whose only yardstick is their own pleasure (*qui omnia voluptate sua metiuntur*)? (Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 7.12)

The idea of being able to measure with the right principle is again bound up in a discussion about the very possibility of civic law, goodness, justice, and communal faith. To measure by one's own pleasure is antithetical to acting for the sake of community. This confirms my interpretation in the previous chapter: when discussing interhuman conduct, Paul says we ought to measure by one superhuman or divine measure, the divine measure of *pistis* (Rom 12.3).<sup>155</sup>

The differentiation between conceptions or layers of law was developed even further in Neoplatonism. Porphyry, for instance, distinguishes three types of law: 'first, the law of God; second, the law of human nature; third, that which is laid down for nations and states.'<sup>156</sup> The law of nations, or 'written law', has its limits, for it 'punishes him who transgresses it, but it cannot reach a man's secret thoughts and intentions' (25). The law of nature teaches the physical needs of humans and the abstinence of excessive bodily pleasure. The law of God is further explained as being a law that is only known by the mind, which is 'implanted by the mind, for their welfare, in the thoughts of reasoning souls'

<sup>155</sup> *Romans* 12.3, see my argument in §2.5.4 above.

<sup>156</sup> Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella* 25. Translations of Porphyry are taken over from Alice Zimmerman (1896) with, when necessary, minor revisions.



(25), and which ‘diligently pursues the search thereafter, and finds it imprinted in itself’ (26). If you understand this divine law, you also know the natural law and you ‘shall never fear the written law (...) For written laws are made for the benefit of good men, not that they may do no wrong, but that they may not suffer it.’ (27) Again, just as in Aristotle, the written law is presented as not meant for those who are good. Likewise, in Paul’s reasoning, as will be discussed below (§§3.4.2–4), there is no law against virtue (Gal 5.23), and if one does what is good, one need not fear external authority (Rom 13.3).

The distinctions and connections between different types of law we encounter in and beyond Platonism will help us make sense of Paul’s use of *pistis* in the context of law (§3.4). The idea that the divine law is also universal in character can be traced back to Plato. Xenophon already attributes the idea of one law for all countries to Socrates. In Plato’s *Laws*, we also see a universalizing tendency, both in the interlocutors’ civic identities and in the actual body of laws for the ideal city, which combines policies already in force in Sparta, Athens, and Crete. Yet, it was the Stoa which further developed the Platonic idea of a divine, internal law of reason by emphasizing this application to all nations and peoples, thus rendering it internal and universal at the same time. Before turning to Paul, I want first to discuss this concept of a universal law and the related teaching of appropriation (*oikeiōsis*), which is essential in conceptualizing a social or interhuman application of law.

### 3.3.5 *The Universal Law: the Stoic Doctrines of Natural Law and Oikeiōsis*

The sufficiency of divine or internal law, superseding human admonitions and laws, as we encounter throughout the Platonic tradition, is also present in the Stoic tradition. In some sense, the Stoics explored the ultimate consequences of the Platonic innateness of law by connecting it to the right reason of the sage: only wise persons are morally infallible because they know which rules apply in particular circumstances.<sup>157</sup> At a more fundamental level, the same question we encountered in Platonism concerning the relationship between external laws and internal goodness can be discerned in the works of later Stoics, and for our purposes it is remarkable that *pistis* and *fides* vocabulary clearly belongs to the sphere of internal goodness, as texts by Seneca and Epictetus demonstrate.

Seneca is aware of the deficiency of actual laws when it comes to the goal of leading people towards moral conduct and partakes in the discourse in which Plato’s *Laws* still appear to play a prominent role. Still, he grants that there is

---

<sup>157</sup> As argued by Paul Vander Waerdt (2003).

some potential in them, ‘as long as they do not only order but teach as well’ (*si non tantum imperant, sed docent*).<sup>158</sup> In this regard, Seneca disagrees with Posidonius over the use of the preambles in Plato’s *Laws*, sections aimed precisely at instructing. While not everyone benefits of such instruction, the same can be said about the role of philosophy in ‘forming souls’, so he argues: ‘and yet philosophy is not on that account ineffectual and useless in the training of the soul (*formandis animis inefficax*). Furthermore, is not philosophy the Law of Life (*philosophia non vitae lex est*)?’<sup>159</sup> The striking image of philosophy as ‘law of life’ does not merely serve rhetorical purposes here, as Seneca repeats the idea in an expository manner in another letter where he considers the contribution of the wise in the earliest periods of human history. After a long discussion with Posidonius, who believed that the wise also invented many practical arts and crafts whereas Seneca attributes most of them to the human need for luxury, Seneca relates what the wise contributed:

First of all there is truth, and nature; and nature he has not followed as the other animals do, with eyes too dull to perceive the divine in it. In the second place, there is the law of life (*vitae legem*), and life he has made to conform to universal principles (*quam ad universa derexit*); and he has taught us, not merely to know the gods, but to follow them, and to welcome the gifts of chance precisely as if they were divine commands (*nec nosse tantum sed sequi deos docuit et accidentia non aliter excipere quam imperata*). (Seneca, *Epistles* 9.34)

While this ‘law of life’ may thus relay a rather basic idea of moral principles shared among humans, it is a concept that recurs in Seneca and belongs to the discourse of unwritten law.<sup>160</sup> The wording of philosophy’s contribution as ‘law of life directed at universals’ is yet another variation on the themes of transcendent types of law. References to such unwritten types of law clearly are not limited to specific technical expressions. This variety in expression amongst authors also leaves room for interpreting Pauline expressions such as the ‘law of faith’, the ‘law of Christ’, and the ‘law of the Spirit of life’ as such unwritten or transcendent types of law (see §3.4.2 below). Moreover, Seneca connects this theme to following (*sequor*) the gods. Whereas the idea that one ought to actively welcome any twist of fate is a specifically Stoic theme, we

<sup>158</sup> Seneca, *Epistles* 94.37.

<sup>159</sup> Seneca, *Epistles* 94.39.

<sup>160</sup> Brad Inwood (2003b, 83) distinguishes five types of ‘natural law’ in Seneca’s works and counts this application as ‘our first ethically important sense of “natural law”’.

will see below that imitation of the divine plays an important part in Pauline thought as well (see in particular chapter 6 below).

In *On Benefits (De Beneficiis)*, Seneca is also critical of the scope of laws in guiding moral conduct. Here, Seneca distinguishes the domain of law from the domain of inter-human conventions, which is more widely applicable. He mentions *fides* in particular as belonging to the latter sphere:

There are many things that do not come under the law or into court, and in these the conventions of human life, which are more binding than any law, show us the way (*ad quae consuetudo vitae humanae omni lege valentior dat aditum*). No law forbids us to divulge the secrets of friends; no law bids us keep faith even with an enemy (*nulla lex iubet fidem etiam inimico praestare*). What law binds us to keep a promise that we have made to anyone (*quod alicui promisimus*)? There is none. Yet I shall have a grievance against a person who has not kept the secret I told him, and I shall be indignant with one who, after giving a promise, has not kept it (*fidem datam nec servatam indignabor*). (Seneca, *On Benefits* 5.21.1)

While we must be careful not to overinterpret Seneca's intentions here, clearly a contrast is drawn between what written laws can prescribe and what is beyond their capacity to enforce. Faith, understood here as a social virtue of keeping one's promises, evidently exceeds the formal prescriptions of law and is guaranteed by different, albeit human, conventions (see §7.3.1 and 7.3.2 below on faith as a civic virtue transcending the sphere of law). These human conventions are nevertheless universal in their application, given that foes are included in their scope.

The divine dimension of ethical directions is emphasized by Epictetus as part of his teaching on Stoic ethics. Epictetus summarizes the divine directions as comprising attending to those things that are under your control, namely faithfulness (τὸ πιστόν, *to piston*) and self-respect:

What directions shall I give you (Τί σοι ἐντείλωμαι)? Has not Zeus given you directions? (...) What directions, then, did you bring with you when you came from him into this world, what kind of an order? Guard by every means that which is your own (τὰ σὰ τήρει ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου), but do not grasp at that which is another's. Your faithfulness is your own, your self-respect is your own (τὸ πιστόν σόν, τὸ αἰδῆμον σόν); who, then, can take these things from you? (...) Since you have such promptings and directions from Zeus, what kind do you still want from me? Am I greater than he, or more trustworthy (ἀξιπιστότερος)? But if you keep

these commands of his, do you need any others besides? (Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.25.3–6)<sup>161</sup>

God's directions are here set above his own as a teacher, as God is 'more to be trusted' (ἀξιοπιστότερος, *axiopistoteros*). Similarly, Epictetus teaches that God's laws are set above the civic laws of jurists: 'These are the laws that have been sent you from God (οἱ ἐκεῖθεν ἀπεσταλμένοι νόμοι), these are His ordinances; it is of these you ought to become an interpreter, to these you ought to subject yourself, not the laws of Masurius and Cassius.'<sup>162</sup> If I were to take the liberty of prematurely discussing Paul's participation in this discourse, I would note how he similarly argues that the Thessalonians are people that have been taught by God (Paul uses the neologism θεοδιδασκτοί, *theodidaktoi*), and for that reason they do not need Paul's letters to teach them brotherly love (1 Thes 4.9).<sup>163</sup> The same rhetoric and the same theoretical distinction between divine and human directions are evident here.

Moreover, Epictetus argues in the passage above (*Discourses* 1.25.3–6) that as long as the divine commands are kept, human teachings and laws have no use. These divine laws pertain to internal virtues such as faithfulness and self-respect, virtues within everyone's grasp. A.A. Long considers Epictetus's view of human nature as being naturally equipped with divine law a 'highly optimistic assumption', paraphrased by him as, 'we don't need God, *as distinct from ourselves*, to tell us what to do; but we are able to tell ourselves what to do only *because of the way our nature has been constructed*.'<sup>164</sup> Granted, few would deny that that the Stoic theology emphasized divine immanentism more than, for instance, the Platonic variant.<sup>165</sup> I would add, however, that the optimism

161 Cf. Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.16.28, 'And what is the law of God (τίς δ' ὁ νόμος ὁ θεῖος)? To guard what is his own (τὰ ἴδια τηρεῖν)', and 1.29.4, 'This is the law which God has ordained (τὸν νόμον ὁ θεὸς τέθεικεν), and He says, "If you wish any good thing, get it from yourself."'

162 Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.3.12.

163 There is some discussion on the meaning and intertextuality behind θεοδιδασκτοί. Malherbe (1983, 253) reads it in light of (anti-)Epicureanism, as Epicurus and his followers claimed to be αὐτοδιδασκτοί. John Kloppenburg (1993) argues for a conscious reference to the famous brotherly love of the Dioscuri, whereby these deities are the *theos* in question. Stephen Witmer (2006 and 2008, chapter 8, 'God-taught to love', 153–164) rejects both options in favour of a reference to *Isaiah* 54.13 (in the Septuagint: καὶ πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς σου διδάσκουσ Ἐθεοῦ). Whereas Witmer's argument seems to have the upper hand here vis-à-vis the others, I would add that the appeal to God also serves to ratify Paul's teachings in line with the Hellenistic discourse of moral education as divine education. On the immediacy suggested by θεοδιδασκτοί, see §6.4.3 *infra*.

164 Long 2002, 188 (italics his).

165 Cf. on divine immanentism in Stoic thought but also on the idea of divine assistance as coming from a separate entity §6.3.4 *infra*.

involved is mostly theoretical, since the Stoics also emphasized the difficulty and scarce instances of success of living according to nature or becoming a sage (on which, see §6.3.4 below). Even as Epictetus believed the divine law to be innate, present from birth, it remained quite a task to trust this law, to trust Zeus, and act likewise. Even though this law is natural, it does not come naturally to follow its commandments. We will come back to the importance of an attitude of confidence and trust exemplified by Stoic sages (§§5.3.5–6), but for now it is clear that *fides* and *pistis* are at home in this discourse of the internal configuration of divine law.

Perhaps an even more important aspect of the naturalness of this Stoic law than its innateness is its universality. The development of the concept of ‘natural law’ can be traced back to early Stoicism, when the idea took hold that there is a common law that applies to all people and that ‘has a status that is on an altogether different plane from the particular, historical laws of any given state’.<sup>166</sup> The defining characteristic of this concept of law, then, is the idea that it is common (*koinos*) to all. As we saw above, Plutarch ascribes this idea to Zeno: ‘we should have a common life and an order common to us all (εἷς δὲ βίος ἦ καὶ κόσμος), even as a herd that feeds together and shares the pasturage of a common field/law (νομῶ/νόμῳ κοινῶ)’.<sup>167</sup> Just like Plato, the early Stoics endorsed the idea of the individual law of reason as identical to the divine law, only this ‘law of Zeus’ gains a universal colour as that which is ‘in accordance with nature’ and ‘pervades all things’.<sup>168</sup> This is at least how Diogenes Laertius paraphrases what appear to be the teachings of Chrysippus:

And this is why the end may be defined as life in accordance with nature, 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 ὄλων), a life in

166 This can be seen as the ‘core intuition of natural law theories’ according to Katja Maria Vogt (2007, 4). Cf. Striker 1996a, 209: ‘By contrast to human legal codes, the natural law is supposed to be valid independently of any formal procedures, and such that it cannot be changed.’

167 Plutarch, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* 329B; note the wordplay between *νομός* ‘field’ and *νόμος*, ‘law’.

168 Plato and Cicero have also been proposed as the inventors of natural law. Plato, however, endorsed the concept of natural or divine justice, but did not connect this to his ideas on the internal law of reason. The early Stoics did not yet consistently use the technical term natural law (*νόμος φύσεως*) as Cicero did (*ius naturae, lex naturae*), but they nevertheless explored the idea of nature as a common law. Hence, I consider Plato to be a forerunner and Cicero an important source and spokesperson for the tradition of natural law. See also Striker 1996a.

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, and is identical with this Zeus, lord and ruler of all that is. And this very thing constitutes the virtue of the happy man and the smooth current of life, when all actions promote the harmony of the spirit dwelling in the individual man with the will of him who orders the universe. (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.88 (Zeno) (SVF 3.4))

Because of this connection to nature, both a cosmological and anthropological concept in Stoic thought, the universal law is both transcendent and immanent. On a human level, it not only pertains to all by promoting virtuous behavior, it also unites all in one community.

The Stoics referred to this community as a cosmic city, to which all who partake in reason, including the gods, are inhabitants:

For in the same way as the name city has two meanings, the dwelling-place, and the system resulting from the combination of residents and citizens, so also the world (κόσμος) is, as it were, a city composed of gods and men, in which the gods hold the rule, and the men are subject. There is, however, a community between them, because they partake of reason, which is nature's law. (Arius Didymus, apud Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 15.15.3–5)<sup>169</sup>

This Stoic teaching, attributed by Eusebius to Arius Didymus, imagines the cosmos as a city with the gods as rulers and reason (*logos*) as its law. Likewise, in Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, the Stoic Balbus calls the world 'the common dwelling-place of gods and men (*communis deorum atque hominum domus*), or the city (*urbs*) that belongs to both; for they alone have the use of reason and live by justice and by law (*ratione utentes iure ac lege vivunt*).'<sup>170</sup> The law of reason is here again put forward as that which makes gods and men into one cosmic community.

Yet, precisely how universal is this cosmic community the Stoics have in mind? There has been a great deal discussion about the extent to which the

169 Translation by E.H. Gifford (1903).

170 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.154. Cf. on this text Morgan 2015, 490: 'Cicero and Stoics (and, for that matter, other philosophers, and very likely Greeks and Romans in general) seem to have no difficulty imagining the cosmos as a divine-human community; they do not, for instance, normally imagine the divine as so far outside their reach or understanding as to belong to another realm.'

Stoics considered everyone to be citizens or part of the city, or, put differently, which Stoics consider which beings citizens. It has been argued that whereas Zeno thought of this city as consisting of sages—for only they fully incorporate the law of reason—Chrysippus invented the notion of a cosmic city that included everyone. Related to this is the equally debated question whether Zeno, in contrast to later Stoic theory, intended his *Republic* to be a real, revolutionary, political suggestion, an option befitting Zeno's Cynic roots.<sup>171</sup> Zeno's work, unfortunately, is lost to us and his ideas can only be reconstructed based on later discussions. According to Dirk Obbink, the universal version of the cosmic city is a later development; it arises 'through a succession of thinkers, from Zeno's exclusive city of the wise and Chrysippus's conception of the cosmos as a polity of gods and wise men, to Cicero and the later view that all men live (or ought to live) under the same canons of natural law.'<sup>172</sup> Cicero indeed offers a comprehensive account of how gods and men are connected: by reason, hence by law, consequently by justice, and finally by sharing in one civic community.<sup>173</sup> In a well-articulated argument, however, Katja Vogt replies that the sources allow for such views already to have been present in the earliest phases. In her analysis of Arius's passage just quoted, she concludes that 'reason provides the kind of kinship that makes for a community, and reason comes in degrees. Communities, it seems, can also come in degrees.'<sup>174</sup> Hence, there is a strong sense of citizenship, which only allows for sages to be citizens, and a weak sense, which considers all human beings to be citizens. In the passage just quoted, Arius Didymus even provides us with another status, that of 'residents', to correspond with the category of 'ordinary' human beings.

The importance of these discussions on the scope of Stoic universalism lies in the importance of analogous discussions about the Pauline variant. As the

---

171 This position is argued for in an impressive reconstruction of Zeno's thought by Malcolm Schofield (1991) and is also endorsed by Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Engberg-Pedersen 2000, 76–77).

172 Obbink 1999, 178.

173 Cicero, *On the Laws* 1.23: 'Therefore, since there is nothing better than reason, and since it exists both in man and God, the first common possession of man and God is reason (*prima homini cum deo rationis societas*). But those who have reason in common must also have right reason (*recta ratio*) in common. And since right reason is Law (*lex*), we must believe that men have Law also in common with the gods. Further, those who share Law must also share Justice (*ius*); and those who share these are to be regarded as members of the same commonwealth (*quibus autem haec sunt inter eos communia, ei civitatis eiusdem habendi sunt*). (...) Hence we must now conceive of this whole universe as one commonwealth of which both gods and men are members (*ut iam universus hic mundus una civitas sit communis deorum atque hominum existimanda*).'

174 Vogt 2007, 92–93.

Pauline communities were concrete communities, not merely abstract ones, there seems to be at least some convergence with the early Cynic-Stoic variant of the city of the wise.<sup>175</sup> Yet one of the questions in need of an answer is whether justification, salvation, or 'the good' extends to everyone or only to the faithful few who were part of his communities. Hence, we ought to keep in mind the solution of varying degrees to the dilemma of the Stoic city and see whether this is any help in understanding Paul (more below in §3.4.4).

While he may be considered more of an Academic than a Stoic, it is Cicero to whom we are indebted for fuller accounts of natural law. And although he is reluctant to admit the Stoic origins of the concept, his indebtedness to Stoicism is evident throughout the *On the Republic* (*De republica*) and the *On the Laws* (*De legibus*).<sup>176</sup> He is also the first to actually use the terminology of 'natural law'. Thus, in *On the Laws*, the law is called 'the highest reason, implanted in nature (*lex est ratio summa insita in natura*)'; it is a 'natural force (*naturae vis*)' to which the origin of justice (*iuris exordium*) can be traced.<sup>177</sup> The civil law is a mere shadow of this law of nature.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, in *On the Republic*, the character Scipio describes the wise man as one who can 'can really claim all things as his own, by virtue of the decision, not of the Roman People, but of the wise (*sapientium iure*), not by any obligation of the civil law (*civili nexo*), but by the common law of Nature (*communi lege naturae*)'.<sup>179</sup> Again, the concept of natural law is connected to the disposition of the wise and is here also set in opposition to the external obligation of law to citizens.

Yet, in Cicero, the common law is not merely some sort of philosophical ideal the lucky few can attempt to mirror; it is also a law that is universally enforced. Further on in the same treatise, the universality of this common law is explained in terms of its applicability to everyone at all times. Here, the character Laelius emphasizes that there is no escaping the justice of this law:

175 Troels Engberg-Pedersen (2000, 77) finds the closest parallel to Paul in this regard to be Chrysippus, who kept some of the revolutionary Zenonian material as regards the non-hierarchical nature of his ideal city and may have looked for ways to implement them without planning a large political revolution.

176 Cf. e.g. Inwood 2003b, 81.

177 Cicero, *On the Laws* 1.18–19.

178 Cicero, *De officiis* 3.69: 'The civil law (*[ius] civile*) is not necessarily also the universal law (*[ius] gentium*); but the universal law ought to be also the civil law. But we possess no substantial, life-like image of true Law and genuine Justice; a mere outline sketch (*umbra et imaginibus*) is all that we enjoy. I only wish that we were true even to this; for, even as it is, it is drawn from the excellent models which Nature and Truth afford (*ex optimis naturae et veritatis exemplis*).'

179 Cicero, *On the Republic* 1.52.



We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times (*et omnes gentes et omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immutabilis continebit*), and there will be one master and ruler, that is, God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge (*unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium deus, ille legis huius inventor, disceptator, lator*). Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst penalties, even if he escapes what is commonly considered punishment. (Cicero, *On the Republic* 3.33)

What stands out in this description is the explicit connection between universal law and one God, all nations, and, no less important, the inescapability of its punishment (which is also an aspect of its universal nature). For my discussion of Paul's view of law, these elements will also be highly relevant (see §§3.4.2–4 below).

Before we turn to Paul, however, there is one more aspect of the teachings of the Stoics relevant to the theme of justice. For the universal community is bound together by more than only a common law. An important part of what enables the sense and actuality of community, according to the Stoics, is the concept of *oikeiōsis*, a concept that is notoriously hard to translate in any elegant manner yet implies some sense of 'familiarization' or 'making-into-one's-own'.<sup>180</sup> In the first place, *oikeiōsis* is a theory to explain instinct in animals: by recognizing what is one's own, an animal is driven towards what is helpful and away from what is harmful for self-preservation.<sup>181</sup> This self-preservation includes one's offspring, whom we are naturally inclined to protect. Referring to Chrysippus's account of *oikeiōsis*, Plutarch laments:

Why then again in every book of physics, yes and of morals too, does he keep writing *ad nauseam* that from the moment of birth we have a natural congeniality to ourselves (οἰκειούμεθα πρὸς αὐτοῦς), to our mem-

180 For general analyses and discussion of *oikeiōsis*, see Engberg-Pedersen 1990; Striker 1996b (first published in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 1 (1983): 145–167); Gill 2017.

181 As explained quite elaborately in Seneca, *Epistles* 121.

bers, and to our own offspring? (Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1038B)<sup>182</sup>

This citation already points to the wide application of this theory not only in Stoic physics, but also in Stoic ethics. For, in the second place, the theory of *oikeiōsis* was also used in relation to human beings as rational animals. In Seneca's 121st epistle to Lucilius, we find this particularly well explained:

Man's constitution is a reasoning one, and hence man is adapted to himself (*conciliari hominem sibi*) not merely as a living, but as a reasoning, being (*non tamquam animali, sed tamquam rationali*) (...) For man is dear to himself (*sibi carus est*) in respect of that wherein he is a man. (Seneca, *Epistles* 121.14)

The connection to reason transforms the theory of *oikeiōsis* as we find it in Seneca into a theory of psychological development: concern for oneself expresses itself differently depending on one's age and condition (121.15: *constitutio*). Apparently, as human beings grow, there is also a change in the content of what is made into one's own.

In *On Ends* (*De finibus*), Cicero records accounts of *oikeiōsis* from both Stoic and Academic (including Aristotelean) points of view. In book 3, the Stoic account is presented as consisting of several elements: 'it is love of self which supplies the primary impulse to action' (3.16), whereas the next step is 'to retain those things which are in accordance with nature and to repel those that are the contrary' (3.20). Moreover, there is a second stage to *oikeiōsis* which leads away from concern from oneself: nature also shows us to 'to love those to whom we have given birth' (3.62) and 'from this impulse is developed the sense of mutual attraction which unites human beings as such' (3.63). In book 5 of the same work, Cicero presents the views of the Academic Antiochus of Ascalon, which seem to improve upon the Stoic theory by offering an integrated account of familiarization with oneself and one's social environment.<sup>183</sup> *Oikeiōsis* is here described as other-regarding solidarity and affection which can be imagined as forming an expanding circle from oneself to one's parents, family, neighbours, citizens, allies, friends, and ultimately to all human beings. In rational animals in particular, *oikeiōsis* as a whole thus gains a more

<sup>182</sup> Cf. SVF 3.179.

<sup>183</sup> See Gill 2016, 231. Cf. Gill 2017, 117: 'Antiochus' account is best understood as an attempt to recast the Stoic theory in Platonic-Aristotelian terms.'

social thrust as ‘the tendency we have both towards developing self-concern and towards developing other-concern’.<sup>184</sup> In the words of the character Piso:

But in the whole moral sphere of which we are speaking there is nothing more glorious nor of wider range than the solidarity of mankind (*coniunctio inter homines hominum*), that species of alliance and partnership of interests and that actual affection which exists between man and man (*quasi quaedam societas et communicatio utilitatum et ipsa caritas generis humani*), which, coming into existence immediately upon our birth, owing to the fact that children are loved by their parents and the family as a whole (*tota domus*) is bound together by the ties of marriage and parenthood, gradually spreads its influence beyond the home (*serpit sensim foras*), first by blood relationships, then by connections through marriage, later by friendships, afterwards by the bonds of neighbourhood, then to fellow-citizens and political allies and friends, and lastly by embracing the whole of the human race. This sentiment, assigning each his own (*suum cuique tribuens*) and maintaining with generosity and equity that human solidarity and alliance of which I speak, is termed justice (*iustitia*). (Cicero, *On Ends* 5.65)<sup>185</sup>

The description of justice by Cicero in terms of solidarity rests on the idea that already as a newborn one is driven by an impulse towards self-preservation. This concern for our own self prompts the need for immediate attachment to one’s parents. And from there, along with the growth of reason and virtue, it should develop in concentric circles towards others, eventually including the whole human race. *Oikeiōsis* thus provided a connection between what is generally considered to be natural and what is generally considered to be virtuous.<sup>186</sup> The sentiment fueling this process is called ‘justice’ by Cicero, because it involves the acquirement of other-regarding moral virtues that together enable a well-functioning society.

The use of *oikeiōsis* as a foundation of justice did not go without criticism. Philo sharply rejects the idea that non-rational, natural human impulse is what guides us towards justice.<sup>187</sup> He completely redefines the meaning of *oikeiōsis* as ‘fellowship with God’ (πρὸς θεὸν οἰκειώσιν): making non-sensible,

184 Annas 1995, 263.

185 Another important source on this issue is Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.671–673 (containing fragments of Hierocles).

186 As argued by Gisela Striker (1996b, 294).

187 On *oikeiōsis* in Philo, cf. Niehoff 2018, 235–236; Boys-Stones 2014, 300–301, n. 7.

divine things into one's own.<sup>188</sup> A similar rejection of *oikeiōsis* as a basis for justice is found in an anonymous *Commentary on Plato's Theaetetus* from the first or second century AD.<sup>189</sup> The author refers to Carneades's example of two shipwrecked people and only one plank: the text of the *Commentary* has partly been lost here, but the scenario shows how concern for one's own safety trumps concern for the other's safety. Thus, the author reasons, *oikeiōsis* is configured in such a way that it confirms a gradually diminishing level of concern when it comes to other people. In that case, it cannot be a foundation of justice. Another possible Stoic position is that appropriation is equal towards all. In responding to this, the anonymous writer of the commentary deems the idea obviously unrealistic 'that one has an equal sense of appropriation towards oneself and the farthest Mysian'.<sup>190</sup>

While the Stoic position can and has been defended against the author of the commentary,<sup>191</sup> what interests me here is how the treatment of *oikeiōsis* in this anonymous commentary can be taken as evidence of the fact that this concept, though Stoic in origin, became accepted across school boundaries. For the commentator distinguishes between a more and less intense meaning of the concept and maintains that Plato endorsed the latter, which involved different levels of appropriation.<sup>192</sup> As a basis for justice and ethics, however, like Philo, this anonymous Academic author finds a better alternative in a divine grounding, specifically in Plato's idea of *homoioōsis theōi*, 'becoming like God', a concept which will resurface in the context of the discourse of 'living law' (§3.3.6) and which is further explored in chapter 6 below.<sup>193</sup> As one scholar remarked, this development from *oikeiōsis* to *homoioōsis* can be considered 'one of the surest signs of the transition from Hellenistic philosophy to Middle Platonism'.<sup>194</sup> In the mid-first century, we are in the midst of this transitional phase in which both concepts were current in the intellectual scene.

188 Cited in Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain* 135.

189 For the debate on the dating of the commentary, see Lévy 2010, 92.

190 Anonymous, *Commentary on the Theaetetus* (P. Berol. inv. 9782) 5, translation by George Boys-Stones. Cf. Martin 2015, 351: 'if even the slightest degree of variation is admitted then a conception of justice derived from *oikeiōsis* has morally objectionable consequences and fails in its claim to warrant a cosmopolitan ethic.'

191 See Annas 1995, 270–274.

192 Anonymous, *Commentary on the Theaetetus* 5. Cf. also Bonazzi 2008a, 599: 'What is remarkable is not so much the opposition between Platonism and Stoicism as the fact that the *oikeiōsis* doctrine, whose distinctively Stoic character is acknowledged, is not completely rejected. (...) [B]y reducing its importance he can incorporate the Stoic theory into his own Platonist system.'

193 Anonymous, *Commentary on the Theaetetus* 7.

194 Lévy 2010, 92.

### 3.3.6 *The Living Law: the Exemplary Leader as Law in Neopythagoreanism and beyond*

Up until this point, we have seen how the concept of law was developed as something beyond written laws. In the Platonic tradition, the concept of *logos* provided a transcendent and at the same time internal law, capable of also covering those ethical ‘provinces’ where the written laws had no jurisdiction. Stoic thought further emphasized the cross-national status of a ‘common law’ and the consequences of such a concept of law for the existence of a cross-national community, whether it comprised only *logos*-led sages or included those who participate to a lesser extent in this *logos*.

Now, there is one more relevant theme which also belongs to the broader Graeco-Roman discourse on law, which seems to have its origin in Plato yet was further developed in Neopythagorean thought on kingship and taken up in Middle-Platonic thought as well.<sup>195</sup> The question involved the exact place of a ruler when the laws of a polis or cosmopolis are a concrete, written expression of the transcendent, divine law. One influential answer to this question was that the king was the law living, embodied, or literally ‘ensouled’ in a human being: the *nomos empsychos* or *lex animata*. When exactly this formula emerged is somewhat difficult to pin down, as the Neopythagorean treatises in which it first appears were once dated to the third or second century BC (in the time of the Hellenistic kingdoms and under influence of Persian kingship models), whereas now a first-century BC dating is considered most likely.<sup>196</sup> Soon after this date, however, the idea of an incarnate law appears in slightly varying terms in works by authors of diverse philosophical orientation.<sup>197</sup> I therefore now want to discuss Plato and Xenophon (as predecessors) and a few important sources from the Hellenistic-Roman period in which the ultimate leader is thought of as a living law.

Plato’s character of the stranger from Elea suggests in the *Statesman* that in an ideal situation a wise king must be able to judge by his expertise (*τέχνη*) and thereby do justice to the particularity of each specific case (*καίρως*), free from the constraints and limitations of written laws.<sup>198</sup> In this dialogue, the myth of

195 On the Platonic origins, see Aalders 1969; more recently and extensively: Ramelli 2006.

196 Thus reasons Peter van Nuffelen (2011, 115), following Thomas Szlezák (1972, 13–26), and arguing against Erwin Goodenough (1928), Francis Dvornik (1966), and John W. Martens (2003, 31–66).

197 A good overview is provided by Glenn Chesnut (1978). He remarks (at 1310) that ‘[t]his concept appeared, in slightly different language, in an impressive range of philosophical systems.’

198 See Plato, *Statesman* 294b. On the meaning of *καίρως* in the *Statesman*, see Harry 2018.

the reign of Cronus is put forward to demonstrate what a king is like (269c: τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπόδειξις).<sup>199</sup> In this age, people were born from the earth, there were no states, nor families, but ‘God himself was their shepherd, watching over them’ (θεὸς ἔνεμεν αὐτοὺς αὐτὸς ἐπιστατῶν).<sup>200</sup> The stranger hypothesizes that ‘the best thing is not that the laws be in power, but that the man who is wise and of kingly nature be ruler’ (294a: ἄνδρα τὸν μετὰ φρονήσεως βασιλικόν). However, the characters in the dialogue seem to conclude that in absence of a divine shepherd in the present age, the best approximation of this type of reign involves adhering to existing written laws and customs.<sup>201</sup>

In the eighth book of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, Cyrus’s performance at his deathbed towards those present there is described in the following terms:

He believed that he could in no way more effectively inspire a desire for the beautiful and the good than by endeavouring, as their sovereign, to set before his subjects a perfect model of virtue (κεκοσμημένον τῇ ἀρετῇ) in his own person. For he thought he perceived that men are made better through even the written law (διὰ τοὺς γραφομένους νόμους βελτίους γιγνομένους ἀνθρώπους), while the good ruler he regarded as a law with eyes for men (τὸν δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἄρχοντα βλέποντα νόμον ἀνθρώποις ἐνόμισεν), because he is able not only to give commandments but also to see the transgressor and punish him. In this conviction, he showed himself in the first place more devout in his worship of the gods (τὰ περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς μᾶλλον ἐκπονοῦντα ἐπεδείκνυ ἑαυτὸν). (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.1.21–23)

We see here how, more than in Plato’s *Statesman*, the good ruler is praised not for his craft or statesmanship, but for being a ‘pattern’ in virtue.

Moreover, this ideal ruler is not an alternative to the written law but rather is its living extension. Cyrus is in fact called a ‘law with eyes for men’, an expression that is further explicated as referring to the punitive aspect of kingship: the king executes the law on the one hand by modelling virtue, on the other by punishing transgressions. From the perspective of being a ‘living law’, these

199 Cf. again at 276a: ‘embracing in the word both the kingship of the present time and that of the time of Cronus’.

200 Plato, *Statesman* 271e. That this shepherd-like divine rule is indeed the ideal situation envisioned by Plato for the present, ‘human’ age is questioned in Speliotis 2011.

201 See 300e–301a: ‘Such states, then, it seems, if they are to imitate well, so far as possible (εἰς δύναμιν μιμήσεσθαι), that true form of government—by a single ruler who rules with science—must never do anything in contravention of their existing written laws and ancestral customs (παρὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα καὶ πάτρια ἔθη).’

roles as example of virtue and judge of transgressions are perfectly harmonious. We will see how Paul ascribes the same double role to Christ (see §3.4.3 below). Finally, this conception of the ruler as law is in Xenophon's account immediately connected to worshipping the gods: he views being a law as the most godlike or devout manner of expressing kingship.

In Hellenistic and Roman times, when the political reality became one of monarchs ruling nations which incorporated a multitude of former city-states, the *nomos empsychos* provided an excellent model to conceptualize the relationship between ruler and law. The ideal king was thought of as a single ruler who not only abides by existing laws but lives and breathes the divine law and thereby supersedes written law. While this offered a foundation for kingship on the one hand, and made it possible for a king to occasionally correct written laws, on the other it was meant to limit the monarch's power by making it subordinate to divine law. As a *nomos empsychos*, the ruler was not allowed to completely abandon written law, as this too was a reflection, albeit imperfect, of divine law.<sup>202</sup>

In a pseudo-Aristotelean handbook of rhetoric addressed to Alexander the Great, probably written by Anaximenes of Lampsacus, the Aristotelean notion of a *koinos nomos* is connected to the *logos* (reason or speech). The interesting development here is that this *logos* turns out to be the *logos* of the ruler:

So just as it has been the custom for common law (ὁ κοινὸς νόμος) to direct the independent cities by guiding on the basis of what is noblest, your reason (ὁ σὸς λόγος) may be able to guide the cities subject to your kingship with a view to advantage. For, simply stated, law is reason defined according to the common agreement of a city (λόγος ὠρισμένος καθ' ὁμολογίαν κοινὴν πόλεως), revealing how everything must be done. (Pseudo-Aristotle, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 0.4 (1420a, 23–28))

The author is able to equate common law and the ruler's *logos* via the idea that common law is a principle (*logos*) collectively embraced.

The contrast between ruler and written laws is much more explicit in Neopythagorean writings, some fragments of which have been preserved in the *Anthology* by Stobaeus (fifth century AD), yet whose dating is highly

---

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Van Nuffelen 2011, 114–118; see on *nomos empsychos* p. 118: 'The concept of "law embodied" thus reconciles the descriptive and prescriptive accounts of kingship and it is the normative emphasis on virtue that provides a check on possible tyrannical abuse of the notion'. Van Nuffelen is in discussion with Martens (2003, 65), who appears to miss this two-sidedness.

debated (although they probably have their roots in the Hellenistic period).<sup>203</sup> Archytas, for instance, in his treatise ‘On law and justice’ (Περὶ νόμου καὶ δικαιοσύνης), distinguishes between two types of law: he calls the written law *apsychos* (ἄψυχος γράμμα) while the king is *empsychos* (ἔμψυχος βασιλεύς).<sup>204</sup>

In these Neopythagorean fragments, the king is not merely human but strongly associated with the divine as friend and imitator of the gods. Someone by the otherwise unknown name of Diotogenes compares the relationship between king and city-state to that between gods and the world:

For the state (...) is an imitation (μεμίματα) of the order and harmony of the world, the king who has an absolute rulership, and is himself Animate Law (αὐτὸς ὢν νόμος ἔμψυχος), has been metamorphosed into a deity among men (θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις παρεσχαμάτισται). (Diotogenes apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.7.61)<sup>205</sup>

Being a ‘living law’ thus means being like a god for people, a god whom subjects should imitate.

Another of these Neopythagoreans, Ecphantas, stated that God used himself as the archetype when he created a king.<sup>206</sup> He explains that such a king is in his turn able to transform his citizens into his likeness:

But I think that by being worthy of imitation himself, he implants in all his proper nature (ἀλλ’ οἶμαι παρέχων ἀξιομίματον αὐτὸν ζῶλον ἐντίθητι<sup>207</sup> πᾶσι τὰς αὐτῶ φύσιος). (...) Those who imitate do everything better than those left to themselves (οἱ δὲ μιμεύμενοι αὐταυτῶν<sup>208</sup> κρέσσον τῷδε πάντα ἐργάζονται). (Ecphantas apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.7.65)<sup>209</sup>

203 The Hellenistic dating (ranging from the fourth to the first century BC) is offered in Thesleff 1961, 113–116, while a dating to the third century AD is argued for by Walter Burkert (1972). Cf. Chesnut 1978, 1313: ‘They could not easily have been written before the third century BC or after the second century AD.’

204 Pseudo-Archytas apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.1.136.

205 Translation by Goodenough (1928, 68).

206 Ecphantas apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.7.64: ὡς ἐτεχνίτευσεν αὐτὸν ἀρχετύπῳ χρώμενος ἑαυτῷ.

207 τίθητι is the Doric variant of τίθησι (present indicative 3rd person singular): see LSJ, s.v. τίθημι.

208 Also a Doric form, combining the reflexive pronouns of subject and object: see Ahrens 1843, 275: ‘Jam vero geminatum αὐτος (...) Dorice in unam coalescunt, reflexiva petestate utitur eo aucta quod et subjecti et objecti notio pronomine αὐτος distinguitur.’

209 Edition: Delatte 1942, p. 50, translation my own.



The contrast here is between imitation of the ruler and being one's own imitator. It is by means of imitation that the ruler inculcates his subjects with his own qualities. The subjects, in turn, ought to accept (παραλαμβάνω) the reason or speech (λόγος) of the king in order to be transformed or restored to health:

The king alone (μόνος ὁ βασιλεύς) is capable of putting this good into human nature so that by imitation (διὰ μίμασιν) of him, their Better, they will follow in the way they should go. But his reason, if it is accepted (παραλαφθεῖς ὁ λόγος), strengthens those who have been corrupted by evil nurture (κακὰν τροφάν) as if by drink. (Ecphantus apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.7.65)<sup>210</sup>

The idea presented here is that a ruler is transformed in likeness of the divine, whereby his subjects imitate the ruler.<sup>211</sup>

These ideas and ideals of imitation of God via human-divine intermediaries are closely associated with the broader philosophical topos of 'becoming like God' (*homoïosis theōi*), a subject that I will discuss in more detail. As I will argue, it is highly relevant for understanding the imitation motive and particularly the role of Christ in Paul (see §3.4.3 in this chapter and chapter 6 more specifically).

In Cicero, the exact terminology of an 'animated law' is absent, yet the discourse of the virtuous ruler who is 'like a law' can be found in several works. In *On the Republic*, we encounter the idea of an ideal state, ruled by virtue (*virtute (...) gubernante*), in which the ruler is in complete control over his passions and is therefore the ultimate model for his citizens: 'Such a man imposes no laws (*nec leges inponit*) upon the people that he does not obey himself, but puts his own life before his fellow-citizens as their law (*suam vitam ut legem praefert suis civibus*).'<sup>212</sup> Here, being like a law is equal to being in complete obedience to the law, so that others may follow suit. Again, in the work specifically on laws (which is also titled *On the Laws*), it is stated that 'as the laws govern the magistrate, so the magistrate governs the people, and it can truly

210 Translation Goodenough 1928, 89. On this transformation of the king's subjects, see Smith 2011, 41–43.

211 See also Chesnut 1978, 1312: 'Monarchy was above all the imitation of God: the good ruler imitated God and thereby took on a kind of powerful reflected divinity himself. In this way the king or emperor was also turned into a kind of saviour figure. The common people were brought to salvation by imitating the ruler, whose virtue, rationality, and very physical appearance were enough to reform the hearts and minds of the worst sinners by giving a vision of a new and higher way of life.'

212 Cicero, *On the Republic* 1.52.

be said that the magistrate is a speaking law (*magistratum legem esse loquentem*), and the law a silent magistrate (*mutum magistratum*).<sup>213</sup> Once again, in Cicero's conception there is complete accordance between written law and magistrate. There is no supersession of written laws, not even in the case of an ideal leader, and even though the life of the leader should be as a law to the people, the idea of transformation and imitation is not foregrounded.

Philo makes more extensive use and offers creative applications of the concepts of unwritten, natural law and *nomos empsychos*. As a Jew, of course, the status of written law was of greater importance. In fact, he had an agenda quite different from some of his contemporaries, as argued by Hindi Najman:

Philo would have to show in opposition to Greek thought on the topic, that the perfect and authoritative copy of the law of nature was to be found, not only in the unwritten law exhibited by the life of the sage, but also in the written law of Moses, despite its writtenness and despite its apparent particularity. (Najman 1999, 59)

Even though the Mosaic Law was particular in a sense that it was meant for a specific nation, Philo appears to have believed that it was nevertheless a perfect copy of the universal, natural law.<sup>214</sup> This creative 'hermeneutical move' would have sounded contradictory to pagan participants in this discourse. As I will discuss below (§3.4.2), Paul appears to be more aware of the inherent limitations of the written Mosaic Law. Yet this close association between natural law and the Mosaic Law can be found in several other Jewish authors of the Second Temple period, of whom Philo thought through the implications of this equation most thoroughly.<sup>215</sup>

Part of the solution to the paradox was to be found in the concept of 'living law' in the form of the lives of the patriarchs recorded in Moses's five books.<sup>216</sup> For this concept of 'living law' was, in Philo, not restricted to the role of a king. Because of the similarity in function, he indeed argues that 'the king is a living law, and the law a just king (ὡς εὐθὺς εἶναι τὸν μὲν βασιλέα νόμον ἔμψυχον, τὸν δὲ νόμον βασιλέα δίκαιον).'<sup>217</sup> Yet Moses, the legislator himself, is also called a 'reasonable and living impersonation of law by God's providence (νόμος ἔμψυχός

213 Cicero, *On the Laws* 3.2.

214 Cf. Martens 1991.

215 Sterling (2003, 78–79) lists at least Philo, Josephus, and Pseudo-Phocylides.

216 See also Najman 2003, 62: 'although the Law of Moses certainly includes rules and precepts, it cannot be reduced to a code. The rules must be read as expressions of the virtuous lives of the patriarchs and of Moses.'

217 Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.4.

τε καὶ λογικὸς θεία προνοία).<sup>218</sup> Moreover, Philo argues that the reason why the lives of the ancestors were recorded in Scripture is that ‘in these men we have laws endowed with life and reason (οἱ γὰρ ἔμψυχοι καὶ λογικοὶ νόμοι ἄνδρες ἐκεῖνοι γεγονόασιν).’<sup>219</sup> This also solved another problem, namely that there were righteous people in the period before Moses presented the written, divine law. It is a solution that was also embraced by the author of the pseudepigraphical *2 Baruch*, a treatise from the early second century preserved in Syriac, in which it is stated that ‘at that time [i.e. of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob] the unwritten law was in force among them and the works of the commandments were accomplished.’<sup>220</sup> Thus, in the exegeses of the second temple period, there is an increasing tendency to emphasize the importance of faithfulness to the law, even for these who lived before Moses and who could only embody an unwritten law.<sup>221</sup>

According to Philo, the lives of the patriarchs, these ‘living and reasonable laws’, were incorporated into and handed down through the written law. Their lives demonstrate two things:

That the enacted ordinances are not inconsistent with nature; and secondly that those who wish to live in accordance with the laws as they stand have no difficult task, seeing that the first generations before any at all of the particular statutes was set in writing followed the unwritten law with perfect ease. (...) They listened to no voice or instruction but their own (ἀναδιδραχθέντες, αὐτήκοοι δὲ καὶ αὐτομαθεῖς), they gladly accepted conformity with nature (ἀκολουθίαν φύσεως ἀσπασάμενοι), holding that nature itself was, as indeed it is, the most venerable of statutes (πρεσβύτατον θεσμὸν), and thus their whole life was one of happy obedience to law. (Philo, *On the Life of Abraham* 5–6)

According to Philo, then, the wise ancestors were ‘autodidacts’: they obeyed the not-yet-written law because they lived in accordance with nature and obedience to the natural law and hence were *nomoi empsychoi*. In view of Philo’s description of the unwritten law as being in accordance with nature, it

<sup>218</sup> Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 1.162.

<sup>219</sup> Philo, *On the Life of Abraham* 5.

<sup>220</sup> *2 Baruch* 57.2, preserved in Syriac (which reads *l' ktb' nmws'*): the treatise was probably originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, possibly the Syriac version was a translation from the Greek. See Gurtner 2007.

<sup>221</sup> As is also the outcome of Anja Klein’s analysis of faith-language in the Old Testament: Klein 2017, 77–78.

is interesting to note that Philo also calls Abraham's faith an 'act of justice and conformity with nature' (τὸ δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ἀκόλουθον τοῦτο τῇ φύσει), hinting at this Stoic view of justice.<sup>222</sup>

Philo's appropriation of the unwritten law discourse is an excellent illustration of how emphases by different philosophical schools were integrated during the period under scrutiny. Whereas in the passage quoted the ideas sound rather Stoic, as they are focused on living 'in accordance with nature', in the preceding argument Philo speaks in Platonic terms: whereas particular written laws in the Mosaic Law are called mere 'copies' or 'images', he ranks these living laws as 'originals'.<sup>223</sup>

Philo's treatise *On the Life of Abraham*, from which some of the previous citations were taken, concludes with an interesting summary of the patriarch's life, in which *pistis* vocabulary and the 'living law' topos are interwoven. Philo praises *pistis* as the queen of virtues (270: τὴν βασιλίδα τῶν ἀρετῶν) and lauds Abraham, who deserves the title of 'elder' as he was a wise man characterized by his prudence, wisdom, and trust in God (271: τὸν δὲ φρονήσεως καὶ σοφίας καὶ τῆς πρὸς θεὸν πίστεως). In reply, God 'marvelling at Abraham's faith in Him repaid him with faithfulness (273: ὃς τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν πίστεως ἀγάμενος τὸν ἄνδρα πίστιν ἀντιδίδωσιν αὐτῷ). The trust and obedience that Abraham exhibited towards God's promises, without being able to depend on written laws, is central to Philo's conclusion:

To these praises of the Sage, so many and so great, Moses adds this crowning saying 'that this man did the divine law and the divine commands (τὸν θεῖον νόμον καὶ τὰ θεῖα προστάγματα).' He did them, not taught by written words (οὐ γράμμασιν ἀναδίδαχθεῖς), but unwritten nature (ἀγράφῳ τῇ φύσει) gave him the zeal to follow where wholesome and untainted impulse led him. And when they have God's promises before them what should men do but trust in them most firmly (τί προσῆκεν ἀνθρώπους ἢ βεβαιοτάτα πιστεύειν)? Such was the life of the first, the founder of the nation, one who obeyed the law, some will say, but rather, as our discourse has shown, himself a law and an unwritten statute (νόμος αὐτὸς ὦν καὶ θεσμὸς ἄγραφος). (Philo, *On the Life of Abraham* 275–276)

222 Philo, *Who Is the Heir?* 95. Philo ascribes to the Stoic doctrine of living according to nature in *On Planting* 49; *On the Migration of Abraham* 120; *On the Life of Abraham* 6; *On the Virtues* 18.

223 Philo, *On the Life of Abraham* 3–4: 'let us postpone consideration of particular laws, which are, so to speak, copies (εἰκόνων), and examine first those which are more general and may be called the originals (ἀρχετύπους) of those copies. These are such men as lived good and blameless lives.'

The next chapter (§4.3.4) will elaborate on the nature of *pistis* in Philo. For now, we should note that for Philo, trust in God amounts to following the unwritten, divine law and even to being an unwritten law. In our discussion of Paul's letters below, we see similar patterns emerge: the prioritization of different types of law, the use of Abraham as a model for having trust in God as opposed to access to written laws, and the idea that laws can become embodied in people (see §§3.4.2–3).

Another author to consider as one who has contributed to the discourse of 'living law' is Seneca. While there is no literal '*lex animata*' to be found in his oeuvre, he is familiar with the concept of the ruler as the 'mind' (*animus* or *mens*) of the realm.<sup>224</sup> Furthermore, he spoke of the ruler as 'law' (*lex*), and what is more, he combines this concept with the Golden Age discourse. In his lengthy 90th epistle to Lucilius on the role of philosophy in humanity's development, he describes the situation in those golden days as one of innocence under the rule of a 'better person' as 'law':

But the first men and those who sprang from them, still unspoiled, followed nature (*naturam incorrupti sequebantur*), having one man as both their leader and their law (*eundem habebant et ducem et legem*), entrusting (*commissi*) themselves to the control of one better than themselves. For nature has the habit of subjecting the weaker to the stronger. (...) That is why it was to the mind (*animo*) that a ruler was assigned; and for that reason the greatest happiness rested with those peoples among whom a man could not be the more powerful unless he were the better (*melior*). (...) Accordingly, in that age which is maintained to be the golden age (*illo ergo saeculo, quod aureum perhibent*), Posidonius holds that the government was under the jurisdiction of the wise (*sapientes*). They kept their hands under control, and protected the weaker from the stronger (*infirmiorem a validioribus tuebantur*). (...) For them ruling was a service, not an exercise of royalty (*officium erat imperare, non regnum*). (Seneca, *Epistles* 90.4–5)

Seneca thus more or less agrees with the Stoic Posidonius regarding the rule of the wise or better people in the Golden Age, describing this type of rule as a service aimed at the protection of the weaker against the stronger. He continues this story with the entrance of vice (*vitium*): at that point, laws became

---

<sup>224</sup> See Seneca, *On Mercy* 1.4.1 (*mens illa imperii*), and 1.5.1 (*tu animus rei publicae tuae es, illa corpus tuum*).

necessary, written down by wise lawgivers such as Solon (90.6). While written laws were thus ‘good’ in the sense that they were able to keep injustice in check, he considers them merely a necessary tool in the period that was no longer ‘golden’. As with Plato’s divine shepherd and Philo’s patriarchs, a living law is tied to a particular period in the bygone past.<sup>225</sup> The ‘living law’ is thereby a feature of a utopian, virtuous society, a true alternative to written law rather than a description of a ruler who lives in accordance with existing written laws, as with Xenophon’s Cyrus and Cicero’s magistrate.

In Plutarch’s treatise *To an Uneducated Ruler* (*De principem ineruditem*), the ‘living law’ discourse is again focused on the ideal of a law-conforming sovereign, though there is more of an antithesis between written and living law. Plutarch explicitly states that ‘justice is the end of law’ (780E: δίκη μὲν οὖν νόμου τέλος ἐστί) in a manner that is reminiscent of the much-discussed statement by Paul that ‘Christ is the end of law’ (Rom 10.4, see §3.4.3 below). Plutarch’s variant seems to reflect the same ambiguous sense of aim-and-termination: when full justice is realized, laws become superfluous. So where does this leave the ruler? Plutarch’s answer is that the law to which a ruler should conform is not written law but the ensouled *logos* within:

Who, then, shall rule the ruler? The ‘Law, the king of all, Both mortals and immortals,’ as Pindar says—not law written outside him in books or on wooden tablets or the like (οὐκ ἐν βιβλίοις ἔξω γεγραμμένος οὐδέ τισι ξύλοις), but reason endowed with life within him (ἀλλ’ ἔμψυχος ὦν ἐν αὐτῷ λόγος), always abiding with him and watching over him and never leaving his soul without its leadership. (Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 780C)

In the context of this treatise, the ‘reason’ Plutarch speaks of as ‘ruling the ruler’ is elsewhere explicated as ‘reason derived from philosophy (ἐκ φιλοσοφίας), which is capable of removing ‘the hazardous element from his power’, yet also as ‘divine reason (θεοῦ λόγον).’<sup>226</sup> With the divine *logos* as a ruler’s ‘law’, written law and living law appear to be mutually exclusive alternatives for Plutarch.

<sup>225</sup> Martens (1994b) seems to miss the application of Plato and Seneca of the ‘living law’ discourse to the ancient sages and attributes its introduction to Philo (at 326): ‘unlike the Hellenistic fragments, Philo creates two levels of *nomoi empsychoi*, those of king and of sage.’

<sup>226</sup> Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 779F.

Furthermore, what stands out in Plutarch's contribution to the discourse is that, as the Neopythagorean authors also stated, there ought to be a mirroring process between God, the ruler, and the subjects. The ruler himself—or 'herself', but I doubt whether that was a real option in Plutarch's mind—is the 'image of God (εἰκὼν θεοῦ) who orders all things' (780E) and 'by his virtue he forms himself in the likeness of God' (780F: αὐτὸς αὐτὸν εἰς ὁμοιότητα θεῷ δι' ἀρετῆς καθιστάς) so that he is like a divine statue. The ruler is presented as a measure or rule (780B: ὥσπερ ὁ κανὼν): he must regulate his own soul and establish his own, then make his subjects fit his pattern (κατευθύναντα τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ καταστησάμενον τὸ ἦθος οὕτω συναρμόττειν τὸ ὑπήκοον).<sup>227</sup> The required attitude of the subjects, then, is one of obedience, veneration and, as we learn a little further on, it starts with trusting (*pisteuein*):

So, then, the statesman who already has attained power and has won the people's confidence (πιστευόμενον ἤδη) should try to train the character of the citizens (τῶν πολιτῶν ἦθος), leading them gently towards that which is better and treating them with mildness; for it is a difficult task to change the multitude. But do you yourself, since you are henceforth to live as on an open stage, educate your character and put it in order. (Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 800A–B)

Before the character of a citizen can be trained and transformed, a ruler must be considered trustworthy (πιστευόμενον). Seeing as I argue that the use of *pistis* vocabulary in contexts of moral imitation is of great importance to understanding Paul's *pistis* and *pistis Christou* vocabulary, I will come back to this extensively in chapter 6. Yet here already, in the context of law and justice, we find that the motive of moral imitation is closely connected to the *nomos empsychos* discourse.

We can conclude here with a final Plutarchan vision from the *Vitae* of how a ruler may induce virtue in his subjects. Numa, the king we already encountered multiple times as the mythical Roman champion of *pistis*, is put forward as a 'conspicuous and shining example of virtue'.<sup>228</sup> In this context, Plutarch stresses the fact there is no compulsion. Out of their own accord (ἐκουσίως), the subjects of king Numa

<sup>227</sup> Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 780B. See also §6.3.4 below.

<sup>228</sup> Plutarch, *Numa* 20.8: αὐτοὶ δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐν εὐδήλῳ παραδείγματι καὶ λαμπρῷ τῷ βίῳ τοῦ ἄρχοντος ὁρῶντες.

unite with him in conforming themselves (συμμετασχηματίζονται) to a blameless and blessed life of friendship and mutual concord (πρὸς τὸν ἐν φιλίας καὶ ὁμοιότητι πρὸς αὐτοὺς (...) ἀμύμονα καὶ μακάριον βίον), attended by righteousness and temperance (μετὰ δικαιοσύνης καὶ μετριότητος). Such a life is the noblest end of all government (ἐν ᾧ τὸ κάλλιστον ἀπάσης πολιτείας τέλος ἐστί), and he is most a king (βασιλικώτατος ἀπάντων) who can effectuate such a life and such a disposition in his subjects (ὁ τοῦτον τὸν βίον καὶ ταύτην τὴν διάθεσιν τοῖς ὑπηκόοις ἐνεργάσασθαι δυνάμενος). (Plutarch, *Numa* 20.8)

Here, in another *telos*-statement, the effectuation of a virtuous disposition by means of mirroring the ruler's example is deemed the end of politics. In what follows, I will emphasize the importance of moral reform to Paul's vision of righteousness with the help of Christ as the ultimate righteous ruler, the living end of the law.

All in all, the discourse of the ruler as living law was a prominent theme throughout all kinds of philosophical literature. Or, in the words of Glenn Chesnut,

This notion of the emperor as the embodied Law or Logos of God, which appeared in a variety of contexts, both pagan and Jewish, was therefore a widespread and quite commonplace idea in the Roman world during the period of the Early Empire. It was simply a part of the general intellectual atmosphere. (Chesnut 1978, 1329)

### 3.4 Faith as Unwritten Law and Christ as Living Law in Paul's Letters

It is my contention in this section that these discourse-level narratives and the philosophical-conceptual developments I described shed new light on Paul's language of *dikaiosynē*, *nomos*, *pistis*, and their cognates. More particularly, I will argue for an interpretation of Paul's 'justification by faith' axiom as pertaining to the salvation and transformation of the inner person on the one hand and all nations collectively on the other by offering both an internal and a universal 'law of faith'. It was in Christ, the *telos* of the law, that Paul saw this law ultimately embodied. Therefore, he taught that *pistis Christou*, a relationship of reciprocal trust with Christ the Lord, is what allows all people to participate in divine righteousness through their faith in him and faithfulness to him.



It is worth recalling here that even if I argue for a reading of Paul based on Greek and Latin, mostly pagan source material, I do not see this reading as exclusive (see §1.3.2 above). It is rather one important entrance to the multi-layered culture of the eastern Mediterranean of the first century in which Paul's life and writings are situated. In fact, the present topic of unwritten or transcendent law is not an entirely unfamiliar theme in the Jewish tradition in those days—this, however, is a story beyond my scope.<sup>229</sup> In the end, I would hold that Paul remains rather divergent from, or radical in the eyes of, both pagan and Jewish authors in his claim that in Christ the law has taken its definitive shape.

In this chapter, I choose to speak mainly about Paul's thought as expressed in *Galatians* and *Romans*. This is a choice prompted by pragmatic considerations, for a large percentage of his *dikaïosynē*, *nomos*, and *pistis* language (including cognates) can be found here. The fact that this type of discourse is less well represented in the other extant letters, however, can also be taken as a warning not to conflate Paul's message to these specific audiences with his main teaching. The differences in occasion and situation between both communities, however, may help us to identify some tenets that remained relevant in the author's thought, yet required development or fine-tuning for specific circumstances.

*Galatians* is famous for its pathos. Paul does not mince his words when it comes to the role and function of *pistis*, *dikaïosynē*, and *nomos*. From the first verse onwards, he is defending his own standing as a divine ambassador and his teaching against a 'different gospel' (1.6) spread by people who sow confusion amongst his addressees. *Romans*, on the other hand, is an epistle addressed to an audience that he, for the most part, had not met before. Consequently, it is generally considered to be a somewhat more general and less situational exposition of his message, even if Paul was probably well informed about the make-up and difficulties of the community in Rome. If it was composed in a later phase of his life, his narrative may have grown more mature. Yet the dating of *Galatians* is debated, and presupposing a huge theological development in the interim has not been convincingly demonstrated. These considerations about the rhetorical setting of the letters will be taken into account as I now turn to assessing the consequences of reading Paul's *pistis*, *dikaïosynē*, and *nomos* language against the Graeco-Roman discourses of the Golden Age and of unwritten law.

In the following sections, I have chosen to discuss those parts of both letters that pertain to the four axes I outlined in section 3.2. Only now, the order of

---

229 On this topic, see e.g. Davis 2002.

the axes is different so that the order of the relevant passages within each Pauline letter can be more or less maintained. This way, the largest apple of discord between ‘traditional’, ‘new’, and ‘radical’ perspectives, and the manner in which Paul’s good news is determined by its universal configuration, will be saved for the final subsection.

### 3.4.1 *But Now That Justice Is Disclosed (Rom 3.21) and Pistis Has Come (Gal 3.25): the Cosmic-Historical Return of Justice and Faith*

In the previous section (especially §§3.3.2–3), we saw how the idea and ideal of the Golden Age of Saturn was a well-known theme throughout Graeco-Roman literature, often phrased in terms of justice, faith, or the absence of external laws. Humans were close to the divine, and gods ruled the earth. This protology of the glorious past is often combined with the subsequent theme of human degeneration into vice, followed or caused by the retreat of virtues, often in the shape of a hypostasized version of Pistis or Fides. The corresponding eschatology, a return of this age of justice and faith, is a topos that was adapted to various reigns in past, present, and future. As I will now argue, Paul also drew on this topos. This has implications for his ‘justification by faith’ language, which appears in a cosmic-historical rather than in a timeless-individual light (on this distinction, see §3.2.4 above).

The first two chapters of *Romans* are particularly well-suited for comparison to pagan narratives of an initial, natural Golden Age deteriorating into unnatural wickedness. In the previous chapter (§2.4.1), I discussed various features of Paul’s depiction of the earliest pagan history in *Romans* 1.18–32 in light of the *theologia tripartita* discourse. Authors such as Varro and Dio Chrysostom emphasized the euphoric beginnings of humanity in a pure religious climate of intimate, unmediated knowledge of the divine. The existence of an initial knowledge of the divine (Rom 1.20) is a characteristic shared with pagan conceptions of such an early phase of human history. Rather than a full-fledged natural theology, it demonstrates that Paul could adhere to a collective-historical phase of affinity with God, which eventually led to a present state of not acknowledging God, to debased minds (Rom 1.28) and a whole list of vices.

When we approach the same text from the perspective of Graeco-Roman Golden Age stories, other interesting points of convergence stand out. The connection between the interhuman vices and the loss of reverence for the gods is to be found not only in Paul but already in the early roots of this discourse with Theognis and Hesiod. Moreover, in both pagan and Pauline variants, God, the gods, or the (hypostatized) virtues essentially leave humanity to stew in its own degeneracy. In the words of the goddess Fides, ‘Behold

the nations! No man is innocent.<sup>230</sup> In *Romans* 1, Paul uses the same verb three times to illustrate this point: God ‘gave them over’ (παρέδωκεν: Rom 1.24, 26, 28) to their lusts, passions, and debased minds.<sup>231</sup> It is against the background of all this *adikia* (Rom 1.18, 29), ‘injustice’ or ‘unrighteousness’, that both the righteousness and wrath of God is now, in the present, revealed (Rom 1.17, 1.18, and 3.21). In other words, God himself returns to earth to set things right and prove himself righteous (Rom 3.26). This metahistorical narrative of a retreat and subsequent renewed disclosure of divine presence, together with the abstractions of *pistis* and *dikaioσynē*, is remarkably in line with the pattern familiar to pagans.

In this context, it is also worth referring to the Song of Moses in *Deuteronomy*, where God exclaims, ‘I will turn away my face from them (ἀποστρέψω τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἀπ’ αὐτῶν), and I will show what will happen to them at the end; for it is a perverse generation (γενεὰ ἐξεστραμμένη), sons who have no faithfulness in them (οἷς οὐκ ἔστι πίστις ἐν αὐτοῖς).’<sup>232</sup> Here, the averting of God’s face coincides with the absence of human faithfulness. Since Paul quotes from the Song of Moses multiple times later in this letter and since it can even be argued that *Romans* follows its general theological pattern, it is likely that this is another relevant contextual marker for Paul’s contribution to the theme of divine departure and return.<sup>233</sup> Yet even for a pagan without such knowledge, the idea that the gods turned away from the earth would have been very familiar. As we saw, Petronius wrote that ‘[a] host of gentle deities’, among which Fides and Iustitia, ‘abandon (*deserit*) the frenzied earth in loathing, and turn aside (*avertitur*) from the doomed army of mankind; and, according to Catullus, ‘then all right and wrong, confounded in impious madness, turned from us the righteous mind of the gods (*iustificam nobis mentem avertere deorum*).’

In light of the diagnosis of the unrighteousness and godforsakenness of the past up to the present age, painted in the darkest of colours in the beginning of the letter, it is hard to overestimate the dramatic effect of Paul’s good news in the ‘now’.<sup>234</sup>

230 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.505.

231 The connection between intellectual degradation, ‘passional’ disorders, and unethical behaviour is particularly evident in Stoicism, cf. for a comparison between Paul and the Stoics (particularly Epictetus) on this point, see Huttunen 2010, 47–54.

232 LXX *Deuteronomy* 32.20.

233 Cf. Rock 2010, see the table at 81–82 in particular.

234 Campbell (1992a) imagines a similar effect, yet seems to overlook that a substantial part of Paul’s listeners may not have been familiar with Jewish schemes of divine salvation (at 184): ‘With the use of the phrase δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ, it would seem that Paul is deliberately echoing religious phraseology widely comprehensible within late Second Temple Juda-

But now (Νυνὶ δὲ), irrespective of law (χωρὶς νόμου), the righteousness of God has been disclosed (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται), and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through the faith(fulness) in (/of) Jesus Christ (δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) for all who trust (εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας), for there is no distinction (...) He did this to show his righteousness (εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ), because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed (διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων); it was to prove at the present time (πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ) that he himself is righteous (εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον) and that he justifies the one through *pistis* in/of Jesus. (*Romans* 3.21–22,25b–26)

This passage and its continuation, which is aptly named ‘the heart of the gospel’,<sup>235</sup> rich in *dikaiosynē* vocabulary, recurs at various points, as I will comment upon the importance of works (§3.4.2), the role of faith and Christ (§3.4.3), the universality of salvation (§3.4.4), and, in a later chapter, on the meaning of the ‘faith of/in Christ’ (§6.4.5).<sup>236</sup> In this subsection, the driving question is whether salvation, according to Paul, is ‘timeless-individual’ or ‘cosmic-historical’ in nature.

Many scholars have debated the precise meaning of the phrase ‘righteousness/justice of God’ (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) the nature of the genitive construction. One of the recurring questions is whether this justice/righteousness Paul speaks about is God’s own (*genitivus possessivus*, indicating a quality, or *subjectivus*, indicating an action) or a justice attributed to humans (*genitivus auctoris*) that is relevant in their status towards God (*genitivus objectivus*). Research has mostly been dominated by the assumption that Paul did not invent this language, but inherited a fixed concept and its connotations from its Old Testament background.<sup>237</sup> However, this view has also been criticized,

---

ism. It is hard to imagine today the chord that such language must have struck in the hearts of his listeners, as Paul assured them that God’s long-awaited salvation was finally at hand.’

235 Douglas Moo (1996, 90, 91) refers to the section *Romans* 1.18–4.25 as ‘The Heart of the Gospel’ and to these verses as ‘the heart of this section’, turning it in effect into ‘the heart of the heart of the gospel’.

236 For the question of whether *pistis Iēsou* means something along the lines of faith in Christ or faithfulness of Christ, see also §3.4.3 and chapter 6 below.

237 For the OT context, see the groundbreaking work by Cremer, the influential address by Käsemann in his footsteps, and, more recently, work by Käsemann’s student Peter Stuhlmacher: Cremer 1899; Käsemann 1969; Stuhlmacher 1986.

since the number of Old Testament texts on which this assumption is based is limited, and, more fundamentally, because it reduces Paul's language usage to mere repetition.<sup>238</sup> Still, evidence from Qumran has shown that the phrase was used in close connection to God's relational, salvific action in contemporary Judaism.<sup>239</sup> And perhaps most convincingly, Richard Hays has pointed out that *Psalms* 143, the psalm Paul actually quotes in the preceding verses (Rom 3.20 cites loosely from Ps 143.2 / LXX *Psalms* 142.2), also points to the direction of 'righteousness' or 'justice' as an attribute of God (not *in se* but understood as action).<sup>240</sup> Paul is defending this attribute in light of his conviction that it extends to gentile Christ-followers, which jeopardizes (in the eyes of his opponents) God's exclusive faithfulness towards his people. In these sections, I would like to contribute to these considerations on the meaning of 'righteousness/justice of God' by means of a synchronic approach informed by Graeco-Roman semantics, philosophical *topoi*, and broader discourses.

On the level of discourse and grand narratives, we can understand the new disclosure of righteousness Paul speaks of here from a Graeco-Roman perspective as the cosmic return of God to the earth, along with the return of the main virtues of justice and faith and the return of the initial Golden Age. From this perspective, the disclosure (or revelation<sup>241</sup>) of righteousness is a historical event, or rather metahistorical or cosmic-historical, since it pertains to a bird's-eye view of history in terms of blissful or depraved ages and generations. That this involves the beginning of a new age is apparent from Paul's emphasis on the now (3.21: *Νυνὶ δὲ*) and the present moment (3.26: *ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ*).

The previous period is designated as a period of sins, yet God passes by or over (3.25: *πάρσεις* from *παρίημι*, 'to pass over') these sins of the past to show his divine justice in the present. The revelation of divine justice in the present thus functions as the antithesis of the earlier divine action of 'handing over' (*παρέδωκεν*, Rom 1.24, 26, 28): it represents the presence of justice in the now against the background of the absence of divine justice in the past. Even though the precise relationship between *Acts* and Paul's letters is a complex issue, it is interesting to point to the formulation of the speech in Athens,

238 See Linebaugh 2013a, 136–139.

239 Campbell 1992a, 163.

240 Hays 1980. Hays summarizes Paul's concern in *Romans* 3 thus (at 109): 'This issue is, at bottom, the question of God's integrity.'

241 From a semantic perspective, I do not see a purposeful difference in meaning between the verbs *φανερῶ* (Rom 3.21) and *ἀποκαλύπτω* (Rom 1.17 and Gal 3.23). Fitzmyer (1993, 273) argues that *φανερῶ* demonstrates that God's presence is apparent from creation (a natural theology), versus the idea that it can only be revealed from above. I agree with his conclusion, not with his argumentation here.

where the character Paul concludes (17.30): ‘While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance (τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν), now he commands all people everywhere to repent (ὁ θεὸς τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν).’<sup>242</sup> The message is very much in accordance with the pattern that there was a previous age of sins (and according to *Acts*, ignorance, which also nicely fits some Graeco-Roman accounts) and a ‘now’ in which divine justice will return, according to *Acts*, in the form of Christ, ‘judging the world in righteousness’ (Acts 17.31: κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ).

Paul thus announces a new, present, eschatological age of divine righteousness that seems simultaneously to break into this evil age and exist alongside it, as we are not to conform to ‘this age’ (see Rom 12.2, discussed in §2.4.4). Similarly, the *dikaiosynē* in question has been revealed, but its effect in this world is also yet to be fully appropriated by faith, for elsewhere ‘we’ are said to ‘eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith’ (Gal 5.5: ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα). So, if we compare this to our Graeco-Roman narratives, Paul’s contribution belongs somewhere in-between Theognis’s more pessimistic version, according to which only Hope remains, and the Augustan variant, which boldly proclaims the start of the age of peace and plenty. Since this return of justice happens on a divine, cosmic scale, I also understand the sins and the salvation described here not as the forgiveness of each individual, but as a collective historical measure, opening up the possibility of a righteous life to everyone by means of *pistis Christou*.

There is a passage in *Galatians* that bears a striking resemblance to the quoted passage from *Romans*. While in *Romans*, *dikaiosynē* is said to be disclosed (3.21), in *Galatians* it is *pistis* who was supposed to come (3.23), and to be revealed (3.23), and has now come (3.25), all this so that we would also be made righteous through *pistis* (3.24). This ‘coming of *pistis*’ makes a traditional, timeless-individual interpretation of *pistis* in this context less likely and at the same time supports the thesis that Paul thought of the Christ-event as a cosmic-historical return of justice and faith. As there are so many instances of *pist*-terminology in this passage, I have given them an additional indication to help discuss their meaning:

But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through *pistis* (*a*) in/of/that is Jesus Christ might

<sup>242</sup> According to the author of *Acts*, this idea of an age (that has now come to an end) in which ‘the nations’ were left pretty much alone, was a recurring theme in Paul’s preaching: cf. Acts 14.16: ‘In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways.’

be given to *those who express pistis* (*b*) (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῆ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). Now before *pistis* (*c*) came (πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν), we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until *pistis* (*d*) would be revealed (εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι). Therefore the law was our disciplinarian (παιδαγωγός) until Christ came, so that we might be justified by *pistis* (*e*) (ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν). But now that *pistis* (*f*) has come (ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως), we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through *pistis* (*g*) in Christ Jesus (διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). (*Galatians* 3.22–26)

*Pistis* is presented as a kind of abstraction in need of revealing (esp. *c* and *d*). Noteworthy is its close syntagmatic connection to Christ in the genitive construction *pistis Christou* as well as its paradigmatic connection to Christ as both are said to ‘come’ (3.19; 3.23 and 3.26).

There is considerable academic discussion as to how we can understand a more abstract meaning of *pistis* here (*c*, *d*, and *f* in particular). One approach is the reified interpretation of *pistis* as ‘proof’ or ‘ground of faith’ (on this sense, which is used most widely in rhetorical contexts, see also chapter 5 below). All instances of *pistis*, with the exception of *b* (and possibly *e* and *g*) can arguably be understood as a proof or assurance on the basis of which people could attain *pistis*. This interpretation of *pistis* as ‘ground of faith’ has been put forth by Richard Hays (1983) and David Hay (1989), each with their respective emphases. Hays puts it thus:

Christ is the ground of faith because he is the one who, in fulfilment of the prophecy, lives ἐκ πίστεως. (...) His destiny, however, is not a merely individual one, because he acts as a universal representative figure, enacting (ἐκ πίστεως) a pattern of redemption which then determines the existence of others, to whom Paul refers as οἱ ἐκ πίστεως. (Hays 1983, 231)

Apparently, Hays understands *pistis* in the objective sense, ‘ground of faith’, in rather personal terms, namely as referring to Christ’s life or ‘redemptive pattern’. This way, Hays is able to integrate this text in his interpretation of *pistis Christou* as the ‘faith of Christ’ (subjective genitive) whose pattern believers imitate. Hay, on the other hand, takes *pistis Christou* to mean ‘faith, that is Christ’ (explicative genitive), as Paul’s ultimate role model for faith is Abra-

ham, not Jesus.<sup>243</sup> Building mainly on the usage of *pistis* as proof in Philo and Josephus, he also takes *pistis* in this passage to mean ‘ground of faith’, though he denounces Hays’s interpretation of *pistis* as not ‘objective’ enough, merely conveying the meaning of ‘non-cognitive trust’.<sup>244</sup> In response to Hay, I would add that it is hard to see how an ‘objective proof’ can realize a transformation into ‘children of God’. The motive of imitation (see chapter 6) on the other hand offers an elegant explanation, in line with the discourse presented in the present chapter: Hellenistic ideas on how a ruler as ‘living law’ sets the example for his subjects, those who express *pistis* in him, to follow. The question of subjective versus objective genitive then loses its either-or character, as my argument for intended ambiguity in chapter 6 will explicate.

Other approaches lean towards a more apocalyptic interpretation of *pistis* as a cosmic event, made visible in Christ, opening up the possibility of human participation. Ernst Lohmeyer speaks of a two-sidedness inherent to *pistis* terminology: it is both a human act and a ‘metaphysical principle’ or ‘an objective and transcendent power’.<sup>245</sup> Hermann Binder proposes a model which aims to integrate both aspects yet remains rather one-sided. According to him, *pistis* is never purely a human act, even if all its occurrences fit the idea of a new reality, a historical sphere of influence. Binder perceives a sharp contrast between this spatial category and a supposedly psychological or individual Greek usage:

The deeper cause is obviously that Greek thinking is dominated by the subject-object-schema or that it does not take place in historical-dynamic, but in spatial-static categories, which then leads to psychologization and relativization. (Binder 1968, 30)<sup>246</sup>

Although I agree with the thrust of Binder’s historical-dynamic interpretation, especially as it relates to this passage in *Galatians*, the argumentation reflects the imposition of theological-conceptual categories on language that

---

243 This distinction is also emphasized in Schliesser 2017a, 559, who holds that Jesus does not have an exemplary function for believers in Paul as he does for the author of *Hebrews*. Cf. for my defence of the opposite view §6.4.4 below.

244 Hay 1989, at 474.

245 Lohmeyer 1929, 117: ‘was nur als Tat und Gesinnung des Herzens, als gläubiges Handeln möglich erscheint, wird hier gleichsam zu einer objektiv gültigen und transzendenten Macht erhoben’; ‘das religiös-metaphysische Prinzip’.

246 My translation of: ‘Die tiefere Ursache liegt aber offenbar darin, daß das griechische Denken durch das Subjekt-Objekt-Schema beherrscht ist bzw. daß es sich nicht in zeitlich-geschichtlich-dynamischen, sondern in räumlich-ungeschichtlich-statischen Kategorien vollzieht, woraus sich dann Psychologisierung und Relativierung ergibt.’



we now, with James Barr's *Semantics*, must reject. In fact, as we have seen in this chapter, 'Greek thought' offers interesting parallels for thinking about faith in cosmic-historical terms. The return of divine *Pistis* is a familiar theme in both protological and eschatological accounts. With Gerhard Friedrich, however, I would hesitate to play off the divine and human aspects against each other.<sup>247</sup> The return of cosmic-divine *Pistis* signals precisely the return of the human virtue of *pistis*. In the text under discussion, the event of the coming of *Pistis* effectuates precisely such a human transformation: the justification of *hoi pisteuontes*.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the cosmic interpretation of *pistis*, or in his words, *pistis* as an 'eschatological event', was once again put forward by Benjamin Schliesser, who dusts off Binder's idea of the 'trans-subjectivity' of *pistis*.<sup>248</sup> In Schliesser's argument, the *pistis* event has a 'bipolar structure' comprising both a salvation-historical and an anthropological-participatory side:<sup>249</sup>

In sum, an anthropocentric narrowing of Paul's concept of faith is averted through the reference to its salvation-historical, trans-subjective character, whereas on the other hand a one-sidedly objectified view is corrected through the participatory aspect of faith. The distinction between a correct christological (subjective genitive) and a wrong anthropological reading (objective genitive) is inadequate. (Schliesser 2007, 280)

The objectified view Schliesser criticizes includes the view of *pistis* as 'a (Gnostic-like) "hypostatization of *pistis*" which regards "faith" as "savior figure"', whereby he refers to the positions of Dieter Georgi and Ernst Käsemann.<sup>250</sup> He reasons that *pistis* is not such a hypostasis, not even in *Galatians*, since 'it essentially exists in connection with Christ, the savior'. He also rejects the interpretation of Martinus de Boer, whose commentary on *Galatians* offers a more apocalyptic reading and who argues that *pistis* serves in this passage

247 See Friedrich 1982, 99; cf. also Schliesser 2007, 52–53.

248 Schliesser (2007, 45–54) offers an excellent overview of the scholarly discussion, including a specific section on 'Faith as Salvation-Historical Event'. For the notion of trans-subjectivity he adapts from Binder, see Schliesser 2016, 282–283.

249 See Schliesser 2016, 289: 'However, the metaphorical or cognitive way of understanding Paul's notion of faith is to be supplemented by a non-metaphorical or cosmological interpretation, one which acknowledges that faith is not only a human possibility, but also a divine reality.'

250 Schliesser 2007, 279, with references to Georgi 1991, 43 and Käsemann 1980 [1973], 88.

to indicate Christ's faithful death in which humans may participate, and not human faith in Christ.<sup>251</sup> In response, in his 2016 article on the 'third view' of *pistis Christou*, Schliesser rejects this option by asking:

How should we imagine an 'objective event', that is, 'an eschatological (newage) reality that has invaded the human cosmos from outside', to correspond to or be definitive of individual human believing? This is, to my mind, a logical and theological impossibility. (Schliesser 2016, 281, referring to De Boer 2011, 239, n. 353)

Even though I heartily agree with Schliesser's conclusions regarding the overall compatibility of a more objective-divine and a more subjective-human perspective in Paul's usage of *pistis*,<sup>252</sup> these contrasts with other objectivist-positions which enable Schliesser to offer his 'third view' seem unnecessary and rhetorically overdrawn.

The compatibility of 'Christological' and 'anthropological' readings becomes particularly evident if we take into consideration the pagan protologies and eschatologies in which *pistis* plays a part. Roman *fides*, a human virtue and relational bond, simultaneously exists in the divine realm, as a quality of Jupiter, sometimes hypostatized as a literary or mythical divinity. The arrival and withdrawal of such a hypostatized Pistis or Fides indicates the increase or decrease of the human enactment of *pistis/fides*, as we saw for instance in Pseudo-Seneca's *Octavia* and in Silius Italicus's *Punica*. In other words, the divine coming of faithfulness coincides with human faithful actions. These are certainly not logically impossible to relate in a Graeco-Roman scenario. The only aspect that is less likely on the basis of these contemporary narratives is the timeless and individual nature of the human faith-response, as these stories are very much tied to specific ages and communities.

So, where does that leave us in our reading of Paul's faith language in *Galatians* 3? Paul probably would not have had a separate female figure in mind when writing (see Gal 6.11) or dictating *Galatians*, but his usage of *pistis* as the acting subject of a verb like 'to come' (ἔρχομαι) indicates that even if, as is quite

251 De Boer 2011, 239.

252 See e.g. Schliesser 2007, 395: 'Not only "faith," but also gospel and law, righteousness and wrath, grace and sin, spirit and flesh, love and peace, even Christ figure as universal concepts, as powerful forces, which at the same time include the category of participation and appropriation. In Paul's world of thought, therefore, objectivity and subjectivity do not represent two mutually exclusive perspectives on the divinely instituted reality, in which (religious) existence takes place, but both are combined in mutual influence.'

clear, its meaning is closely linked to Christ, Paul chose a more abstract connotation, indicating that a new eschatological age, a new realm has presented itself, characterized by this particular divine-human *pistis* relationship. *Pistis comes*, just as a little further ‘the fulness of time’ *comes* (Gal 4.4: ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου): a new period and realm has arrived determined by a new *pistis* relationship between God and humanity, made possible by Christ’s faithfulness. These paradigmatic relations between faith, Christ, and the fulness of time are essential for understanding the cosmic scale of Paul’s language here. At the same time, and also from the perspective of the discourses presented in this chapter, the subjective component of *pistis* is not lost. This human factor includes both faith in Christ as a divine ruler and the practice of faithfulness as a virtue exemplified by Christ, as the next subsections on the law of faith as ‘internal law’ (§3.4.2) and Christ as ‘living law’ (§3.4.3) will further explain. Yet, because of the metahistorical or cosmic language involved, this justice and faithfulness point us in the direction of a collective, corporate transformation. In the eyes of Paul, God showing his righteousness will coincide with collective, faithful commitment to Christ the ruler and transformation through the example of Christ’s faithfulness. Thus, these pagan cultural narratives help us to realize that ‘justification by faith’ (or ‘righteousness through faithfulness’) was probably understood not as a timeless-individual salvific affair, but rather as a cosmic-communal salvific movement initialized by the disclosure of God’s righteousness and the newly arrived offer of a divine-human *pistis* relationship.

### 3.4.2 *The Law of Pistis (Rom 3.27): Ethical Justice through an Internal Law*

In the discussion of *Romans* 3.21–26 and *Galatians* 3.22–26 in the previous subsection, we saw how a cosmic-historical reading of *pistis* makes sense against the backdrop of the discourses presented in section 3.3. Human-psychological *pistis* was seen—by Paul and his pagan contemporaries alike—to be a natural extension of this cosmic-divine return of *pistis*. To understand this cosmic-human connection further, a closer look is needed into the role of law (*nomos*) and the complex relationship between justice, faith, and law in these and other relevant Pauline passages. As is well known, in both *Galatians* and *Romans*, faith (πίστις) is often contrasted with ‘law’ (νόμος) or with ‘works of the law’ (ἔργα νόμου). In linguistic terms, they function as antithetic semantic markers. The major question is how this Pauline contrast is to be understood and, in particular, whether ‘works’ and ethical behaviour play any part in ‘justification by faith’.

In this subsection, we will see how Paul’s language can be seen as participating in the discourse of unwritten, and particularly ‘internal’, law, as he makes

a similar point: external, written laws cannot make someone just. It takes an internal law to transform people from within, in Paul's words, a 'law of the Spirit' (Rom 8.2) or, indeed, a 'law of faith' (Rom 3.27).

Before it is possible to interpret these peculiar *nomos* expressions, however, it is necessary to take into account whether Paul alludes to the idea of 'natural law' or the related idea of a 'natural theology' in his letters. One's position in this issue is often intertwined with one's reading of the first chapters of *Romans*. We already discussed the question whether Paul speaks of natural knowledge of God in *Romans* 1 ('natural theology'), to which I would answer affirmatively (see §2.4.1 above). Yet, there is the related issue of whether or not Paul assumes the existence of natural law in the subsequent argument:

For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified (οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται). When gentiles, who do not possess the law by nature,<sup>253</sup> do what the law requires (ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν), these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves (οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος). They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν), to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all. (*Romans* 2.13–16)

These verses are particularly tough for those who emphasize the antithesis between justification by faith and judgement according to works in *Romans*: can one be justified apart from faith in Christ? In other words, is Paul referring to a natural law on the basis of which one can be deemed just apart from the Mosaic law? These questions were already an issue for Augustine, who first read this passage in light of the natural law topos, yet later proposed that 'justification precedes them as doers of the law', so that it was not the works that led to justification, and that 'what was impressed on their hearts when they were created in the image of God has not been wholly blotted out'.<sup>254</sup>

<sup>253</sup> I adapted the NRSV translation so that it retains the ambiguity that fuels the exegetical discussion.

<sup>254</sup> Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* 45, 48, translation by Philip Schaff. Cf. Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* 47: 'Nor ought it to disturb us that the apostle described them as doing that which is contained in the law "by nature,"—not by the Spirit of God, not by faith, not by grace. For it is the Spirit of grace that does it, in order to restore in us the

The sentence that speaks of ‘gentiles who do not possess the law by nature follow the law’ can be understood in two ways, depending on what verbal expression the adverb ‘by nature’ (φύσει) modifies. Hence, the question is whether these gentiles are in fact people (probably gentile Christ-followers) who are already familiar with the Jewish law, even though they do not possess it ‘by nature’ or ‘by birth’ as the Jews do (as φύσει is used in Gal 2.15), or whether they are gentile people in general, who are not familiar with the Jewish law yet follow its commandments ‘by nature’ (in line with Rom 1.26–27).<sup>255</sup> Scholars who opt for the second option are divided between those who think that Paul’s argument is that God is right to condemn these pagans, and those who think that Paul’s argument is that such pagans might do well on Judgement Day in order to confront the Jewish boast.<sup>256</sup>

One problem with the first option, however, is that Paul does not speak of the followers of Christ as simply ‘gentiles’ or ‘nations’ (ἔθνη) in any other extant text without any indication of their ‘Christian’ status.<sup>257</sup> Moreover, if we read the ‘disclosure of God’s justice’ a little further on (Rom 3.21) as the presentation of a temporal climax, the situation described in the above verses would refer to the period before Christ. This solution thus appears to be unlikely.

In addition to comparing the relative likelihood of these interpretations, we can also find an enlightening explanatory scheme in the Graeco-Roman discourses presented in the present and previous chapter.<sup>258</sup> We already seen the implications of the conception of an initial natural knowledge of the divine for reading *Romans* 1.18–32 (§2.4.1). I argued that a narrative of a divine departure is apparent in the background of these chapters, (see §3.4.1), even if it remains Paul’s understanding that some knowledge of what is right and wrong

---

image of God, in which we were naturally created.’ On Augustine’s changing position, see Gathercole 2002a.

255 Cf. e.g. for the first position Cranfield 2004a [1975], 155–158 and Gathercole 2002b.

256 Fitzmyer (1993, 311) is a representative of the first (sub-)position, Dunn (1988b, 104) of the second.

257 Cf. Martens 1994a, 61: ‘Paul never refers to gentile Christians as gentiles alone.’ Cf. Cranfield (2004a [1975], 156), who mentions *Romans* 11.13 and 15.9, and Gathercole (2002b, 31), who also points to *Romans* 9.30, yet in all these cases the ‘pagans’ are referred to as a collective, a collective Paul serves as apostle, which ‘did not strive for righteousness’ and which will ‘come to honour God’: these designations seem to pertain to more than those individuals who have already accepted Christ. Martens also argues that if ‘Christian gentiles’ were able to do right ‘by nature’ instead of ‘by the Spirit’ this would be a far more challenging ‘natural theology’ (at 61, n. 20), but here, of course, there is the possibility of understanding ‘by nature’ as referring to ‘possessing the law’.

258 Cf. for a different position Käsemann 1980 [1973], 63: Käsemann explicitly denies that the idea of unwritten law is relevant to understanding these verses.

is still available to all. Pagans still know ‘the righteous degree of God’ (1.32: τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγινόντες) and commit their trespasses in this full knowledge. In the Stoic ‘natural law’ discourse discussed in this chapter (§3.3.4), such a natural knowledge is also presented in juridical terms. While it is sometimes argued that there is no connection between the external knowledge of God in the cosmos in *Romans* 1 and the internal knowledge of the law in *Romans* 2, the discourse of unwritten law offers precisely such a connection: the divine force of nature in the cosmos, ‘natural law’, is the same force that prompts an individual soul to live virtuously as an ‘internal law’.<sup>259</sup>

Besides the existence of a common, universal law, what stands out in *Romans* 1–3, and in the passage quoted above in particular, is the divine judgment, which is also part of the Graeco-Roman discourse of universal law. Cicero spoke of God as ‘the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge’ (*On the Republic* 3.33, see §3.3.5 above). For Paul, it is also by this internal law that ‘people who do not possess the law’—that is, the written Law of Moses—will be judged. ‘Natural law’ is therefore an important component of Paul’s argument for the inexcusability of all, Jew and pagan alike. Is it also part of Paul’s solution?

The argument for Paul’s engagement with a Stoic conception of natural law is not new. What has not yet been sufficiently brought to light is the broadness of this discourse, including elements of universal law, internal law, and living law, and the manner in which it is integrated via the Golden Age discourse with Paul’s ‘justification by faith’ language (see §3.3 above).

Of interest is Josef Fuchs’s study on natural law (1955), which was conceived as a response to the movement of situational ethics in Protestantism, yet which includes a chapter on ‘natural law in the Biblical testimony’ in which he confines himself to the Pauline literature.<sup>260</sup> However, Fuchs mostly speaks of the modern, Roman Catholic conception of natural law, and while he mentions its Stoic roots, he does not engage with these sources directly nor does he explicate Paul’s contribution to the ancient discourse.<sup>261</sup>

The argument for Stoic themes in Paul’s understanding of ‘law’ has been advanced in the work of Nico Huttunen (2009, 2010). Unfortunately, Huttunen

259 Cf. for a different position Gathercole 2002b, 39: ‘Even Rom 1.19–21 does not bear comparison with Rom 2.14–15 very well: the former speaks of an external revelatory voice in the cosmos, which humanity in any case constantly refuses. The natural knowledge of God’s will attributed by some to Rom 2.14–15 is quite different: it is internal.’

260 Fuchs 1955; English translation: Fuchs 1965, 21–42.

261 A brief discussion of the Stoic ideas is found at Fuchs 1965, 82.

limits his suggestions on natural law in Paul to specific passages, most importantly *Romans* 1.18–32 and 2.14, where Paul actually speaks of doing things in accordance or in opposition with nature, and *1 Corinthians* 9.19–21, where he is speaking of a divine law apart from the Mosaic law.<sup>262</sup> Accordingly, he does not participate in the debate on the interpretation of Paul's righteousness and faith language. The passages Fuchs and Huttunen refer to will indeed be discussed in this subsection, though my suggestion is perhaps bolder, as I would argue that Paul's entire 'justification by faith' language is to be understood in light of the discourse of unwritten law as well.

John Martens and John Collins have argued respectively for a Stoic and Aristotelean reading of the passage just quoted (Rom 2.13–16). After focusing on Stoicizing phrases in the preceding argument, such as the usage of 'against nature' (1.26: *παρὰ φύσιν*) and 'things that should not be done' (1.28: *τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα*), Martens explains that this passage suggests the idea of a pagan following Stoic natural law as well as the related idea that such a possibility is highly hypothetical: 'Paul's gentile, and probably Jewish, readers would have known that only the wise man does the natural law; they would have known something else too: according to both the Stoics and their enemies there had either never been a wise man, or only a handful.'<sup>263</sup> John Collins, in turn, questions the validity of a specifically Stoic background and argues that, in view of the parallels with Aristotle, Paul here seems to have a concept of natural law in mind.<sup>264</sup> Like others before him, Collins calls attention to the striking verbal parallels between this passage and texts by Aristotle.<sup>265</sup> As I noted above (§3.3.4), Aristotle speaks of good people who 'are themselves a law' (*αὐτοὶ γὰρ εἰσι νόμος*) and, in what for Collins is an even more striking parallel, of a person who will be 'as it were a law to himself' (*οἶον νόμος ὦν ἑαυτῷ*).<sup>266</sup> Moreover, Aristotle critiques the written law as is 'it does not do the work of the law' (*οὐ γὰρ ποιεῖ τὸ ἔργον τὸ τοῦ νόμου*). Collins does an excellent job demonstrating how an Aristotelean reading of *Romans* 2 as speaking of 'nonbelieving gentiles' who do what the law requires is in tune with the Old Testament theme of 'a gen-

262 For *Romans*, see Huttunen 2010, 46–54 and 2009, 50–62, and for *1 Corinthians*, see 2009, 33–34.

263 Martens 1994a, 66.

264 Collins 2010, against Martens at 146.

265 Though this list is not exhaustive, the parallel has been acknowledged in by Greenwood 1971, 264; Martens 1994a, 60, 21; Whelan 1982, 458, n. 32; Jolivet 1997, 315. Remarkably, sometimes it is noticed without further comment on the exegetical implications, such as in Cranfield 2004a [1975], 157, n. 3.

266 Aristotle, *Politics* 3.8.1–2 (1284a) and *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.8.10 (1128a).

tile [who] outperforms one of Abraham's descendants in the moral realm'.<sup>267</sup> It is, however, precisely this idea that Martens's interpretation underlines: the hypothetical possibility of a good and wise pagan person serves to underline that Jews should not boast, while at the same time making it clear that such pagan sages are scarce: divine justice has to find another way to take hold of human hearts, be they Jewish or Greek.

What is less appealing in Collins's contribution is his effort to establish a direct influence between Aristotle and Paul ('Paul had access to some sayings of Aristotle'). The focus on such specific parallels is even deemed 'an extreme case of parallelomania' by some.<sup>268</sup> Collins is indeed susceptible to such criticism, as he claims that Paul knew of a few particular passages in Aristotle while at the same time he rejects a similar influence from Stoicism.<sup>269</sup> As I argued in the introductory chapter (§1.3), while there are merits in trying to standardize the search for 'echoes' (as Collins does, following Hays), it is more fruitful to take potential 'echoes' as indications of participation in a discourse—one transcending the boundaries of a particular work, author, or philosophical school—and look for similarities and dissimilarities on a larger scale. It is more likely that Paul knew of and responded to the broad outline of the discourse of unwritten law, which amounts to something in-between having direct 'access' and being merely 'in the air'.

I now want to read the passages (Gal 3.21–28 and Rom 3.21–31) we encountered in the previous subsection in the context of a cosmic arrival of the age of justice and faith in the context of the related discourse of internal law. In *Galatians* 3.22–26, there is at least a 'temporal' or 'historical' antithesis between *pistis* and *nomos*. Paul obviously thinks in terms of historical periods. The Mosaic Law was not always there; it was relatively late to arrive on the scene. Paul calls it 'the law which came 430 years later (3.17: ὁ μετὰ τετρακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη γεγωνὼς νόμος)'—later, that is, than the promise made to Abraham. Whereas 'faith' now ensures that people become 'children of God', 'law' is an entity which 'imprisoned' and 'guarded' (3.23) and functioned as a temporary 'disciplinarian' (3.24). This temporal 'law' and the newly arrived 'faith' thus function to define and demarcate subsequent ages.

267 Collins 2010, 142.

268 Gathercole 2002b, 38, n. 62, following Moo 1996, 151, n. 40.

269 Cf. Collins 2010, 132 ('it is reasonable to suppose that in some way or another Paul had access to some sayings of Aristotle') and 146 ('it makes far better sense to suppose that (at least some of) the words that Paul used were "in the air," as part of popular conversation in the Graeco-Roman world').



We encountered similar historical contrasts between ages in the discourse around the Golden Age and subsequent ages, including the contrast between having a divine guardian versus having an actual divine parent (§3.3.2). In Seneca's 90th epistle to Lucilius, humanity had nature as its parent in the Golden Age, yet nature became a more distant 'guardian' in the second, silver age (90.38). Even more striking is the convergence with Vergil and Ovid in the idea that a Golden Age does not need a law, as faith and justice are cherished 'out of their own accord'. In the words of Ovid, 'Golden was that first age, which, with no one to compel, without a law, of its own will, kept faith and did the right (*sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat*):'<sup>270</sup> Similarly, in the Epicurean wall-inscription in Oenoanda, there is no need for 'laws and fortifications' in the ultimate divine-human society, while justice and love do remain. These accounts share the notion that in an ultimately happy human society, depicted in either protological or eschatological periods, written laws are absent. Just as in Paul's thought, laws were a later addition, 'set over' humanity because of transgressions (Gal 3.19: τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν προσετέθη), but not the ideal picture. Paul's depiction of the law as a disciplinarian and God as a parent perfectly fits this Graeco-Roman contrast between law as an external boundary and divine leadership or even parentage leading to internally motivated righteousness.

In the more specific pagan discourse about 'internal law' (see §3.3.4 above), we see a similar ideal of being just out of one's own accord, only this is now presented as an option in the present, realized by answering to a divine law or an internal *logos*. The Athenian in Plato's *Laws* offers an allegorizing appropriation of Cronus's rule by ordering that people should now imitate those days by obeying an internal law: 'giving to reason's ordering the name of "law" (714a: τὴν τοῦ νοῦ διανομήν ἐπονομάζοντας νόμον)'. According to Paul's story in *Galatians* 3.23–26, the opportunity to be 'justified' and to become 'children of God' is also not a matter of the distant past or future, but it is happening now (cf. Gal 4.9: νῦν δὲ γρόντες θεόν). Unlike other participants in this topos of an internal law, Paul offers a concrete and apocalyptic reason for why this has now become a possibility by means of a cosmic and divine intervention in this age. Now that, with Christ, faith has come, the external law can be internalized. Whereas before, 'we' obeyed an external disciplinarian that is the law, now 'we' can, from an internal yet still cosmic-divine force and motivation that is described as 'faith', obey God as children. Viewed from a semantic-conceptual perspective, Paul switches between *pistis* in the large cosmic narrative to *pistis*

<sup>270</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.89–90.

in the mentality of the Christ-follower in this passage. The latter subject is one to which I shall return in more detail in chapters 4, 5, and 6 (Part 2: ‘The Mentality of Faith’).

Whereas in *Galatians* it fits Paul’s argumentative strategy to focus on *pistis* as the counterpart of the written law, in *Romans* it is in accordance with the relatively more general (or more defensive) message to emphasize the universality of divine righteousness. Yet apart from such differences in tone and emphasis, it is clear that in *Romans* 3.21–31 the disclosure of *dikaiosynē* also depends on *pistis* and that there is some sort of contrast between being justified by means of *pistis* and ‘works of the law’. Still, in this passage there is no simple exclusive antithesis between faith and law, for the ‘law of works’ is contrasted to the ‘law of faith’:

Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law (διὰ ποίου νόμου)? By that of works (τῶν ἔργων)? No, but by the law of faith (διὰ νόμου πίστεως). For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law (λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιούσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου). (*Romans* 3.27–28)

This remarkable usage of ‘law’ and ‘faith’ in close syntagmatic relation to each other—as ‘law of faith’ (*nomos pisteōs*)—is an unexpected wordplay. Based on a comparison with the discourses of unwritten types of law, however, I would say that it is also more than a mere display of wit.

The notion of a ‘law of faith’ has given rise to varying scholarly interpretations. The two main choices are either 1) that it is an instance wordplay or loose usage and does not refer to any actual ‘law’ or 2) that it refers to the Mosaic Law. The first position was advocated by Heikki Räisänen, for example. He argued against a ‘growing tendency’ exemplified by the interpretations of Osten-Sacken and Hübner that takes all instances of *nomos* in these verses, including *nomos pisteōs*, as references to the Mosaic Law.<sup>271</sup> Instead, he reasons, the ‘active role’ of the law in the passage must be taken seriously, namely in bringing boasting to an end. Räisänen concludes, ‘*Nomos* must be metaphorical; the new “order of faith” is being referred to.’<sup>272</sup> The opposing view has, among others, been advanced by J. Louis Martyn, who takes issue with the explanation offered by Räisänen.<sup>273</sup> Nevertheless, he grants that there is

271 Räisänen 1987, 51, referring to Von der Osten-Sacken 1975, 245 and Hübner 1978, 119.

272 Räisänen 1987, 52.

273 Martyn 2003.

indeed enough evidence in extant Greek sources to support the possibility of *nomos* referring to general norms or patterns of behaviour. I agree with Martyn that it appears to be somewhat haphazard or theologically biased that interpreters opt for this sense in particular in those cases where *nomos* appears to be regarded in a positive light.<sup>274</sup>

Apart from *Romans* 3.27, an important text where this more general meaning of 'order' or 'norm' is read is later in the same letter (Rom 8.2), where Paul states, 'the law of the Spirit of life (ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς) in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death (ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου): Räsänen argues that, in view of the active role of the law as 'liberator', it is not simply a change in mindset that will cause the Law of Moses to be experienced as law of the Spirit: Paul is consciously playing with words.<sup>275</sup> Martyn asks what prompted a double use of *nomos* in this verse. His own solution is that 'in every instance Paul refers to the Torah itself', but that throughout the history of this divine law 'the crucial question about the Law is the identity of the power that has it in hand', namely either Sin or Christ.<sup>276</sup>

Although Martyn's historical perspective on the law fits perfectly with my reading of Paul and with contemporary historical discourses such as the Golden Age, as Martyn freely admits,<sup>277</sup> the problem with this interpretation is twofold: it fails to account for sharp antitheses with *nomos* without any accompanying negative genitive, and it fails to account for the alignment of the law with *pistis* in *Romans* 3.27. As for antitheses with 'law' without qualifying genitive, I am thinking particularly about sections of *Galatians*. 'Law' is set against 'spirit' or 'faith': 'But if you are led by the spirit, you are not subject to the law' (Gal 5.18: εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον), and against faith: 'But the law does not rest on faith' (Gal 3.12: ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως). In these passages, there is no immediate contextual clues to suggest that Paul is speaking of a 'Law in the hands of Sin'. Martyn apparently reads the first text as indicating that 'you are no longer subject to the Torah in the hands of Sin but subject to the same Torah in the hands of Christ'. Yet the usage of 'law' here is rather unmarked, just as a little later in this passage when Paul sums up the fruit of the Spirit and adds that 'there is no law against such things' (Gal 5.23: κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος). This is a type of law that is in some sense

274 Martyn 2003, 377: 'We are entitled to wonder whether the interpretation of *nomos* plus genitive is being unduly influenced by an implicit assumption regarding Paul's theology.'

275 Räsänen 1987, 52.

276 Martyn 2003, 584–585.

277 Martyn 2003, 581–582.

contrasted with ‘spirit’, but is this the law in the hands of Sin? Is it not rather a specific type of law, the written type, which is contrasted with the unwritten type? This is a contrast that was evidently part of Paul’s thought as he speaks of a new covenant that is ‘not of letter but of spirit (οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος), for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ)’ (2 Cor 3.6).

In line with the discourses of unwritten law, I suggest that in *Galatians* 5.18, as in many other occurrences of *nomos* in Paul, he refers to the written Jewish law, a law that is not regarded solely in a negative light but rather is seen as not being able to fulfil its purpose of bringing justice and life due to the power of sin. However, accompanied by a qualifying genitive noun like ‘faith’ (Rom 3.27), ‘spirit (of life)’ (Rom 8.2), ‘God’ (1 Cor 9.21, Rom 7.22,25, Rom 8.7), ‘Christ’ (Gal 6.2, 1 Cor 9.21), or even ‘mind’ (Rom 7.23), the law Paul speaks of is the unwritten, divine, internal, and universal law, a law that is able to ‘make righteous’ and ‘make alive’ (cf. Gal 3.21, 2 Cor 3.6).

As we saw when we discussed this broader discourse of unwritten, internal law (§3.3.4), such diverse indications are not uncommon: Plato called ‘the ordering of the mind’ (ἡ τοῦ νοῦ διανομή) law and speaks of a ‘divine law’ (ὁ θεῖος νόμος), Aristotle of a ‘common law’ (κοινός νόμος) and an ‘unwritten law’ (ἄγραφος νόμος), and Seneca of a ‘law of life’ (*vitae lex*). Even Fides is closely connected to the law in the Golden Age, as she is represented as lawgiver by Vergil (Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.292–293, see §3.3.3). For Paul, this law is universal in the sense that it is not bound to one *ethnos*, the Jewish people, but to all, so that no one can boast (see §3.4.4 on this universal element). This unwritten law is also internal, as it guides people towards righteousness and virtue from within their minds and discourages anyone from boasting, namely about external ‘works’. It is to this latter subject, the role of ‘works’ in justification, that we now turn.

One of the questions raised by this view of ‘the law of faith’ as ‘divine-internal law’ is if or to what extent this new law of faith requires ‘works’, that is actual good deeds and the abstinence of bad deeds by the people under its jurisdiction. Are we in fact declared righteous *sola fide*, regardless of our behaviour? And what is the content of this *fides*?

The semantic closeness of *dikē* and *pistis* language in the time of Paul and their main occurrence in the semantic field of virtues (see §3.3.1) speaks for the importance of actual moral deeds in justification. For a pagan contemporary of Paul, being faithful implies being just and therefore justifiable.<sup>278</sup> Of course,

<sup>278</sup> Cf. Ziesler (1972, 20, 25), who argues that the forensic ‘cannot be separated from the ethical altogether; ‘It is not just a vindicated status, but a vindicated life.’

Paul may have preached a countercultural message that goes against pagan expectations. Yet if Paul were to bring such ‘news’ to a pagan audience, he must have taken pains to distinguish between what his audience expected and what he actually wanted to say, especially if he did not want to be an utterly futile voice in the wilderness. We do not find evidence in his letters of any attempt by Paul to separate faith from doing God’s will, from being just. Hence, Paul’s audience would probably not have conceived of good works and faith as an antithesis in the Lutheran sense of self-righteous legalism versus vindicative, undeserved justification.

But there is more to be said. In line with the New Perspective and analogous to the universality of the ‘common law’ in Stoicism and beyond (see §3.3.5), the ‘works’ Paul argues against can be conceived of as the keeping of laws that emphasize one’s separate ethnic status. Yet the collective-universal nature of justification is only part of the discourse of unwritten law. We have also seen (see §3.3.4) how already in Plato the city-state laws were problematized, for they could not give a satisfying answer to the question of how to create just citizens. Solutions were sought in conceptions of an internal law which addresses the intellect by means of persuasion (μετὰ πειθοῦς): it is the internal *logos* that should function as law. Plutarch argues that if we would take away civic laws but leave the teachings of the philosophers the *logos* will function as *nomos*. According to Porphyry, the ‘law of God’ is also connected to the human mind. Therefore, it is striking that in *Romans*, Paul also connects the law of God to the intellect, the *nous* (Rom 7.23,25). In Paul’s letters, a similar function is performed by the spirit (*pneuma*), which is also both divine and internal and closely connected to faith (*pistis*) (e.g. Gal 3.14; Gal 5.6).

The Stoics in Paul’s days (see §3.3.5) also argued that civic laws are in fact powerless: they do not cover the entire sphere of virtue, as not every sin is a civic matter.<sup>279</sup> Moreover, they are superfluous when the divine directions are taken seriously and followed directly, that is, unmediated by human lawgivers. It is to this divine-internal sphere that *pistis* language belongs: Seneca regards *fides* as the part of being good about which the law has no say, while Epictetus speaks of *to piston* as one of the main virtues that are internal and under our control. To speak of a ‘law of faith’ against this background is thus to speak of that internal part of being righteous that cannot be ‘subject to the law’ (Gal

---

279 Cf. Troels Engberg-Pederson on how Paul’s view of the law is similar to Stoic thought (2006a, 458): ‘Paul came to see a possibility in Christ faith that he would then find to be missing in the law: the possibility of fulfilling the law in the quite concrete sense of actually doing God’s will as expressed in the law. Christ faith brought about what the law itself had not been able to bring about: that it be actually done.’

5.18: ὑπὸ νόμον) or ‘against which there is no law’ (Gal 5.23: κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος). Because of the external nature of the written law, in Paul’s case particularly the Jewish law given by Moses, it cannot transform people completely from within. This is where *pistis* comes in: it has everything to do with works, namely with interiorization of law and righteousness.

We see a similar contrast between the external Law of Moses and the new, internal proclamation of faith in *Romans* 10.5–10, where Paul ironically cites the law to show its own inadequacy. Here, he takes up the case addressed in *Deuteronomy*, that the commandments are ‘too hard’ or ‘too far away’ (Deut 30.11). According to Paul, *Deuteronomy*’s response here, ‘the word is near you, on your lips and in your heart’ (Rom 10.8 citing Deut 30.14) refers to his own ‘word’ of ‘message of faith’ and Paul puts these words not into the mouth of Moses, but into the mouth of ‘the righteousness from faith’ (Rom 10.6: ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει). They thus offer a different solution to the difficulty of living by the law than Moses offered in *Leviticus*. For he creatively sets this solution against Moses’ own words (the written law), in *Leviticus*: ‘Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that ‘the person who does these things will live by them’ (Rom 10.5). The interiority of law is, Paul seems to imply, already evident from *Deuteronomy*, yet this interiorization takes shape in the present, when his ‘message of faith’ has become the interior version of the written law. In Paul’s reading of the text, it is only because Christ came down from heaven and ascended from the abyss (see Rom 10.6–7) that the law has come to us in the unwritten form of the ‘message of faith’ (Rom 10.8, citing Deut LXX 30.14).

Now, in line with this internal-external antithesis between two types of law, the ‘works’ Paul argues against do not seem to be solely those that separate Jews from non-Jews (analogous with the New Perspective on Paul), but all ‘works’ meant to arrogantly exhibit external righteousness. For Paul, ‘works’ cannot be restricted to external behaviour but need to be the outcome of a renewed mind, or put differently, an imitation of the divine measure of faith, personified in Christ (Rom 12.3, see §2.4.4 above). Like the measure of faith, which is given to all yet meant as a divine standard for the mind, the law of faith is thus to be understood as both universal and internal. The justification Paul preached was an internal, ethical justification, a transformation that would begin the moment someone starts to have faith in Christ. It was not, to paraphrase the traditional perspective, a passive acquittal regardless of past (or even future) ‘works’ but an active, internal process to make someone more just than the observance of any written law could achieve. Thus in part, this is in accordance with the Radical New Perspective’s position on the importance

of ethical justification, but it differs in its estimation of the importance of the unwritten 'law of faith' for Jews.<sup>280</sup>

Still, Paul emphasizes that even though pagan discourse spoke of such an internal, divine, and universal law—and even though sometimes this enabled exceptional individuals to 'do the work of the law' (Rom 2.15)—in general, 'Jews and Greeks are all under the power of Sin' (Rom 3.9: Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτιᾶν εἶναι). The problem Paul addresses relates to the fact that even though Jews knew the 'righteous degree of God' out of the written, Mosaic Law and pagans knew it out of natural law, both did not fully internalize these laws. According to Paul, then, the Platonic and Stoic discourse of a divine and universal law failed to offer the solution it was designed to offer: it did not lead to whole communities of righteous people. In theological terms, Graeco-Roman ethics was in need of some Jewish soteriology. The crux of this internal transformation, for Paul, was given by not so much by the mere existence of a divine or internal law, but by entrusting oneself to the reign of a living law: Christ. This 'living law', to which we now turn, could finally and definitely break the power of Sin and make Jew and Greek righteous.<sup>281</sup>

#### 3.4.3 *That He Himself Is Just and That He Justifies the One through Pistis in/of Jesus (Rom 3.26): Participational Justice through Commitment to Christ as Living Law*

If there is any element in the 'unwritten law' discourse that perfectly fits the cosmic or apocalyptic reorientation in Christ, which Paul experienced and proclaimed, it is the topos of the 'living law' (*nomos empsychos*). This term, however, is not found in Paul's extant letters. Can we nonetheless find traces of this topos in the Pauline writings, and if so, how does this affect our understanding of the meaning of 'law' and 'faith' in those writings? In particular, is the *pistis* related to Christ the faith of the people in him or the faithfulness of Christ himself? A more complete answer to the *pistis Christou* question will have to wait until chapter 6. Here, I want to offer a preliminary interpretation

280 Paula Fredriksen, for instance, describes 'justification by faith' as follows (2014, 808): 'Their πίστις in Christ (confidence that he had died, had been raised, and was soon coming back) righteoused them (through the giving of πνεῦμα, which also effected adoption) so that they could "fulfil the law," specifically, the Law's Second Table, δικαιοσύνη.'

281 In the 'living law' discourse (and to some extent in the discourse of moral imitation, cf. chapter 6 below), we thus encounter a bridge from divine faithfulness in soteriological contexts to faithfulness as a moral quality. Cf. Volker Rabens's criticism of Wright 2013: 'Wright hardly provides any insights on how God's love and covenant faithfulness may effect human faithful living, even though the ethical quality of "faithfulness" is at the heart of his study.' See Rabens 2016a, 577.

of those passages that make sense against the background of the 'living law' discourse.

An argument for the presence of the topos of 'living law' in *Ephesians* was made by Julien Smith; following him, Jason Whitlark argued for a similar motive in *Hebrews*.<sup>282</sup> For the Pauline letters, some preliminary observations were made by Calvin Roetzel, who emphasized the similarities with Philo regarding the idea of unwritten law. Especially, he argues, in a diaspora setting, 'it is difficult to use *nomos* as a signifier with one meaning that served all purposes'.<sup>283</sup> Roetzel proceeds to describe Philo's presentation of Moses and Abraham as 'nomos incarnate' and concludes with these remarks on Paul:

This whole concept of a living, incarnate law may find its echo in Paul's reference to the *nomon tou Christou* (Gal. 6.2) which is to be fulfilled by the Galatian converts or similarly, the observers of the 'law of the Spirit' (Rom. 8.1), that is, the unseen, unwritten law of that special gift associated with and poured out on citizens of the last days. While the correspondence is hardly exact, the statement in Rom. 10.4 that Christ is the *telos* of the law has been variously read, but viewed in a diaspora setting shows certain affinities with Philonic thought. (Roetzel 2010, 126)

These passages do indeed come to mind as places where Paul might be thinking of an 'unwritten law'. However, when we consider the discourse as a whole and not merely Philo's appropriation of it, the argument for the existence of 'unwritten' and specifically 'living law' (*nomos empsychos*) makes even more sense. Particularly important signs of this in Paul's letters include the apocalyptic return of a just ruler, namely Christ, and the combination of roles ascribed to this ruler, sometimes in a single breath, as divine moral archetype on the one hand and supreme judge on the other.

I will discuss passages from two of Paul's epistles, *Philippians* and *Romans*, including some passages without any *pistis* vocabulary that are nevertheless crucial for establishing a likely participation in this discourse of *nomos empsychos* (like Phil 3.17–21, Rom 10.2–4). Yet we will see how these passages help to explain the relationship between *pistis* and *Christos* and at the end of this subsection I will return once more to the first chapters of *Romans*, this time in particular to the notorious *pistis Christou*-formulation there (or here rather ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ: Rom 3.26).

282 Smith 2011; Whitlark 2018. On Jesus as the philosopher king and ἀνὴρ τελεῖος in *Ephesians*, see also Long 2013, esp. 298–299.

283 Roetzel 2010, 122.



In *Philippians*, *nomos*-vocabulary is limited to one passage. Paul first describes himself as, ‘as to the law, a Pharisee (Phil 3.5: κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαίος)’ and, ‘as to righteousness under the law, blameless (Phil 3.6: κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμempτος)’. As Krister Stendahl famously remarked, Paul seems to have a rather ‘robust conscience’ here: there is no Luther-like, anguished questioning about whether he can find a gracious God.<sup>284</sup> Still, this ‘righteousness under the law’ is hereafter framed as something he no longer aims for, as a ‘loss through Christ’ and as ‘righteousness of my own’ instead of ‘righteousness from God based on faith’:

in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him (εὐρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ), not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law (ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου), but one that comes through faith in/of Christ (τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ), the righteousness from God based on faith (τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει). (*Philippians* 3.8–9)

This is one of the *pistis Christou*-passages to which we will return in chapter 6 (§6.4.5), where I argue for a reading of sustained ambiguity framed by the discourse of moral imitation. From the perspective of the discourse of the ‘unwritten law’, the contrast between the parallel expressions of ‘justice based on the law’ (δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου) and ‘justice based on faith in/of Christ’ (δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει) is remarkable. As we have seen, *pistis* and *fides* vocabulary is often associated with internal virtuousness which cannot be realized by external laws (§§3.3.4–5 and §3.4.2). Thus, this contrast seems to be a contrast between two ways of ensuring justice: through the external written law and through the internal unwritten law.

The question behind this contrast also informs the whole discourse of unwritten law: ‘how can people’, or perhaps rather, ‘how can a society become righteous?’ Such a question is prompted by unease with the achievements of written law. For Paul, the answer is ultimately one of confidence: should I have confidence in the flesh (Phil 3.4: ἔχων πεποιθήσιν καὶ ἐν σαρκί) and aim for ‘righteousness of my own that comes from the law’ (Phil 3.8), or should we ‘boast in Christ’ (Phil 3.3: καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) and aim for ‘the righteousness from God based on faith’ (Phil 3.9)? In this section in particular, there are many different lexemes which indicate such a ‘confidence’, and *pistis Christou* may thus well be translated as ‘confidence in Christ’ (on the related meanings of *pisteuō* and *peithō*, see §5.4.1 below).

<sup>284</sup> Stendahl 1963, see p. 200 on a ‘robust conscience’ and Phil 3.

More specifically, the combination of *pistis* and *Christou* points in the direction of the discourse of ‘living law’: by committing to a just and faithful ruler, divine justice can take hold. We have seen that in Plutarch’s advice to rulers, he says that a statesman should first attain power and ensure the trust, the *pistis* of the people, before beginning to model their character after his own.<sup>285</sup> Moreover, in Neopythagorean treatises, the ruler was closely associated with God, and imitating the ruler’s divine virtues was the route towards *homoiosis theōi*, becoming like God. The Pauline expression ‘be found in him’ suggests that *pistis Christou* is indeed an expression of such ‘participation’ in Christ: by having faith in the faithful Christ, Paul participates in Christ’s righteousness and is transformed into the image of the just ruler. Viewed from this perspective, the two occurrences of *pistis* in this specific text most likely refer to the relationship between ruler and subject, indicating either the trust in the ruler, or the ruler’s faithfulness towards his subjects, or rather this reciprocal relationship of mutual trust as a whole, whereby the ruler’s faithfulness or obedience to the divine is implicitly assumed yet not highlighted.

We might ask here, however, whether this image of Christ as ‘living law’, can be found elsewhere in this letter. There are several passages in *Philippians* where Christ is mentioned in relation to the last judgement and as the one enabling an ethical transformation. At the thanksgiving section, Paul says that he is ‘confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you (ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθόν) will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ (ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ)’ (Phil 1.6). God’s ‘good work’ inside people is already related to the ‘day of Christ Jesus’: ‘justification’ appears to be a process of becoming righteous, which proceeds in the present. The same idea is stated more elaborately when Paul concludes the section with a prayer:

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει) to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ (εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ) you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ (πεπληρωμένοι καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης τὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) for the glory and praise of God. (*Philippians* 1.9–11)

<sup>285</sup> Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 800A–B, cf. on trust in leaders Plutarch, *Cato the Younger* 44.7–8 and Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* 821B–C, both quoted above (§3.3.1).

The 'good work' is here further explained in terms of interior, moral qualities resulting in a 'harvest of righteousness': the goal is an ethical transformation that takes place 'through' or 'because of' (διὰ) Christ and will hopefully be complete at the 'day of Christ' (on the debated ethical usage of καρπός, see §6.4.1 below). This day, which Paul describes elsewhere as the 'day of the Lord Jesus [Christ]' (1 Cor 1.8 [textual variant]) and the 'day of the Lord' (1 Thes 5.2; 1 Cor 5.5), appears to be both the day of Christ's return and the day of the last judgement called 'day of the Lord' in the 'Old Testament' (e.g. LXX *Isaiah* 13.6: ἡμέρα Κυρίου).<sup>286</sup>

Whereas here we see the close affinity between ethical righteousness and divine judgement as both related to Christ, as the argument of the letter evolves, we encounter a political semantic domain which sheds light on this connection. After Paul's appeal to 'join in imitating me' (Phil 3.17: Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε), he describes the opposite mental attitude of 'those who have their minds set on earthly things' (Phil 3.19: οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονούντες). After this topos of moral imitation (see chapter 6 below), Paul's framing seems to take a political turn, with Christ as ultimate Saviour and Lord who subjects everything (τὰ πάντα) to himself:

But our citizenship is in heaven (ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει), and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour (σωτήρα), the Lord (κύριον) Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory (ὃς μετασχηματίζει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ), by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself (κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα). (*Philippians* 3.20–21)

According to Paul, it is one and the same power (*energeia*) that enables Christ to subject everything under his rule and transform his citizens so that they become equal in shape (σύμμορφος) to his 'body of glory'. Already in Xenophon, but particularly in the Neopythagorean discourse of the *nomos empsychos*, this transformative aspect of kingship was emphasized. Plutarch used remarkably similar vocabulary to express how subjects 'unite with him [Numa] in conforming themselves (συμμετασχηματίζονται) to a blameless and

<sup>286</sup> On the 'referential shift' from God to Christ in Paul's usage of the theme of the Day of the Lord in the 'Old Testament' (an anachronistic term I use in the absence of a better alternative, 'Hebrew Bible' being unfitting for the Greek Septuagint), see Kreitzer 1987, 112–129.

blessed life (...) attended by righteousness and temperance (μετὰ δικαιοσύνης καὶ μετριότητος).<sup>287</sup> Plutarch then proceeds:

Such a life is the noblest end of all government (ἐν ᾧ τὸ κάλλιστον ἀπάσης πολιτείας τέλος ἐστί), and he is most a king (βασιλικώτατος ἀπάντων) who can effectuate such a life and such a disposition in his subjects (ὁ τοῦτον τὸν βίον καὶ ταύτην τὴν διάθεσιν τοῖς ὑπηκόοις ἐνεργάσασθαι δυνάμενος). (Plutarch, *Numa* 20.8, see also §3.3.6 *supra*)

Plutarch and Paul agree that a true Lord has the power (δύνασθαι) to effectuate (ἐνεργεῖσθαι) a metamorphosis in his subjects after his own image (on *energeia* and *pistis*, see §5.3.4).

In *Philippians*, we thus see a combination of the eschatological coming of the heavenly Lord of all, the ultimate just ruler, and the eventual transformation this will entail for those who belong to his heavenly *politeuma*.<sup>288</sup> This eventual transformation appears to be the final stage of a transformation that has already started now, as the Philippians are called to 'live as good citizens (πολιτεύεσθε) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (...) competing together with one mind in the faithfulness expressed in the good news (συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου)' (Phil 1.27; on this text and translation, see §6.4.1). Here also, political imagery and the athletic metaphor that was often used for expressing moral exercise (see §6.3.2) combine to explain the ethical transformation that takes place under Christ's rule.

The discourse of the 'living law' thus offers cohesion to the frequent references in *Philippians* to the diverse roles of Christ as enabler of internal moral transformation, inaugurator of divine judgement, and eschatological ruler of all. Therefore, an interpretation of *pistis Christou* along these lines as 'trusting participation in the living divine law' is not implausible. So, would this interpretation fit passages on faith, law, and justice in *Romans*?

In a text I discussed in the previous subsection in relation to the discourse of 'internal law', we encountered people who 'show that what the law requires is written on their hearts' (Rom 2.15: τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις

<sup>287</sup> Plutarch, *Numa* 20.8.

<sup>288</sup> Cicero speaks in similar terms about the deification of human beings as people 'who are believed to have been admitted to celestial citizenship in recent times, by a sort of extension of the franchise' (*On the Nature of the Gods* 3.40: *quos quasi novos et adscripticios cives in caelum receptos putant*). Paul, however, probably did not think of this transformation as a transformation into divinity.

αὐτῶν). Paul states that the thoughts (λογισμοί) of these people who, according to my argument, follow the divine-internal-universal law, ‘will accuse or perhaps excuse them on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ (διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ), will judge the secret thoughts of all (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων)’. The precise role of Christ in this judgement is left vague, yet the reason for connecting Christ to knowledge of the internal reflections of people is evident when we think of Christ as ‘living law’: one of the functions of a ‘living law’ which the written law cannot perform is to enforce justice by effectively punishing transgressions. Xenophon said that Cyrus regarded the good ruler as a ‘law with eyes for men’ (βλέποντα νόμον ἀνθρώποις).<sup>289</sup> Plato’s *Statesman* focuses on the importance of *kairos*, specific circumstances, which a ruler should take into account. Porphyry describes the limits of written law, as it ‘punishes him who transgresses it, but it cannot reach a man’s secret thoughts and intentions’.<sup>290</sup>

The description of the relationship between Christ and *nomos* in *Romans* 10 is rather abstract: ‘Christ is the end of the law (τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστός) so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes (εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι)’ (Rom 10.4). The statement concludes the description of how Paul’s fellow Jews did not attain righteousness:

Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it (ἔθνη τὰ μὴ διώκοντα δικαιοσύνην κατέλαβεν δικαιοσύνην), that is, righteousness through faith (δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως); but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not arrive at the law (Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν). Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works (οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐξ ἔργων). (...) they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened (ἀλλ’ οὐ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν). For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God (ἀγνοοῦντες γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην), and seeking to establish their own (τὴν ἰδίαν ζητοῦντες στήσαι), they have not submitted (ὑπετάγησαν) to God’s righteousness. (*Romans* 9.30–32, 10.2–3)

As much as possible, I try to avoid the thorny issue of Paul’s exact view of Israel in these parts of the letter. That said, it is safe to say that these contrasts are very similar to what we encountered before. The contrasts between law

<sup>289</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.1.22.

<sup>290</sup> Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella* 25.

and faith and between faith and works can be read as analogous to those contrasts found in the texts we discussed in the previous subsection (Gal 3.21–28 and Rom 3.21–31), which articulate the opposition between written-external and unwritten-internal law. Furthermore, the righteousness that is described as ‘their own’ is very much in accordance with the manner in which Paul describes his own righteousness in *Philippians*, namely as ‘a righteousness of my own that comes from the law’ (Phil 3.9: ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου). In both passages, this ‘personal righteousness’ is contrasted with divine righteousness (Rom 10.3: τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην; Phil 3.9: τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει).

Rather than the traditional reading of these notions as ‘self-righteousness’ in the sense of ‘working hard to attain justification while not being dependent on divine grace’, what seems to be the issue is not the lack of trust in God, but purely that this righteousness is not reached by trusting and imitating Christ as the living embodiment of the transcendent law. It is not their effort or self-centred motivation which is rejected by Paul; in fact, they all have perfectly ‘robust consciences’. Moreover, I would argue that it is not that they all failed regarding righteousness in any real sense—as the NRSV translates, they ‘did not succeed in fulfilling that law’—instead, while they strive for righteousness based on the written law, they simply did not attain or arrive at the ultimate unwritten and living law, that is, Christ. Like Paul, most of them have every reason to ‘be confident in the flesh’ (Phil 3.4: ἔχων πεποίθησιν καὶ ἐν σαρκί), but they lack ‘the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord’ (Phil 3.8: τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου). As Ecphantas states, ‘those who imitate do everything better than those left to themselves’ (οἱ δὲ μιμήμενοι αὐταυτῶν κρέσσον τῶδε πάντα ἐργάζονται).<sup>291</sup> Only by becoming subject to this ‘living law’ can people ‘do everything better’, for they are changed internally, by the ‘internal law’ of faith, into his image. This is, in Paul’s eyes, Israel’s ‘lack of understanding’ (οὐ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν), the divine righteousness they ‘did not know’ (ἀγνοοῦντες) and to which they ‘did not subject’ (ὑπετάγησαν).

If we now return to the phrase ‘Christ is the end of the law (τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστός)’ (Rom 10.4), this seems to be a logical conclusion in both senses of *telos*: aim and termination. As the ultimate embodiment of the divine law, Christ is the perfect aim or fulfilment of that law both in its divine and written form, yet as the final shape of the law, he is also the expiration of particular written laws such as the Mosaic Law. We have seen that participants in the ‘living law’ discourse differed as to the precise relationship between the ruler and

291 Ecphantas apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.7.65, ed. Delatte 1942, p. 50. English translation is my own.

the written law. Either the authors emphasize that the ideal ruler is in absolute submission to this law (e.g. Cicero but also Philo's Moses), or they focus on the ideal ruler as the means by which subjects can truly become virtuous, eventually rendering written laws superfluous (e.g. the Neopythagoreans and Plutarch). The tension in this latter strand of the discourse helps to explain Paul's own ambiguous stance towards the Mosaic Law. Just as Plutarch states that 'justice is the end of law', so Paul can state that 'Christ is the end of law'.<sup>292</sup> In the end, the Mosaic law 'does not do the work of the law' (cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.15.6–9 and Rom 2.15) in effectuating an age of justice and faith for all, which is the end of the divine law brought about by Christ the Lord. Like Philo and Seneca, however, Paul maintains that the rule of a 'living law' is a feature of an otherworldly, utopian society. Yet unlike these authors who focused on an idealized past, he locates the Golden Age of the 'living law' in the present or rather in the 'future-starting-now'.

Not only does this interpretation of the *telos* of the law fit within the preceding argument, it also offers a segue into the remainder of *Romans* 10 in which *pistis* language is so prominent: *pistis* as an interior answer of loyalty to Christ, the new ruler and living law (on which, see §7.4.1 and §7.4.3 in the chapter on the socio-political semantic domain of *pistis*, which is naturally closely related to the concept of 'living law'). This same ruler is Lord of all, Jew and pagan alike (Rom 10.12): it is significant that in citing *Isaiah* (28.16 LXX: καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυθῆ) Paul adds 'all' (Rom 10.11: πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυθήσεται).<sup>293</sup> *Pistis*, confidence in and commitment to this living law, is the appropriate attitude for a transethnic 'all', not an additional way for pagans while for Jews the written law would suffice (for further thoughts on this universal aspect and the Radical New Perspective, see §3.4.4).

Can this discourse of the living law shed light on the now-familiar passage at the end of *Romans* 3? What is remarkable here is how the repeated chorus is concerned with God's justice or righteousness, which is revealed (v. 21, see §3.4.1) and of which God meant to give a 'demonstration' (*endeixis*):

He did this to show his righteousness (εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ), because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to show his righteousness (πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ) at the present time: that he himself is righteous (εἰς τὸ

292 Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 780E: δίκη μὲν οὖν νόμου τέλος ἐστί.

293 As already noted in Trebilco 2012, 76: 'He does this to emphasise the universality of salvation.'

εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον) and that he justifies the one through *pistis* in/of Jesus (δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ). (*Romans* 3.25–26)

Here again, I try to avoid those exegetical difficulties on which my focus and approach have no direct bearing, such as the meaning of ἀπολύτρωσις (v. 24) and ἰλαστήριον (v. 25). What is noteworthy, however, is how the demonstration of divine righteousness entails two aspects: God is righteous and he intends to make people righteous. In both aspects, Christ plays the central part. In Christ, God shows himself as just, and in Christ, God makes people just. This is indeed in essence what a leader, as living law, is expected to do: to represent God to his subjects, in particular the justice of God, by mirroring it and to thereby allow these subjects to imitate divine justice so that they become just themselves. In this process, *pistis* stands for the reciprocal relationship of trusting allegiance between the just Lord and his people, through which the transformative process of justification takes place.<sup>294</sup>

The frame of the 'living law' thus surpasses not only a subjective interpretation of the genitive construction (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ), but the narrow focus on 'Christ's obedience' of the objectivist interpretation as well.<sup>295</sup> Perhaps more importantly, it allows for Paul to remain consistent with Jewish contemporaries' views on Abraham and the law. We have seen that in 2 *Baruch* Abraham is described as living by the 'unwritten law' and how in Philo's *On the Life of Abraham* he is 'one who obeyed the law, some will say, but rather, as our discourse has shown, himself a law and an unwritten statute' (276: νόμος αὐτὸς ὢν καὶ θεσμὸς ἀγγραφος). This idea of Abraham keeping the law in Philo and 2 *Baruch* (among others) is often cited in order to show how Paul's hermeneutics differed from these authors or works by framing Abraham as the one who is righteous 'by faith' and not 'by law'.<sup>296</sup> Yet 2 *Baruch* explicitly mentions the concept of 'unwritten law' (2 *Baruch* 57.2) which is in line with Paul's argument as I have construed it here. In Philo's work in particular, it is evident that faith and faithfulness, trust and obedience are intertwined and that they together

294 Morgan (2015, 291) suggests reading *pistis* in this passage in its reified sense of 'pledge/assurance' given by Christ to the faithful that if they exercise *pistis*, they will be made just. The 'lens' of the living law discourse, however, has the advantage of offering an additional explanation of how Christ may effectuate such a process of 'making just'.

295 Cf. e.g. Campbell 1992a, 186: 'πίστις no doubt describes Christ's obedience or faithfulness.' And cf. at 187: 'while the dominant sense of πίστις in 3.21–26 seems to be the obedience of Christ in accepting and going to the Cross (...), a broader sense of obedience cannot be excluded from vv. 22b and 26d. (...) [H]is entire life also functions as a revelation of God's saving purpose and activity.'

296 E.g. Hong 1993, 112; Witherington III & Hyatt 2004, 115; Muddiman 2006, 96.



admonish people to live the precepts of unwritten law. Philo praises the exemplary faith Abraham had in God or God's promises (271: τῆς πρὸς θεὸν πίστεως; 276: τί προσήκεν ἀνθρώπους ἢ βεβαιοτάτα πιστεύειν) and his obedience: both are connected to him following and even becoming the divine, unwritten law.

While Paul would not go so far as to depict Abraham as a living law, there is a similar fluency in how Paul uses *pistis* language to describe Abraham's faith and his faithfulness. On the one hand, Abraham 'trusted God' (Gal 3.6: ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, cf. LXX Gen 15.6); on the other, he is deemed faithful (3.9: τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ). To translate this adjective, *pistos*, as 'believing' misses the point entirely: Abraham did not 'believe' in God but was rather faithful to their reciprocal trust-relationship. In this passage from *Galatians*, Paul consistently calls pagan Christ-followers 'those out of faith' (Gal 3.7,9: οἱ ἐκ πίστεως). By avoiding the active participle here, while the Septuagint citation would prompt an active voice, Paul chooses the noun to signify that these are the people who now, in Abraham's footsteps and by being 'in Christ', participate in the divine-human relationship of trust.

Similarly, in the passage from *Romans* under discussion, in the designation 'the one who lives out of a *pistis* relationship with Christ' (Rom 3.26: τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ), *pistis* refers to Christ's just and faithful disposition as living law (his 'obedience'), the Christ-follower's trust in Christ as living law, and his/her imitation of this disposition (for a more elaborate discussion of *pistis Christou*, sustained ambiguity, and the discourse of moral imitation, see chapter 6 below).

#### 3.4.4 *The Good of All, Especially Those of the Family of Pistis (Gal 6.10): the Law of Christ as Universal Justice Working through Oikeiōsis*

The final issue related to the justification by faith debate is perhaps the most difficult, for it lies at the heart of the New Perspective orientation. Was Paul arguing against Jewish moralism or Jewish particularism? Did he intend to preach a morally unconditional or an ethnically universal type of justice? Before we attempt to answer this question informed by the Graeco-Roman discourses pertaining to the semantic domain of justice, let us first consider the broader perspective of the scope of doing what is good to others in Paul's letters. For although Paul does not always distinguish between doing good to insiders and outsiders (e.g. 1 Thes 5.15: 'always seek to do good to one another and to all'), at times he does seem to distinguish between laws or directions which benefit a universal 'all' and those that benefit a smaller ingroup of Christ-followers.

One of such supposedly 'less universal' passages is found in *Romans* chapters 12 and 13. Following Runar Thorsteinsson, Engberg-Pederson is con-

vinced that Paul proposes a different attitude towards both the ingroup and outsiders: ingroup-behaviour is to be governed by ‘love’ (ἀγάπη), while behaviour towards outsiders should be determined by ‘the good’ (το ἀγαθόν), which is paraphrased by Engberg-Pederson as ‘what is conventionally—and of course quite rightly—taken to be “good”’.<sup>297</sup> In this way, Engberg-Pederson argues, Paul sharply distinguishes between an internally directed, subjective love-ethic and an externally directed, objective goodness-ethic, with the effect of ‘very sharply distancing Christ believers from their surroundings’.<sup>298</sup> I agree with the basic point Thorsteinsson and Engberg-Pedersen make in this context concerning the unity between chapters 12 and 13 and the relevance of Stoic themes for understanding this section.<sup>299</sup> The distinction between love for insiders and ‘what is good’ for outsiders, however, is less clear. Instead, Paul seems to ‘oscillate’ between insider- and outsider-language.<sup>300</sup> This is most clearly evident when he first talks of ‘the needs of the saints’ and then immediately about ‘hospitality’ or ‘love for strangers’ (12.13: φιλοξενία). Moreover, while there may be a ‘transition’ (a literary feature emphasized by Engberg-Pederson) between verse 13.7 and 13.8, the ‘love’ in verse 8 is not necessarily only directed towards insiders, as the expression ‘Owe no one anything’ (13.8: μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε) sounds pretty inclusive, in particular in view of the verbal contrast with ‘Pay to all what is due to them’ (13.7: ἀπόδοτε πᾶσι τὰς ὀφειλάς), which clearly concerns outsiders.<sup>301</sup>

Not only is ‘love’ not restricted to insiders, the idea of ‘the good’ seems to permeate the section as a whole, for it is already part of the first programmatic statement in 12.2, where a renewal of the mind is foregrounded, meant to ‘to discern what is the will of God—what is good (τὸ ἀγαθόν) and acceptable and perfect’. If what is good is part of the will of God, it seems to be more than an attitude reserved for irrelevant, temporal affairs. Further on, the audience is told to cling to the good (12.9: κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ) and to overcome the evil of others with good (12.21). Finally, if you indeed do this good, the magistrates

297 Engberg-Pedersen 2006b, 116. Cf. for a similar argument Thorsteinsson 2006, 146, repeated in Thorsteinsson 2010b, 193.

298 Engberg-Pedersen 2006b, 166.

299 I also agree with his syntactic choice to read verses 12.6–9a and 9b–14 as ‘anacoluthic crescendo’s’: see Engberg-Pedersen 2006b, 165.

300 As Bertschmann (2014, 247) also observes in critical conversation with Thorsteinsson.

301 Cf. Thorsteinsson (2006), who mentions the option of μηδενὶ (13.8) being a dative of respect (at 145, n. 23) and simply states and does not actually substantiate that τὸν ἕτερον (Rom 13.8) and τὸν πλησίον (Rom 13.9) ‘must here refer to people within the group addressed, viz. fellow Christ-believers’ (at 146).

will approve of this (13.3), for the authority is God's servant for you towards the good (13.4: θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν).

The internal logic of this part of *Romans* becomes clearer when we connect these recurring instances of 'the good' with the discourse of 'unwritten law', in particular 'universal law'. In the previous chapter, I have given considerable attention to the passage in which Paul presents his cult as reasonable worship to which the measure of faithfulness applies (*Romans* 12.1–3). Here, it is good to recall that in speaking of a 'measure of faith' (12.3: μέτρον πίστεως), Paul refers to an objective, God-given measure, available to all as standard for the mind. The notion of measure, together with the markers in its context—mind (νοῦς) and thinking temperately (σωφρονεῖν)—place this passage in the context of the philosophical discussions of justice and the law. As we have seen in the previous chapter, for Plato, living according to 'measure' is living temperately, justly, and in accordance with God.<sup>302</sup> Even though Paul is not referring to the law or to justice in most of *Romans* 12–13, and even though he need not have been familiar with specific works of Plato or his followers, the semantic field involved relates to the question of how people can be made to live virtuously and what external or internal means can be of assistance in this process. Expressed in Stoic terms, the idea of a 'measure of faithfulness' comes close to the idea of a 'common law', similar as these concepts are in their connection to reason (Rom 12.3: φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν) and their universal availability (Rom 12.3: ἐκάστω).

Paul eventually defines this common law as the ultimate fulfilment of written Jewish law in terms of *agapē* (Rom 13.8). That said, the authority of Roman rule and their provincial representatives, which seems to frame Paul's reasoning in *Romans* 13.1–7, can be considered as a particular system of written, external law as well. At least ideally, such written types of law capture some idea of what is ultimately or divinely 'good' and have limited external means to achieve this good in their subjects. The idea of authority as 'God's servant towards the good' (Rom 13.4) can hence be understood in line with Porphyry's remark that if you follow the divine law, there is no need to fear the written law. Indeed, Porphyry reasons, good people do not need these external laws to be good, but are protected by it from other wrongdoers.<sup>303</sup> Likewise, Paul states that those who do act wrongly may expect to be judged by the authorities. By following the common, internal, and divine law of love, Paul's addressees not only live by particular written laws, they even surpass them in

<sup>302</sup> See Plato, *Laws* 716C–D and §2.4.5 *supra*.

<sup>303</sup> Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella* 27.

virtue. They not only 'do no wrong to a neighbour' (13.10), but are transformed and made righteous internally. The discourse of unwritten law thus offers a further explanatory scheme that perfectly fits current exegeses of *Romans* 13. Dorothea Bertschmann, for instance, concludes thus:

The Christian paradigm of love, then, is the greater reality which encloses almost as a 'by-product' good and generally approved behaviour in the civic and political world. In other words, the 'good' and 'bad' as perceived by the political authorities are subsets of the Christian good, which is lived out in love. (Bertschmann 2014, 248)

This 'greater reality' concurs with an unwritten, divine law, which by its nature surpasses any written law, any 'subset'.

This interpretation based on the discourse of unwritten law also puts Paul's controversial views on obeying the legal government in *Romans* 13.1–7 in a different light. The main controversy in the section on the legal authorities is of course whether Paul actually wants to protect the status quo (or at least appease the Roman usurpers) by teaching his followers to submit to their laws. At first glance, he seems to do so, yet in other places of the same letter Paul teaches an ethic of nonconformity (Rom 12.2) and condemns pagan practices (Rom 1.18–32). Is Paul really saying that all Roman, pagan state-laws are good or even divinely sanctioned? I am not able to fully answer this historically and theologically hazardous question here, yet based on the discourse discussed in this chapter, I can offer some critical remarks on this interpretation. Graeco-Roman discourses confirm that written laws are generally considered instrumental in facilitating a virtuous life. External laws aim for the same goal as unwritten law: delivering virtue or at least protecting good citizens.<sup>304</sup> Notwithstanding this instrumental function, though, the ultimate transformation takes place inside the soul. To that end, laws and human governments remain very external and limited. In Paul's *Romans*, just as in Plato's *Laws*, God is in the end the true ruler of man, and rulers can be considered servants to the divine law. In Plato's elevated words: 'wherever the law is lord over the magistrates, and the magistrates are servants to the law, there I descry salvation and all the

---

<sup>304</sup> Considering this latter function, there seems to be logic in the argument that analogous to other Jewish responses to the empire Paul's strategy is 'to encourage submission, for now, to the authorities, rather than desperate resistance; and thus to safeguard the most vulnerable around and among the Roman Christians, those Jews struggling to rebuild their shattered community in the wake of imperial violence.' See Elliott 1997, 203.

blessings that the gods bestow on states.<sup>305</sup> Thus, even though Paul is addressing people in a concrete situation, his language here reflects philosophical, utopian conceptions of society. His general and philosophically inspired terminology does not make allowances for unjust states and constitutions. This passage thus expresses Paul's view on the ideal state, in which citizens are induced both internally and externally to lead a righteous life. By setting his 'standard of faith', he takes the measure of each temporary and worldly state, including the Roman empire.

To come back to the question of the universality of the scope of the admonitions to 'love', it is here that Engberg-Pedersen and Thorsteinsson detect a deviation from Stoic ethics. In the latter's words, 'whereas the ethics of the Roman Stoics is universal in its scope, Paul's "love ethic" is not.'<sup>306</sup> In reply, I would argue that it is precisely Stoic thought that offers the crux for understanding how, for Paul, the good of the Christ-communities relates to the good of all.<sup>307</sup> In these chapters of *Romans*, the admonitions follow a widening circle of spheres to which 'love' or 'good' is due: from the internal law (12.1–3), the argument develops via the sphere of the Pauline community (12.4–13) and sphere of behaviour towards outsiders (12.14–21) to dealing with the state (13.1–7), concluding with a general appeal to uphold the common law of love now that time is short (13.8–14). The fellowship with the insiders should result in love towards strangers (12.13), even in acts of love towards enemies (12.20): in this love towards all, the law is fulfilled (13.8). These steps follow a familiar pattern. The widening circles of people to whom care or affection is due strongly remind us of the Stoic ideal of *oikeiōsis*.

To briefly recall some contributions to this discourse of *oikeiōsis*, Plutarch writes that Chrysippus would not stop speaking of a 'natural congeniality to ourselves (οἰκειούμεθα πρὸς αὐτοὺς), to our members, and to our own offspring'.<sup>308</sup> Antiochus's account as preserved by Cicero described *oikeiōsis* as a natural development for each human being, starting at birth and then moving from the house as a whole (*tota domus*), determined by close family relationships, to the world outside (*serpit sensim foras*), eventually leading to

305 Plato, *Laws* 715d: ἐν ᾗ δὲ ἂν δεσπότης τῶν ἀρχόντων, οἱ δὲ ἄρχοντες δοῦλοι τοῦ νόμου, σωτηρίαν καὶ πάνθ' ὅσα θεοὶ πόλεσιν ἔδοσαν ἀγαθὰ γιγνόμενα καθορῶ.

306 Thorsteinsson 2006, 159.

307 It is worth noting that in his *Paul and the Stoics* (2000), Engberg-Pedersen used the theory of *oikeiōsis* to argue for a similar basic structure underlying Stoicism and Pauline thought (57–70). Furthermore, in discussion with Philip Esler, Engberg-Pedersen (2005) went to great lengths to demonstrate that, particularly in *Romans* 12, Paul and the Stoics are much alike, even when it comes to the structure of *oikeiōsis*.

308 Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1038B, cf. SVF 3.179.

embracing the whole human race.<sup>309</sup> Both Philo and other Platonic thinkers reworked this Stoic idea into a more theocentric model: Philo spoke of ‘becoming God’s family’ (πρὸς θεὸν οἰκείωσιν) and the writer of the anonymous commentary to the Theaetetus connected *oikeiōsis* to *homoīōsis theōi*, becoming like God.

While not contributing explicitly to this discourse, in *Romans* 12–13 Paul seems to follow the Stoic idea of naturally widening circles of care and love for others. There is no strict separation between offering care to insiders and to outsiders, as the one naturally follows from the other. This model is compatible with the obvious distinctions between different target groups such as ‘saints’ and ‘enemies’, while also explaining the lack of clear demarcations in what is due to each and the general flow in the argument in this part of the letter from individual, to community, to the public realm and eventually to the overall command to love all. The rule to ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ (Rom 13.9) as a summary of the law could in fact be read as another wording of *oikeiōsis*, which also speaks of self-love which gradually extends to more and more people.<sup>310</sup>

This interpretation along the lines of *oikeiōsis* neatly fits another Pauline admonition in *Galatians*, where the distinction between insiders and outsiders is made more explicitly than in *Romans* 12–13. As a piece of closing advice, Paul emphasizes how the ultimate goal is to ‘work for the good of all’ (ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας), particularly ‘for the family members of *pistis*’ (πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως) (Gal 6.10). As Teresa Morgan has argued regarding this text and many others, it is anachronistic to translate *pistis* here as ‘the faith’ understood as the main message or body of doctrines Paul preached.<sup>311</sup> Rather, especially in this close syntactical relationship with *oikeioi*, ‘household-members’, it refers to the covenant, the bond of trust, between God, Christ, and the Galatian community and between the members themselves.

The contrast between the ‘all’ from the first half of the sentence and the *pistis* community suggests that ‘all’ implies everyone else. There is a universal concern here, though it only becomes clear in the second half: the primary address of ‘the good’ is the *oikos* of trust. It is by practising the virtue of trust in these small communities that eventually ‘all’ will benefit. As in Stoic *oikeiōsis*, people start by building relationships of trust and love with those closest to

309 Cicero, *On Ends* 5,65.

310 Augustine indeed regarded the biblical love-command in line with Stoic and Aristotelean *oikeiōsis*; see Clair 2016, 46–47.

311 On this text in particular, see Morgan 2017b, 176. For my own evaluation of such an interpretation of *pistis* in Paul, see §6.4.1 (on Phil 1.27) and §7.4.1 (on Gal 1.23).

them, but the ultimate aim is loving the whole human race. In Pauline thought, as in Stoic thought on the city of sages, however, there are levels of participation (see §3.3.5 above): the Christ-communities are only for those who are trustworthy and who put their trust in Christ, whereas ‘the good’ is eventually meant for all people, as all people have a *nous*, albeit a debased one. As trustful *oikeioi*, the community members should have a growing concern for all which implies a process of *oikeiōsis* or familiarization.

If we take the broader context of *Galatians* chapters 5 and 6 into account and see how Paul’s *nomos* vocabulary is used, we see how interconnected the discourses of unwritten law and *oikeiōsis* are. This is the only other instance (besides Rom 13.9) where Paul refers to *Leviticus* 19.18 as the one *logos* in which the whole law is fulfilled (Gal 5.14: ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται), and it is here used again in the context of doing good first to one’s closest relations and eventually to all (Gal 6.10), which amounts to *oikeiōsis*. The broader argument is that the written, Mosaic law cannot be upheld only in part (5.3) and that there is a tension between the route of the written law and the realm of Christ/grace/the Spirit (5.4,18). The written law is then summed up in the principle of other-regarding love (5.14), which is contrasted with the (unwritten) law of Christ (6.2).

This ‘law of Christ’ (τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) is a law that is to be fulfilled in the first place inside the Christ-community by bearing each other’s burdens (6.2), though the addressees seem to fail even at this love for insiders (5.15,26). We have already suggested (in §3.4.2) that the ‘law of Christ’ is one of Paul’s names for the unwritten, internal law that teaches virtue. Indeed, the vocabulary of ‘work’ (6.4) and ‘sow-reap’ (6.7–9) here perfectly fits this semantic domain of moral progress, as I outline in one of the chapters to follow (see in particular §6.4.1). From the limitations of the written law, Paul’s argument thus moves towards the more effective, internal law of Christ.

So, what were these limitations of the written law precisely? In a previous subsection (§3.4.2), I argued that one limitation of the written law was its failure to create internal, lasting moral transformation of whole communities. Did Paul perceive the ethnic particularism of written law, the fact that the Mosaic Law was entrusted to the Jewish people, as a shortcoming as well? This leads us back to Paul’s ‘justification by faith’ language and the debate surrounding the New Perspective, in particular the question whether the works of the law are rejected because they are Paul’s shorthand for self-righteous moralism or for ethnic particularism. Does Paul’s *pistis* vocabulary in these contexts emphasize the individual undeservedness or the ethnic universality of God’s grace? The answer, I argue, lies precisely in the discourse of unwritten law: this discourse

unites the idea that such a divine law transcends external and particularistic limitations of written laws by being internal and universal at the same time.

A familiar passage from *Romans*, central to the previous subsections in this chapter, offers further relevant specifications of the revealed divine justice. It is expressed in terms of being ‘outside the law’ (3.21: χωρὶς νόμου), ‘outside the works of the law’ (3.28: χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου), in terms of an ‘absence of distinction’ (3.22: οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή), and as pertaining to Jew and gentile alike:

Or is God the God of Jews only; is he not the God of gentiles also (ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν)? Yes, of gentiles also, since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through faith (ὃς δικαιοῦσει περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως). Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law. (*Romans* 3.29–31)

The manner in which these verses relate to the preceding argument has been discussed frequently in the ‘justification by faith’ debate. To articulate two opposing views, N.T. Wright would consider these verses a *non sequitur* if the boasting in the preceding verse is the boasting of the successful moralist and the justification is individual in nature. Instead, if the boasting is that of the ethnocentric Jew, it makes perfect sense to continue arguing that such a racial boast would require a racial God.<sup>312</sup> Simon Gathercole, however, responds that these verses can follow from such an individual-anthropological argument, for then their effect would be to reduce *ad absurdum* the idea that only upholding the Mosaic Law can offer salvation, since the gentiles would in that case be completely cut off from God.<sup>313</sup> This exchange of views, however, only serves to show how interconnected moralism and particularism actually are. The boast of individually upholding the Torah is intrinsically related to the boast of having received this Torah as a people in the first place.<sup>314</sup> The verse does not conclusively demonstrate that universalism is being foregrounded by Paul when he speaks of justification by faith, yet it does conclusively connect the issue of obtaining divine salvation with the issue of a multi-ethnic world filled with ethnic particularities. *Pistis* is Paul’s answer to ancient multiculturalism.

<sup>312</sup> Wright 1997, 129.

<sup>313</sup> Gathercole 2002a, 231–232.

<sup>314</sup> Gathercole mostly argues against an exclusively ethnic interpretation of the ‘boasting’ and appears to agree that there is an interconnectedness between what he calls a boast in ‘obedience’ and a boast in ‘election’: see Gathercole 2002a, 194: ‘there can be no confidence in relation to the nations that is not also confidence in God because disobedience to the covenant leads to God giving Israel into the hands of the nations.’



Paul is consistently speaking of the law of works as a type of law that only pertains to one nation, the nation of Israel. But the God of Paul is God of the non-Jewish nations too. Consequently, it makes sense that his 'law of faith' ought to be understood not only as an internal law, but as a common law to all. More precisely, it is defined by its ability to include all nations in God's righteous rule. It is similar to the Stoic natural law in this unifying characteristic. This is the law that Paul has in mind when he asks, in his typical, diatribe-styled manner, 'Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law!' (Rom 3.31). The universal law of *pistis* upholds the Jewish law as it teaches to do right and teaches this universally, not only to Jews but to gentiles too.

Paul's reference to the Shema in this passage (Rom 3.30) is obviously to be understood firstly as a reference to this important Jewish confession, confirming the unity of the sovereign Jewish God.<sup>315</sup> Yet, this appeal may very well have served a double purpose: it reminds Jews (or the imaginary Jewish interlocutor) that proclaiming one God implies one God for all people, while at the same time evoking the wider Hellenistic discourse of universal justice and universal law. Just like in the ideal, eschatological community of Diogenes of Oenoanda, full justice cannot be realized with laws based on divisions between people. And like Alexander the Great, who, according to Plutarch following Zeno, did not distinguish between Greek and Barbarian, but built one community with one law, Paul also proposes one common 'law of *pistis*' (Rom 3.27). Based on this ancient discourse, we can concur with Badiou in his comments on *Romans* 3.27–30 (27–30): '[t]he One is that which inscribes no difference in the subjects to which it addresses itself. The One is only insofar as it is for all: such is the maxim of universality when it has its root in the event.'<sup>316</sup>

In light of the utopian, universalistic tendencies in Paul's Graeco-Roman *Umwelt*, and the analogy of his reasoning with the concept of common law, it seems probable that Paul was, as the 'New Perspective' argues, indeed arguing against Jewish—and, important to note, also against gentile<sup>317</sup>—ethnocentrism. His universalism did not merely concern the *scope*, but also the *content* of his message.<sup>318</sup> Paul's justice extends not only to every

315 I agree with Mark Seifrid here, who calls it a 'quintessentially Jewish theme' (1992, 223).

316 Badiou 2003, 76.

317 See Van Kooten 2010b, on the necessity of 'broadening the New Perspective on Paul'.

318 In his defence of the views of a new version of the traditional perspective versus the merits of the New Perspective, Simon Gathercole (2004) describes this universal thrust as merely the 'scope' of justification, whereas the content involves the justification of the individual believer, thus driving a wedge between verses 27–28 and 29–30 (at 155–156):

individual but to the nations by offering a collective 'law of faith' and is as such truly universally configured.

Moreover, if Paul is indeed emphasizing the collective-universal nature of justice, this would be a better match with the New Perspective interpretation of the law than with the not truly universal alternative of the Radical New Perspective, according to which only gentiles are addressed by Paul's 'justification by faith' model. If there is a divine law of faith, this law cannot in the end be restricted to one section of humanity. Paul may have granted that the Mosaic Law is as good a written law as presently available, but, more than Philo, he understood that no written law could ever be truly transethnic. Yet, with Christ as the embodiment of that law, this paradox was solved: 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation (*καὶνὴ κτίσις*) is everything!' (Gal 6.15).

When it comes to *pistis* language, it also seems that Paul was not, as the Radical New Perspective holds, offering *pistis* as a different or additional solution to gentiles, while the Jews could still be justified and saved based on their existing covenantal relationship. Some discern this distinction in the two different prepositions used in the text at hand (Rom 3:30), 'out of' (*ἐκ*) and 'through' (*διὰ*): this variance would confirm the difference in the way faith(fulness) effects salvation.<sup>319</sup> Yet, as Douglas Campbell has convincingly argued, these are mere paradigmatic variations.<sup>320</sup> Furthermore, Paul does not uphold a consistent distinction in his usage of *pistis* language. He rather emphasizes the similarity of Jew and Greek, as for instance in his 'programmatic statement' in *Romans* just after the letter's opening:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith (*εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι*), to the Jew

---

'I would certainly affirm that gentile inclusion is prominent in 3:29–30, but that cannot serve to minimize the anthropological content of the doctrine of justification in 3:27–28. (...) Rather, the *content* of the doctrine of justification by faith should be distinguished from its *scope*.'

319 Stowers 1989, 674: 'It is clear, however, that he does not assimilate the two [Jews and gentiles] into a generic Christianity. Both Jews and gentiles share in blessings *ἐκ πίστεως* of Abraham and Jesus, although not in identical ways. Thus, Paul can apply *ἐκ πίστεως* to Jews in 3:30 but not *διὰ πίστεως*.' See also Stowers 1994, 237–241 and cf. Bryan 2000, 113–114.

320 Campbell 1992b, 96: 'In sum, it would seem that the two phrases *ἐκ πίστεως* and *διὰ τῆς πίστεως* function paradigmatically in Paul; that is, they are stylistic variations of the same basic idea, allowing Paul to repeat his point without undue tedium. This is not to say that the variation cannot be motivated, but in terms of their primary meaning they seem to be saying essentially the same thing when they occur.'

first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν); as it is written, 'The one who is righteous will live by faith.' (*Romans* 1.16–17)

Both Jew and gentile are described as a *pisteuōn*, one who has faith, just as both are seen as *pisteuontes* in need of *pistis Christou* in *Romans* 3.22. The argument that there is one 'law of faith' (3.27) is precisely made so that no one can boast on one's special standing. There are not enough contextual markers to uphold a 'radical' difference in the manner in which *pistis* works for Jews on the one hand and gentiles on the other.

Whose *pistis* is Paul talking about in each of the three instances in *Romans* 1.17? Whereas the Hebrew of the text Paul cites from *Habakuk* 2.4 indicates that it is the righteous person's faithfulness, and the Septuagint that it is God's own, Paul omits the pronoun μου, 'my', from his citation, whereby he seems to consciously avoid a precise answer to this question.<sup>321</sup> In light of this ambiguity, the phrase 'through faith for faith' may then explicate this double meaning by referring first to the divine faithfulness expressed by Christ and second the human response of faithfulness modelled after Christ, together creating the bond of trust, whereby the righteous person lives.<sup>322</sup>

When it comes to interpreting the first two instances of *pistis* in this verse ('from *pistis* to *pistis*'), however, it is important to take note of research of comparable 'from x to x' expressions in Greek. Based on such an analysis of similar idioms traced by means of the TLG, Charles Quarles (2003, 13) argues that this 'from-to' (ἐκ-εἰς) construction 'often expresses range, duration, repetition, source and destination, previous state and new state or progression' but does not function as an idiom of emphasis. The idea of a 'span' is then used by Quarles to 'dust of' John Chrysostom's interpretation, 'from the faith of the Old Testament believer to the faith of the New Testament believer' (at 19), although he leaves room for the reading 'from God's faithfulness to the faith of the believer (favoured by i.a. Ambrosiaster and Karl Barth).'<sup>323</sup> Based on a similar approach, John Taylor (2004b) concludes that this expression 'has

321 Cf. Morgan 2015, 276: 'avoiding both the Hebrew Bible's specification that the *pistis* is the just man's own and that of the Septuagint that it is God's, is a master stroke. By leaving *pistis* unqualified, Paul allows it to refer equally and simultaneously to the *pistis* of God towards Christ and humanity and that of Christ towards God and humanity which make *dikaiosynē* possible, and that of the human being towards God and Christ' (cf. 286–287).

322 This is also the interpretation of Schumacher (2017, 337–339), who reads it in light of the (according to his argument) specifically Latin asymmetrical configuration of *fides* as an offer of protection.

323 Barth 1933, 41.

three main functions; it can indicate movement, extended time, and progression or increase.<sup>324</sup> As *pistis* is an abstract noun, he opts for the latter meaning. Unlike Quarles, a complete change of perspective, like ‘from the faithfulness of God/Christ to the faith of the believer’ or ‘from the faith of the old to the faith of the new covenant’, is deemed unlikely by Taylor given the absence of any immediate contextual indicators.<sup>325</sup> In light of the preceding expression ‘the Jew first and then the Greek’, Taylor favours terms indicating ‘the progress of the gospel’, expressing Paul’s excitement over the growing number of gentiles in particular. The direct context thus permits the (smaller) change in referent: ‘starting from the faith of the Jews first, and now growing also among the gentiles’.<sup>326</sup>

Perhaps the most satisfying reading is to combine both of these insights. The undefined subject of the noun (resulting from the omission of ‘my’) in the clause that follows suggests ambiguity in whether the *pistis* of God or that of humans is on Paul’s mind. Perhaps the whole divine-human relationship is indicated by *pistis* in this one condensed statement. The preceding clause suggests a growth of *pistis* from Jews to gentiles. Taken together, we can paraphrase *Romans* 1.17 as ‘from the divine-human bond of trust with Jews extending to a bond of trust with gentiles’. Seen in this light, ‘from faith to faith’ perfectly fits a universal configuration of ‘justification by faith’, beginning as the bond of trust expressed in the covenant with the Jews, but now

---

324 Taylor 2004b, 342. Gupta (2020b, ch. 9: ‘And the Righteous Will Live by Trust’) lists four usages and is inclined towards a ‘rhetorical’ usage, which intensifies the meaning: ‘by faith and only faith’, this interpretation is not mentioned by Taylor but convincingly rejected by Quarles.

325 As a result, he rejects the readings by church fathers like Tertullian, John Chrysostom, Origen, and Theodoret, who all understand it as indicating some sort of change between the old and new covenant (see for an overview, Quarles 2003, 2). The change in referent from God (or Christ) to humans was first suggested by Ambrosiaster and made popular again by Karl Barth, but is also favoured in recent times. Cf. Hebert 1955, 375, who argues for ‘from God’s faithfulness to man’s faith’, and Torrance 1957, 113, ‘That is to say, the righteousness of God is revealed from God’s *pistis* to man’s *pistis*, but man’s *pistis* is his implication in the Divine *pistis*.’ Dunn (1988b, 48) opts for a similar change in referents and takes the first *pistis* to refer to God’s faithfulness and the second to ‘man’s response of faith’. Stowers (1994, 202) prefers Christ as the first referent: ‘The righteousness of God is revealed in it (the gospel) by means of (Jesus’) faithfulness resulting in faithfulness.’ So also Witherington III 2009, 217: ‘the cryptic, tightly packed phrase “from the faithful one unto faith” probably alludes to Christ in its first half and prepares for the use of the *pistis Christou* language later about the faithfulness of Christ, referring especially to his death on the cross.’

326 Taylor 2004b, 346, citation from p. 348.

extending a divine-human *pistis* relationship to all the nations outside of any written law.

In the end, the answer to the question whether Paul inveighed against moralism or particularism cannot be phrased in simple terms of either-or. Paul inveighs against the nexus of moralistic particularism and ethnocentric moralism.<sup>327</sup> It is a moralism that can only be understood in the context of a culture that promotes collective ethnic superiority, a cultural boast which was by no means limited to the Jewish *ethnos*. It is a moralism that promoted dualities of righteous Jews versus unrighteous Greeks, or of faithful Romans versus faithless barbarians, not the moralism of the self-righteous individual. Yet, it is also a particularism that was inherently moral as it only made sense when it was bound up with the ultimate question of how to live the good life within God's saving presence. The ethnic boast was a moral boast of collective self-righteousness. *Pistis* is Paul's ultimate antidote to this external and self-centred exclusivity as it effects internal moral change, sets its hope on a divine and righteous king, and offers access to a kingdom open to all nations. These 'transjuridical' and 'transethnic' aspects of *pistis* (as we may also call them) as opposed to 'law' will be further addressed in chapter 7, where I discuss social-political discourses of *pistis*.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that Paul's language on 'justification by faith' is part of a larger metahistorical narrative according to which he perceived and explained the importance of the Christ event. The 'disclosure of God's justice irrespective of the law' (Rom 3.21) is consistent with contemporary Graeco-Roman discourses on the return of a Golden Age in which both justice and faith are prominently present and in which the idea of 'law' is redefined. The Golden Age was an age in which particular written systems of law were no longer relevant, either because one ruler united all as the one, living law, and/or because people would no longer be externally driven but now internally motivated to live a 'good' or virtuous life.

If we use these ideas as an interpretative lens for Paul's 'justification by faith' language, we can understand several phrases and passages as creative reconfigurations of this discourse. I argued that it is Paul's main message that God has

---

327 Cf. Dunn 1998, 388: 'Justification means acceptance into a relationship with God characterized by the grace of Israel's covenant. Justification by faith means gentiles experiencing the blessing promised to Abraham, being granted a share in Israel's inheritance.'

chosen this moment, this *aiōn*, to disclose his righteousness by reintroducing faithfulness embodied in Christ, the living law. This was necessary, because righteousness and faithfulness were largely absent from the world ever since the primordial age of humanity, leading to idolatrous religion, dysfunctional minds, and moral deprivation (a diagnosis widely shared among philosophical schools of the time). The present is the time when the righteousness, which will be fully enacted in the near future, can already be appropriated through *pistis* by all followers of Christ. This appropriation is effective both in the individual, who is internally induced to live righteously and ethically according to the 'law of faith', and in the community, which is encouraged to enact universal justice by incorporating Jew and Greek, by overcoming ethnic differences.

The discourse of 'unwritten law' thus offers a cohesive frame to otherwise loosely related or even contradictory emphases in Paul's 'justification by faith' language: internal ethical transformation (by means of an internal law), participation in Christ (as living law), and incorporation of the nations (by overcoming all particular ethnic laws in one universal law).

There is one question prompted by the introduction that remains unanswered: how should we evaluate Badiou's characterization of Paul as the 'antiphilosophical theoretician of universality' from the methodological perspective of this study? As for Badiou's interpretation of universalism, to a large extent this is endorsed by the New Perspective's emphasis on Paul's transcending of ethnic (and social, gender) differences and supported by our Graeco-Roman discourses. However, Pauline universalism seems to be of a structural, ahistorical nature in Badiou's analysis, whereas the convergence with Graeco-Roman Golden Age narratives places Paul's universalism in a metahistorical light, proceeding not only from one 'event' but from an understanding of the world's history as divided in ages. As for Badiou's depiction of Paul as an antiphilosopher, the many parallels with ancient philosophical sources on the level of semantics, concepts, and discourses suggest its inadequacy. Nevertheless, Paul's address to *all* and his 'not-so-theoretical' utopian social experiment of including *all* in one community—not only different ethnicities, but also the 'wise, philosophical elite' and the 'foolish, ignorant plebeians'—sets him apart from most philosophical schools of his day.



**PART 2**

*A Pistis Mentality*







# Pistis, Doxa, and Epistēmē: Faith as Firm, Human Conviction Anticipating Divine Knowledge

## 4.1 Faith Opposed to Knowledge?

Over the past decades, Paul has received a lot of attention in the works of contemporary philosophers who consider Paul's message of faith an alternative to the objectifying tendency of Greek metaphysics and epistemology. Alain Badiou, for instance, states that 'his discourse is one of pure fidelity to the possibility opened by the event. It cannot, therefore, in any way (and this is the upshot of Paul's anti-philosophy) fall under the remit of knowledge.'<sup>1</sup> While this judgement can in fact be considered a compliment, coming from someone who is highly critical of traditional metaphysics, it echoes contemporary sentiments of a much more polemical nature. In the introduction to chapter 2 (§2.1), I have already discussed the modern tendency to equate belief and faith with religion and to associate belief and faith with holding uncertain cognitive points of view. This semantic development in its turn offers fuel to anti-religious polemics. To give just one example, in his 'A Manual for Creating Atheists', New Atheism spokesperson Peter Boghossian presents his definition of faith: it means 'pretending to know things we don't know'.<sup>2</sup> Whereas Badiou tries to sever the ties of faith to epistemological concerns, Boghossian denies the relevance of non-epistemological meanings to religious faith.<sup>3</sup> Both authors, albeit with different agendas, explicitly oppose faith and knowledge.

Fortunately, in contemporary academic philosophy there is an increasing awareness that such definitions of faith are unnecessarily narrow, if not narrow-minded. 'Believing based on insufficient evidence' is, rather than a definition of faith, a definition of fideism. Daniel McKaughan distinguishes between different conceptions of faith and acknowledges the 'reason' behind, or appropriateness of, trust-based or hope-based faith.<sup>4</sup> These types of faith

---

1 Badiou 2003, 45.

2 Boghossian 2013, 23.

3 According to Boghossian, the use of faith as trust is not relevant for understanding religious faith, since this is 'not how the faithful use the word "faith" in religious contexts' (2013, 210).

4 McKaughan 2013.

encompass more than purely epistemological claims and often apply to situations of recognized risk, though this does not render them unresponsive to evidence. From a perspective of ‘expected utility theory’, however, even strictly epistemological or propositional faith can be considered rational, as Lara Bushak argues, at least when the costs associated with gathering further evidence or postponing the decision are high.<sup>5</sup>

These insights are relevant, not only for analysing present-day conceptions, but also for evaluating its ancient equivalent. For the opposition between faith and knowledge is often assumed to find its roots in classical antiquity: remarkably, both Plato and Paul are suspected as having set the stage for this dichotomy. Greek philosophical lexica distinguish between two ‘philosophical’ senses of *pistis*: 1) ‘belief’, as evidenced i.a. by Plato’s divided line analogy, one of ‘the mental states that are not true knowledge (*epistēmē*), but have to do with “opinion”, and 2) ‘something that instils belief’ or ‘a means of persuasion’, as evidenced i.a. by Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*.<sup>6</sup> I will deal with this second meaning in the next chapter as part of the semantic domain of persuasion.

The Platonic antithesis between knowledge and opinion (including *pistis*) is also often highlighted in *pistis* research. Thus, Teresa Morgan writes that ‘Plato treats *pistis* as the opposite of the understanding of truth.’<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Benjamin Schliesser summarizes the meaning of *pistis* in Plato’s epistemology as ‘a form of inferior knowledge tied and limited to the sensual world.’<sup>8</sup> And in a comparison between Paul’s and Plutarch’s usage of *pistis*, Jeanette Hagen Pifer writes that ‘by the fourth century BC, Plato writes of the inferiority and instability of *pistis*. (...) Evidence of this understanding of belief as an inferior mental state persists through the third century AD.’<sup>9</sup>

This often-emphasized inferior epistemic position of *pistis* in Plato’s works and in the works of those who appropriated and developed Plato’s legacy seems to have contributed to the impression that the early Christian pre-

---

5 Buchak 2012, 244.

6 Quoted from Peters 1967, 160. See also Urmson 1990, 135, who lists ‘(1) Belief’ and ‘(2) A less than demonstrative truth’. For a critical reflection on Urmson’s second meaning, see §4.3.3 below.

7 Morgan 2015, 193.

8 Schliesser 2017b, 11.

9 Hagen Pifer 2019b, 74. Hagen Pifer considers Plutarch’s usage to be an exception to this Platonic tradition; cf. at 83: ‘Plutarch viewed *pistis* as being a firm foundation from which to view the world, even critiquing those who would demand proofs for faith. Paul makes an even stronger case for a rational basis of faith.’

occupation with faith must have come across as fideistic to a pagan audience.<sup>10</sup> When Christ-followers began to promote their movement in terms of this *pistis*, so it is imagined, it must have been received as a desperate attempt to proclaim truth where there was no reason, evidence, or proof to sustain their claims. The opposition of Christian *pistis* to knowledge is even traced back to Paul by the Liddell–Scott–Jones dictionary of ancient Greek. Here, it is deemed necessary to list a specifically ‘theological’ usage of the word: ‘Theological faith, belief, as opposed to sight and knowledge (1 Cor 13.13 etc.).’<sup>11</sup> At the end of this chapter, I will return to the question whether and, if so, in what sense *pistis* is used by Paul as an opposite to either sight (see §4.4.3) or knowledge (see §4.4.4).

Those who wish to avoid such a fideistic understanding of early-Christian *pistis*, tend to avoid a Greek, epistemological contextualization. James Kinneavy, for example, who argues in favour of Greek roots to *pistis* (see esp. §5.2.4), sharply distinguishes between an epistemological usage (‘the mental conviction’, ‘persuasion as a product’) and a rhetorical usage (‘the technique that evokes such a conviction’, ‘persuasion as a process’) and bases his ‘new hypothesis’ for understanding early Christian faith on the latter.<sup>12</sup> In the first category, Kinneavy argues that Homer, the early poets, the sophists, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, and the Gnostics ensured that *pistis* was ‘a despised level of thought’ and from there to ‘the central concept of a religious system’ was understandably ‘too much for investigating theologians.’<sup>13</sup> Kinneavy is probably right that *pistis*’s epistemological reputation may indeed have led many theologians to deny Greek roots to Christian faith. New Testament scholars are indeed sceptical when it comes to ascribing more ‘cognitive’ aspects of *pistis* to Paul:

We should therefore be very cautious about adding the word ‘conviction[s]’ to the vocabulary of our discussions of Paul’s theology. Where it may be able to serve a heuristic purpose, fine, but it is doubtful whether it corresponds to any important constituent of the apostle’s own thought

10 See Barnes 2014, 41–42, who rejects this connection (p. 42: ‘in fact none of the authors who attacked Christianity alludes, even implicitly, to Platonic πίστις’). Barnes also holds that Christians never used it in this specific Platonic sense, on which cf. §4.4.3–4 *infra*.

11 LSJ, s.v. πίστις. The reference to 1 Cor 13.13 is a later specification in the 1940 edition of the earlier general reference to the New Testament in the 1889 ‘intermediate’ edition of LSJ.

12 Kinneavy 1987, 17. Kinneavy’s solution is that in early Christianity, a transferral took place of aspects of the process-type of *pistis* to the product-type of *pistis*. See on the rhetorical semantic domain of *pistis* chapter 5 and on Kinneavy §5.2.3 below.

13 Kinneavy 1987, 20.

beyond what is contained in the terms ‘faith’ and ‘believing’. (Furnish 1997, 167)

As my chapter title indicates, I would choose not to be so ‘cautious’: ‘conviction’ perfectly captures the more cognitive semantic colouring of Paul’s *pistis* language.

Others have suggested that early Christian *pistis* was in need of being bolstered by second-century apologists against its low-level status in the Platonic frame.<sup>14</sup> This may be true for some polemical treatises of the period, yet in the wider Platonic tradition—as my survey in §4.3 demonstrates—*pistis* was a highly versatile epistemological category and did not live up to such a bad reputation. Moreover, as we will further explore in chapter 5, Stoicism and Epicureanism complicate the suggestion of *pistis* being considered a low-level knowledge category even further, since these traditions use the same term for a stable, high-level mental disposition.<sup>15</sup> I would therefore argue that Paul did not share these apologists’ concerns and could therefore freely join the epistemological semantic domain of *pistis*.

In this chapter, then, I aim to trace and dismantle three phases of the argument that ascribes low epistemological status to *pistis*. I will demonstrate that as regards (1) the Platonic tradition, (2) Paul, and (3) the early Christian movement, the assumed strict antithesis between faith and knowledge is built on dubious grounds. In the next section (§4.2), the evidence in pagan sources for the early Christian reputation of ill-founded faith, a reputation often upheld in scholarly literature, is reviewed. Thereafter (§4.3), authors that are connected to the Platonic tradition are questioned for their epistemological usage of *pistis*. I will show that precisely because of its intermediate or ambivalent epistemological status, *pistis* can function as a bridge from the human to the divine level. Finally, as in all chapters, we will turn to Paul’s letters, to look for epistemological usage of *pistis* language (§4.4).

14 See §4.2 below. This is what Mark A. Seifrid suggests (2018, 248, n. 17). While I share his overall plea for a philosophical contextualisation of *pistis*, in this chapter, I do so by discussing early Christian *pistis* in continuity with rather than in opposition to the Platonic tradition.

15 Even though in most chapters, I discuss discourses based on a variety of philosophical schools, here I have chosen to focus solely on Platonism, as it is in Platonic discourses that *pistis* functions most clearly as a specific knowledge category and this Platonist usage (particularly the usage by Plato and Plutarch) is then used to ascribe a certain fideism (faith moving beyond its proper sensible object, or an irrational faith) to Paul and the early Christians.

One may perhaps wonder what good it will do to deconstruct the faith-reason divide in Platonic thought if the goal is to shed light on the semantics of *pistis* in Paul. Indeed, one might be inclined to think, as Edwin Judge did, that faith ‘primarily interests him [Paul] as the means of justification as opposed to works, not as opposed to knowledge’.<sup>16</sup> While the faith-works dichotomy is certainly a primary construct in Paul’s thought, it would nevertheless be unnecessary to deduce that the cognitive dimension of faith is never foregrounded in Paul’s letters. It will be shown that in diverse passages across Paul’s letters, it is used very much like *pistis* in the Platonic tradition, denoting a firm yet human conviction that serves as a bridge to full, divine knowledge. The epistemological semantic domain of *pistis*, I argue, is important for understanding Paul’s *pistis* language especially when he speaks of weakening, stability, and growth of *pistis* (see §4.4.1); of his own reliability and God’s in terms of *pistis* (see §4.4.2); and of *pistis* as a provisional, earthly cognitive category as differentiated from the eternal, direct, and reciprocal knowledge of God (see §4.4.3 and §4.4.4).

#### 4.2 The Stigma of Early Christian *Pistis* Being a Low-Level Epistemological Category

How do we ‘moderns’ evaluate the epistemological reputation of *pistis* among the ‘ancients’? The epistemological merit of ancient, especially early Christian, *pistis* is, to say the least, rather low high in many scholarly evaluations. More than half a century ago, Eric Dodds formulated it thus:

Had any cultivated pagan of the second century been asked to put in a few words the difference between his own view of life and the Christian one, he might reply that it was the difference between *logismos* and *pistis*, between reasoned conviction and blind faith. To any one brought up in classical Greek philosophy, *pistis* meant the lowest grade of cognition: it was the state of mind of the uneducated, who believed things on hearsay without being able to give reasons for their belief. (Dodds 1965, 120–121)<sup>17</sup>

16 Judge 2008c, 681.

17 Cf. Walzer 1949, 51: ‘for them [philosophers and educated Greeks] πίστις is mainly the habitual state of mind of the ordinary man; true beliefs can be held without knowledge and may be sufficient guides for action (...) but they remain insecure until based on rational knowledge.’

This estimation of ancient *pistis* being known as ‘the lowest grade of cognition’ seems to have been quite influential, as it is echoed in works such as *Pagans and Christians* by the widely read ancient historian Robin Lane Fox.<sup>18</sup> It was also quoted with approval by classical archaeologist Helene Whittaker, who dubs it ‘intellectual laziness’.<sup>19</sup> Even more recently it was elaborated on in *Athen und Jerusalem* by the historian of philosophy Winfried Schröder, who argues that the Enlightenment critiques of Christianity, including their accusation of fideism, find their classical forerunners in pagan philosophers.<sup>20</sup> *Pistis*, he argues, essentially meant assent to dogma, to pagan and Christian authors alike:

And yet the pagans are right—and are in agreement with Christian authors of their time—when they consider Christian *pistis* an essential element: the assent (συγκατάθεσις) to statements, i.e. to ‘doctrines (δόγματα)’ such as that of the sonship of God Jesus or the resurrection of the body. (Schröder 2011, 89)<sup>21</sup>

By comparing ancient pagan criticisms of *pistis* to the modernist objections to faith, he concludes that Enlightenment thinkers were in the right and did not lapse into anachronisms (as apologists would suggest) by deeming this fideism essential to Christianity.<sup>22</sup>

The question remains, however, on what sources these and similar evaluations are based. How do these authors arrive at their interpretation of

---

18 Fox 1986, 31.

19 Whittaker 2001, 157, cf. at 157–158: ‘From a Neoplatonic perspective, the Christian reliance on salvation by faith alone without endeavour could only be regarded as intellectual laziness, as was also their inability to provide a rational foundation for their beliefs’; Schröder 2011.

20 Schröder 2011, 224: ‘Mit den wesentlichen Einwänden, die die Aufklärer gegen das Christentum erhoben, befanden sie sich in substantieller Übereinstimmung mit ihren spätantiken Vorgängern, die als Zeitgenossen über das Christentum urteilten.’

21 ‘Und doch sind die Heiden im Recht—und befinden sich im Einklang mit christlichen Autoren ihrer Epoche—, wenn sie als eine wesentliche Komponente der christlichen *pistis* die Zustimmung (συγκατάθεσις) zu Aussagen, also zu ‘Lehren (δόγματα)’ wie der von der Gottessohnschaft Jesu oder der Auferstehung des Leibes gesondert ins Visier nehmen’.

22 Schröder 2011, 223: ‘Die christlichen Lehren und ihr biblisches Fundament wurden, so heißt es immer wieder, auf das Prokrustesbett moderner Rationalitätsstandards und des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes gezwungen und damit missverstanden und verfehlt. (...) Diese Gemeinplätze, der Anachronismusvorwurf und der Topos vom mangelnden historischen Bewusstsein der Aufklärer sind nicht aufrechtzuhalten.’

Christian *pistis* as merely accepting something as true, without giving any reasonable account? There are a handful of ancient sources that indeed point in this direction. Schröder predominantly refers to the *Contra Celsum* or *Against Celsus*, a work written in the mid-third century by Origen to disprove the charges put forth by the Platonist Celsus around 177 AD.<sup>23</sup> Other witnesses include more fragmentary accounts or remarks ‘in passing’ in the second-century writings of the physician-philosopher Galen and the satirist Lucian.<sup>24</sup> It is worth taking a closer look at these sources to see whether they commit us to a similar conclusion. I leave aside the anti-Christian polemic of Neoplatonist Porphyry for now, since he writes roughly a century later than the others (but see §4.4.4 below for some reflections on his usage of *pistis*).<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.2.1 *Galen: Uncritical and Firm Pistis*

Amidst the extensive medical and philosophical legacy of Galen, four references to Christians are extant. In one passage, he speaks of logical demonstration versus empirical teaching, and compares the latter to ‘undemonstrated laws’ (νόμων ἀναποδείκτων) you hear when you arrive at the ‘school of Moses and Christ’ (Μωυσοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ διατριβήν).<sup>26</sup> Elsewhere, in a commentary on Aristotle’s first unmoved mover that has only survived fragmentarily in Arabic, we read: ‘If I had in mind people who taught their pupils in the same way as the followers of Moses and Christ teach theirs—for they order them to accept everything on faith—I should not have given you a definition.’<sup>27</sup> It is important to note how Galen unproblematically describes Jews and Christi-

23 Schröder 2011, esp. 88–110, ‘>alogos pistis<: >blinder Glaube<’.

24 Karamanolis (2014, 118) names Galen, Lucian, Celsus, and Porphyry in this context. I agree with his judgement that ‘what they sneer at is not the fact that Christians believe certain things but rather that they do not give proofs in support of them.’ Unfortunately, though, he partly endorses their judgement based on an unnecessarily fideistic interpretation of 2 Cor 1.22–23.

25 For a discussion, cf. Berchman 2005. However, Berchman includes many disputed fragments that might come from the *Apocriticus* by the fifth-century Macarius Magnes. On the difficulties in reconstructing Porphyry’s anti-Christian polemics, see Magny 2014.

26 *De differentiis pulsuum* 2.4 (Kühn 2011 [1821], 8:579; Walzer 1949, 14, ref. 4). This contrast allows Edwin A. Judge (2008g, 724; 2015, 30–31) to argue that the Christians adopted a radical new epistemology, even though this was not recognized by the classicizing patristic authors. Walzer (1949, 48) notes that Galen’s remark does not imply that logical demonstration is unattainable for Christians, should they be willing to study Peripatetic logic.

27 Walzer 1949, 14, ref. 5. Originally from Galen, Εἰς τὸ πρῶτον κινουῦν ἀκίνητον, translation Walzer 1949, 14–15. On the origin and transmission of the Arabic passages, see his appendix 4, 87–98.



ans as schools with students.<sup>28</sup> In fact, in the two other extant passages on Christians he compares them favourably to philosophers on account of their open-mindedness, self-discipline, and pursuit of justice.<sup>29</sup> Still, according to Galen, Jews and Christians are prototypical for an uncritical manner of teaching which he sharply opposes, and he connects this attitude to what probably was the Greek word *pistis*.<sup>30</sup>

If we look beyond these specific passages on Christians to the manner in which Galen uses and understands forms of *pistis*, we find that it is not necessarily characterized by a lack of demonstration. In one of his many medical treatises he suggests that certain feverish patients need to be nourished at the occurrence of a paroxysm, after which he defends his position thus:

Perhaps, then, this too is not believed by the majority of doctors (τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν ἰατρῶν ἄπιστον). But it is necessary to provide belief either by reason itself or by actions (εἴτε τῷ λόγῳ χρῆ παρέχειν αὐτῷ τὴν πίστιν εἴτε τοῖς ἔργοις). (Galen, *Method of Medicine* 10.4 (Kühn 2011 [1821], 10.679))

Consequently, according to Galen, *pistis* in itself need not be an uncertain disposition; it can be based on reason or actions. In this manner, it can even function as the type of knowledge in possession of intellectuals, as is shown by Galen's appeal to the 'firm conviction' (πίστις βεβαία) of all logicians, in order to show how unjustified the Stoic Chrysippus was for failing to engage with Plato's teaching on the soul:

Now all the geometricians, arithmeticians, mathematicians, astronomers, master-builders, and even musicians, sundial engineers, rhetoricians,

28 Nevertheless, Walzer (1949, 43, 44) emphasizes the actual differences between the Christian 'religion' and philosophical schools: 'Galen is, as far as I can see, the first pagan author who implicitly places Greek philosophy and the Christian religion on the same footing. (...) This rash equation (...) was bound to produce curious misunderstandings on both sides.' Cf. at 51: 'it would be natural (...) for Galen's contemporaries to mistake a religion of this unusual kind for a new philosophical school.' Gathercole 2017, 294 understands this description as 'by no means necessarily a ringing endorsement', as Galen himself was trained in different schools and happy with his independence.

29 Galen, *De differentiis pulsuum* 3.3 (Kühn 2011 [1821], 8.657; Walzer 1949, 14, ref. 3) and a text preserved with some variations in different Arabic sources originally from Galen's Πλατωνικῶν διαλόγων συνόψεις (Walzer 1949, 15, ref. 6) respectively.

30 The importance of proper 'demonstration' is emphasized by Gathercole (Gathercole 2017, 296): 'His criticism of Christians' indifference to proof is, for Galen personally, an absolutely fundamental error—especially for him, as the author of a work *On Demonstration* in fifteen volumes.'

grammarians, and, in short, all who had been trained in a rational art (ὅλως εἴ τις ἐν τέχνῃ λογικῇ γεγύμναστο), held the firm conviction (πίστιν βεβαίαν ἔσχον) that the arguments written by others about the governing part of the soul had been refuted, and that those of Hippocrates and Plato were true. (Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 8.1.13)<sup>31</sup>

In Galen, *pistis* comes in many varieties, so it seems.<sup>32</sup> Christians are caricatured for their lack of demonstration when it comes to believing. Yet philosophers are presented as having *pistis* as well as common people. We do not find evidence that there was such an evident dichotomy between reason or knowledge and faith as such, a dichotomy increasingly common in modern times.

#### 4.2.2 *Lucian: Gullibility versus Pistis*

In the many works of the second-century satirist Lucian of Samosata, there is one episode in which Christians play a major part and the noun *pistis* is used. The protagonist of the book, Peregrinus, a Cynic philosopher and charlatan, tricks the Christians into believing he is one of them and quickly rises to become a leader in their community. This led to his imprisonment, whereupon Christians spared no expense to come to his rescue. In this context, Lucian describes the Christian movement as a highly gullible band of brothers, who—surprisingly—lack *pistis* (here used to mean ‘evidence’) for their convictions:

The poor wretches have convinced themselves, first and foremost, that they are going to be immortal and live for all time, in consequence of which they despise death and even willingly give themselves into custody, most of them. Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brothers of one another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself (τὸν δὲ ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἐκεῖνον σοφιστὴν αὐτὸν) and living under his laws. Therefore they despise all things indiscriminately and consider them common property, receiving such doctrines

31 Translation De Lacy 1980 (with minor adaptations).

32 Cf., for a similar conclusion, Barnes 2014, 43: ‘they did not mean to suggest that faith is in itself irrational, or that it corresponds to a bare assertion.’ Barnes observes that pagans objected to faith because it cannot be based on a specific type of explanatory proof, while also discussing the varied Christian responses to this objection (46–59) and the strict nature of Aristotle’s conditions for proof (p. 50), conditions that were met by neither Christians nor pagans.

traditionally without any definite evidence (ἀνευ τινός ἀκριβοῦς πίστεως τὰ τοιαῦτα παραδεξάμενοι). So if any charlatan and trickster, able to profit by occasions, comes among them, he quickly acquires sudden wealth by imposing upon simple folk. (Lucian, *The Passing of Peregrinus* 13)

Ironically, even as Lucian's general portrait of Christians is one in which their gullibility is paramount, he accuses them of a lack of *pistis* for their opinions. It might be a conscious word play based on general knowledge of the importance of *pistis* for the Christians, but given that the reified use of the word as 'ground for trust' or 'evidence' is very common as well, one would expect clearer indications of jest here. Thus, whereas the reputation of Christians as easily persuaded is again confirmed—though before wholly accepting its accuracy we should probably take the satirical genre into account—*pistis* is not a sign of the Christians' credulity, but rather is used as an equivalent of rational verification.

There is one other instance in which both Christians and *pistis* language recurs: a treatise in which another travelling charlatan and miracle worker by the name of Alexander institutes a three-day mystery festival:

On the first day, as at Athens, there was a proclamation, worded as follows: 'If any atheist or Christian or Epicurean has come to spy upon the rites, let him be off, and let those who believe in the god perform the mysteries (οἱ δὲ πιστεύοντες τῷ θεῷ τελείσθωσαν), under the blessing of Heaven.' Then, at the very outset, there was an 'expulsion,' in which he took the lead, saying: 'Out with the Christians (Ἔξω Χριστιανούς),' and the whole multitude chanted in response, 'Out with the Epicureans!' Then there was the child-bed of Leto, the birth of Apollo, his marriage to Coronis, and the birth of Asclepius. (Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet* 38)

This passage is remarkable for its usage of the participle *pisteuontes* to designate adherents to a specific God vis-à-vis outsiders (on which, see §8.3.1 below) and for its association of Christians with atheists and Epicureans (on which, see §8.2.1 and §8.4.5 below). I will elaborate on both of these themes later, but for now it suffices to point out that apparently Lucian did not deem Christians 'gullible' enough to stay and become one of Alexanders' followers. Perhaps they are not welcome at the ceremonies, precisely because their criticism could dissuade Alexander's gullible followers to believe him.<sup>33</sup>

33 As one Epicurean actually endeavours further on in the same treatise (at 44–45).

If we step back and look at Lucian's general usage of *pistis* and cognates, it becomes clear that as an author he is constantly playing with credibility and credulity on several levels: characters' stories are doubted or believed by other characters, and the author, the narrator, is frequently (and purposefully) unreliable. Teresa Morgan recorded many examples of Lucian's playful technique.<sup>34</sup> Particularly in his *Lover of Lies*, she notes, Lucian's usage of *pistis* is remarkably propositional: the story's sceptical protagonist Tychiades and his friends are continuously spoken of in terms of their (un)belief in their stories that draw on such authorities as eyewitnesses, wise men, and the coherence of their world view.<sup>35</sup> Even though this demonstrates that belief as such may be ill-founded (or not), in Lucian, we find no evidence that *pistis* language is used outright to denote a weak cognitive power we ought to avoid.

#### 4.2.3 *Origen against Celsus: Faith with and without Substantiation*

The second century Platonist Celsus is our third pagan source for the allegedly low epistemological status of early Christian *pistis*. For Celsus's thought, we have only one extant text to refer to, one that has been handed down to us only in the paraphrases and quotes preserved in a reply written some seventy years later by a Christian intellectual named Origen. Even though Celsus grants the notion of *pistis* a pretty important place in public worship, he is less enthusiastic about the Christian obsession with the term.<sup>36</sup>

Early in the first book of Origen's *Against Celsus*, the book that lays out the agenda for the rest of the work, we encounter Celsus's accusation that the Christian faith is 'without substantiation' (ἄλογος). This general impression of the Christian teachings seems to be based on exclamations of believers:

And he asserts that certain persons who do not wish either to give or receive a reason for their belief, keep repeating, 'Do not examine, but believe!' and, 'Your faith will save you!' And he alleges that such also say, 'The wisdom of this life is bad, but that foolishness is a good thing!' (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.9)<sup>37</sup>

34 Morgan 2015 esp. 41–42, 144, 149–150, 161, 162, 455.

35 Morgan 2015, 144, 148–150.

36 On *pistis* in Celsus's thought on worship, see Morgan 2021, 162–169, esp. at 168: 'Celsus' discussions of πίστις add complexity and nuance to his commitment to reason, by recognizing that cult practice and religiosity involve cognitive and interpersonal trust as well as belief, that the two are intimately connected, and that both trust and belief are based on multiple foundations which often interact.' Here, I focus on his evaluation of Christian *pistis*.

37 Text edition Chadwick 1953, translation Crombie 1885.

According to Celsus, these simple adages are not only endorsed by ‘certain persons’. The latter quote seems to be inspired by Paul (cf. §5.4.2 on 1 Cor 2.5) and Celsus goes on to explain that this is the impression given by Christian preachers, whom he compares to priests of Cybele, soothsayers, Mithras-adherents, and Sabbadians. These preachers, Celsus maintains, deliberately taking ‘advantage of the ignorance of those who are easily deceived, lead them away whither they will.’<sup>38</sup> It is thus a Christian strategy to mislead the simpleminded by means of *pistis*. According to Origen, ‘he asserts that Christians repel every wise man from the doctrine of their faith, and invite only the ignorant and the vulgar.’<sup>39</sup>

Origen’s response to these charges is somewhat surprising, for he does not deny them outright. Instead, he distinguishes between different types of adherents to the Christian teaching.<sup>40</sup> It would be great, he says, if all people would practise philosophy (σχολάζειν τῷ φιλοσοφεῖν), but for a variety of reasons only a few have the opportunity and determination to devote themselves to reason (ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον ἀττόντων).<sup>41</sup> Hence, Origen’s view of the Christian community is that of a mass practising a conviction without substantiation (πίστις ἄλογος) and a philosophical elite addressing issues of deeper wisdom. In effect, he also creates different types of *pistis*, modifying the strict distinction between true knowledge and mere belief, which was part of Plato’s legacy (though cf. for a more nuanced interpretation of Plato’s *pistis* §4.3.2 below).<sup>42</sup>

In response to Celsus’s accusation that Christian teachers in fact reject such deeper wisdom, Origen distinguishes between true wisdom and sophistry:

For true wisdom does not mislead, but ignorance does, while of existing things knowledge alone is permanent (μόνον τῶν ὄντων βέβαιον ἐπιστήμη), and the truth which is derived from wisdom (ἀλήθεια ἅπερ ἐκ σοφίας παραγίνεται). But if, contrary to the definition of wisdom (παρὰ τὸν τῆς σοφίας ὄρον), you call any one whatever who dogmatizes with sophisticated opinions wise (τὸν ὅ τι ποτ’ οὖν δογματίζοντα μετὰ τινων σοφισμάτων λέγῃς σοφόν), we answer that in conformity with what you call wisdom, such an one rejects the words of God, being misled and ensnared by

38 Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.9.

39 Origen, *Against Celsus* 3.18.

40 Cf. on this strategy in Theodoretus Barnes 2014, 51–53.

41 Origen, *Against Celsus* 3.72.

42 Cf. Le Boulluec 2005, 73: ‘Si la “foi” se trouve ainsi pourvue d’une stabilité qui était l’apanage de l’ “intellection” pour Platon, la “sensation”, qui était le mode cognitif propre à la “foi” platonicienne, est élevée au rang de faculté de connaissance la plus haute.’

plausible sophisms (πλανώμενος ὑπὸ τῶν πιθανοτήτων καὶ σοφισμάτων καὶ παραποδιζόμενος ὑπ' αὐτῶν). (Origen, *Against Celsus* 3.72)

According to Origen, true wisdom should aspire to true knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) which is firm (βέβαιος), whereas ignorance is characterized by holding false opinions (ψευδοδοξοῦντες).<sup>43</sup> The 'wisdom' Christian teachers despise according to Celsus is labelled 'sophistry' by Origen (on this accusation, cf. §5.3.2 below). Apart from this language game, however, at a deeper level the discussion concerns what philosophical system offers the ultimate path to true knowledge. Celsus rejects the Christian claim to offer a bypass ('revelation' or 'grace' leading to 'faith') to Platonic dialectic for entering the metaphysical sphere, a claim that would subordinate Platonism as the lesser system.<sup>44</sup>

Now, of course, the question is what we are supposed to infer from this critique of early Christian *pistis*. At the very least, and before drawing any conclusions, we need to account for genre and discourse. As an apology, *Against Celsus* reports on a dispute between two antithetical positions. The ease by which the tables are turned and labels are reversed in this intellectual show-down demonstrates the flexibility of terms such as 'wisdom', 'knowledge', and 'faith' in a polemical setting. Whereas Origen has the advantage of presenting his adversary's arguments in a way that suits his purpose—Celsus's original treatise 'On True Doctrine' is lost to us—both avail themselves of various techniques to discredit the opponent's point of view. Thus, taking Celsus's account at face value is as unwarranted as 'blindly believing' Origen's version.<sup>45</sup> Of course, Origen admits that the Christian masses may believe without a reasoned account or substantiation (ἄλογος). However, Schröder considers this admission to plainly affirm pagan criticism and thereby overlooks Origen's more nuanced distinction between advanced and less-advanced faith.<sup>46</sup>

43 Cf. also Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.27.

44 Cf. the analysis by George Boys-Stones, for which he builds on Origen's teacher Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr: 'Christians, then, enter the debate with philosophers quite deliberately, casting themselves as *opponents*—specifically, as a school which has an approach that can offer superior philosophical understanding. As such, it can claim to *subordinate* Platonism, as Platonism in turn claims to subordinate Aristotelianism, Stoicism, and the rest—and so to make it irrelevant. Celsus knew this. (...) Celsus's own views (...) point to the broader diffusion of divinity through the universe, especially though divine intermediaries—the condition, in Platonist philosophy, for ascent to the intelligibles without the need for revelation' (Boys-Stones 2019, 277–278).

45 On the increasing awareness that this picture of early Christianity is a caricature, see the references offered by Jan Bremmer (2017, 26, n. 68).

46 Schröder 2011, 92.

Viewed sociologically, Origen's confirmation of the masses' unreasoned faith could point to the fact that the Christian movement had adherents from across social strata, including uneducated laymen, probably more so than Celsus's Platonist school.<sup>47</sup>

As we will see through this study (particularly in §5.3 and §8.3), the passages quoted perfectly fit the profile of polemical epistemological discourse between diverse philosophical schools of antiquity. *Inter alia*, we will see how Epictetus accused the Academics of calling for a similar unsubstantiated faith in their preaching. As Benitez and Tarrant have argued, 'philosophical attacks on religious movements, particularly Christians and Gnostics, arose out of competition for the same spiritual ground.'<sup>48</sup> The correct conclusion to be drawn from these sources does not include a ratification of one of the participants in this discourse. Instead, we can infer that the exact relation between knowledge and *pistis* and, by extension, the right philosophy-religion was the object of a continuous debate throughout the Hellenistic-imperial age and not the prerogative of anti-Christian polemic.

#### 4.3 A Fideistic Turn in Plato's Wake? Epistemological Usage of *Pistis* in Graeco-Roman Discourses

In order to evaluate *pistis* as an epistemological category, it is worth delving deeper into the present-day interpretation and Graeco-Roman reception of the usual suspect, Plato, and his successors.<sup>49</sup> Naturally, Platonism was not the only philosophical tradition that influenced the intellectual and broader culture in the days of Paul, and the different schools ought to be considered in continuous dialogue and interaction. Yet by focusing on the Platonic-Academic tradition in this chapter, we will see how *pistis* functions in an epistemological frame, which opens up a fruitful way of approaching *pistis* as an epistemological category in Paul. Several of the other traditions (namely the Peripatetics, the Epicureans, and the Stoics) are central to the next chapter,

47 This squandering of philosophical knowledge on the uninstructed masses is one of the main points of Celsus's critique according to Peter van Nuffelen (2011, 224–226). Though cf. Morgan 2021, 175: 'Apparently Celsus thinks that some theological teaching is appropriate, even for ordinary people.'

48 Benitez & Tarrant 2015, 220.

49 On the reception of Plato in the first century BC, cf. Hatzimichali 2013, 1–11, esp. p. 10: 'it is evident that it [Plato's text] had a rich transmission, gaining the attention of philosophers and non-philosophers alike as a mainstream part of Greek cultural heritage, with recognised literary value and high-quality Attic prose.'

where the related yet broader semantic domain of *pistis* and persuasion will be discussed.

Before we launch into a discussion of the use of *pistis* as an epistemological category by Platonic philosophers, it is good to take a broader look at the usefulness of this exercise for understanding Pauline *pistis*. For particularly when it comes to epistemology, the relevance of Greek philosophical categories for understanding an 'apocalyptic Jew' is often questioned.

Henrik Tronier compared Jewish apocalypticism to philosophical idealism and observed a surprisingly similar structure.<sup>50</sup> Whereas the first of these two is usually considered eschatological in nature, pertaining to two levels in the sphere of time, the second is often thought to be characterized by a cosmological dualism of two levels in space. However, the epistemology of, for instance, Philo, a Jew whose thought is deeply indebted to Hellenistic philosophy, and the epistemology underlying the apocalyptic visions and dreams in *1 Enoch* are not so dissimilar, as both are based on the interconnectedness of the sensible and the real, the present disorderly condition and the heavenly order. From the perspective of the history of ideas, then, the rise of Jewish apocalypticism could only take place after the rise of philosophical idealism with its particular conception of transcendence. In this manner, Tronier successfully overcomes a particular aspect of the Judaism/Hellenism divide that is of particular interest to the topic of this chapter, where I contextualize *pistis* within the worldview of both Greeks and Jews in the days of the early Roman Empire.

Inspired by Tronier's argument, Anders Klostergaard Petersen also places Paul's use of the *pistis* lexeme in this epistemological field, shaped by Platonic ontology.<sup>51</sup> He explains the connection between idealism and apocalypticism as two phenomena related to the larger evolutionary development of axial forms of religion. While the benefits of this approach are unmistakable on a structural hermeneutical level, due to this wide-ranging view of human history and thought, Klostergaard Petersen does not delve too deeply into specific Platonic or Pauline authors and their usage of *pistis*. He does, however, briefly point to a particular Pauline text that I will discuss in detail below (§4.4.3), 'for we walk by faith not by sight' (2 Cor 5.7). Regarding this text, he remarks:

---

50 Tronier 2001.

51 Klostergaard Petersen 2017a. We have already briefly commented upon the value of this approach in our introductory chapter (see §1.3.2). Cf., on Platonic religion as a form of axial age religion, Klostergaard Petersen 2017b.



The statement has an unmistakably Platonic ring to it. As long as one is in this world, true relationship to the heavenly realm is only accessible by means of a particular cognitive activity, that is, *pistis*. At this point, some may reasonably object why I have recourse to Plato rather than a later strand of philosophy or philosopher contemporaneous with Paul. The criticism is legitimate, but the idea is that the basic epistemology underlying Paul's thinking is ultimately one that may be seen blatantly clearly in the context of Platonic philosophy as an epitome of axial age religion. (Klostergaard Petersen 2017a, 242)

This wider perspective thus allows us to see Paul in line with Plato's epistemology. To satisfy the 'critics', however, I will trace the development of Platonic epistemology via different authors of this tradition down to the age of Paul. In this way, Klostergaard Petersen's more abstract connection (on the level of religious evolution) is confirmed by offering a more specific connection on the level of shared discourse, a discourse extending from Plato and his predecessors to the time of Paul and beyond. By searching the corpora of authors from the Platonic tradition for the co-occurrence of *pistis* vocabulary and epistemological terms, I have collected a varied selection of passages that concern the substantiation and stratification of knowledge.<sup>52</sup> In each of these authors, Platonic *pistis* is shown to be a particularly human category of knowledge, yet at the same time it is univocally tied to the real, the ultimate, and the transcendent.

#### 4.3.1 *Parmenides and Heraclitus: True Pistis as Inquisitive Human Appropriation of Divine Truth*

While Plato is most famous for his ordered scheme of different levels of cognition in the divided line analogy, he built on a longer tradition that was handed down mostly in poetry. I discuss two such predecessors, Parmenides and Heraclitus, whose extant writings both contain *pistis* language used in an epistemological context, as well as a fragment of what is known as the Derveni papyrus by an unnamed author who seems to have developed Heraclitan themes.

Already in the sixth century BC, in Parmenides's famous poem 'On Nature' on the 'two ways', preserved in considerable part in many ancient sources,

---

52 The following sources have been collected by using the TLG proximity search option, combining keywords such as βεβαι-, ἀπλ-, ἀροτατ-, ισχυρ-, γνωσ-, ἐπιστημ-, and πιστ-.

we find a strong duality between truth (*alētheia*) and opinions (*doxa*), corresponding to gods and mortals respectively.<sup>53</sup> Surprisingly, *pistis* belongs to the side of truth, as we learn from the final word of the goddess to the narrator in the introduction:

Thou shouldst learn all things, as well the unshaken heart of persuasive truth (ἡμὲν ἀληθείης εὐπειθέος ἀτρεχῆς ἦτορ), as the opinions of mortals in which is no true belief at all (ἡδὲ βροτῶν δόξας ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθῆς). (Parmenides, *On Nature* B 1.29–30)<sup>54</sup>

The combination of a cognate of *pistis* and a cognate of ‘truth’ (ἀλήθεια) occurs two more times in the poem.<sup>55</sup> Based on the quote above, Aryeh Finkelberg reasons that ‘we need not conjecture about the relation of *pistis* to “persuasion”’: the opposition *eupeithēs alētheia*: the lack of *pistis alēthēs* (πίστις ἀληθῆς) at B 1.29–30 makes it certain that in Parmenides these terms are used as synonyms.<sup>56</sup> This may be an overstatement, as ‘the unshaken heart of persuasive truth’ may not be exactly the same as ‘persuasion’. As Milena Bontempi has pointed out, *pistis* belongs to the *Logos*, to being, and to thought, and it enables a reciprocal relationship while persuasion merely leads to ‘multiplicity and becoming’.<sup>57</sup> Regardless of the precise reading, however, it is evident that *pistis* belongs to the divine side of the divide.

Parmenides was not quite the first to make a strong distinction between divine and human types of cognition or language; he followed in Homer’s, Hesiod’s, Theognis’s, Semonides’s, and Solon’s footsteps.<sup>58</sup> He was the first,

53 According to Tomás Calvo (1977, esp. p. 255), Parmenides does not endorse a strong epistemic duality between mind/truth and opinion, but a duality in types of language, namely between *logos* and *epos*. The epistemic interpretation, however, remained the mainstream interpretation of Parmenides’s poem ever since Plato. For an epistemic interpretation of Parmenides as precursor to Plato, see e.g. Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 114C–F.

54 As preserved in Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 114F; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 9.22; Theophrastus, *The Opinions of the Natural Philosophers* 6a; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.11, 7.114, translation Burnet 1892.

55 Parmenides, *On Nature* B 8.28 (πίστις ἀληθῆς) and B 8.50: ‘Here shall I close my trustworthy speech and thought about the truth’ (Ἐν τῷ σοι παύω πιστὸν λόγον ἡδὲ νόημα ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης).

56 Finkelberg 1988, 66. See chapter 5 *infra*, esp. §5.3.1 and §5.3.2, on *pistis* and persuasion.

57 Bontempi 2013, see chapters 1 and 2 on Parmenides and cf. p. 52, where she describes how unlike persuasion, *pistis* ensures a ‘modello relazionale contrapposto a quello disposizionale che apre al molteplice e al divenire’.

58 See Torgerson 2006, 35; Palmer 1999, 25, n. 16. On Parmenides’s dependence on and deviation from Xenophanes, see Palmer 1999, 25–26.

however, to suggest that between human ignorance and divine revelation a human type of understanding is required, a judging mind that functions as more than the passive receiver of divine truth. As Tobias Torgerson has noted, Parmenides ‘radically alters the traditional understanding of revelation by subordinating it to human verification.’<sup>59</sup> It is the figure of the goddess, a representative of traditional poetic revelation, who in fact ‘lend[s] credence to the new philosophical *pistis alēthēs*’.<sup>60</sup> For our understanding of Pauline thought, both the importance of an active, functioning human mind to receive divine knowledge and the appearance of *pistis* in this same context stand out: *pistis* is used in opposition to mere mortal opinion as the human equivalent of divine truth.

Among the preserved fragments of Heraclitus, another presocratic philosopher and a contemporary of Parmenides, we find another example of *pistis* language within an epistemological and also religious context. This fragment is preserved as a citation by Plutarch (the context of which will be discussed in §4.3.5 below):

But most divine things (τῶν μὲν θείων τὰ πολλά), according to Heraclitus, escape being known due to disbelief (ἀπιστίη διαφυγγάνει μὴ γιγνώσκεισθαι). (Heraclitus, *Fragment* 86, apud Plutarch, *Marcus Coriolanus* 38.4, my translation)

In this dictum, disbelief or distrust (ἀπιστίη, in Ionic dialect) is an obstacle to attaining knowledge of things pertaining to the gods. Again, just as in Parmenides’s poem, *pistis* is not seen as standing in opposition to higher forms of knowledge. Rather, it is the prerequisite to knowing things divine: these things must be trusted before they can be truly understood.

Even though the context of this citation is lost, it is interesting to note that in a heavily damaged papyrus scroll only discovered in 1962 on the Greek mainland, whose author seems to be indebted to Heraclitus, the condition of *apistia* is again lamented. This Derveni papyrus is the oldest literary papyrus fragment we now have, dated to the fourth century BC, yet containing a text (of which

59 Torgerson 2006, 40.

60 Torgerson 2006, 40. Pace Mark Edwards, who reads ‘*pistos*’ in Parmenides as attesting to ‘the celestial origin of the poet’s theory (...) it is used to browbeat the reader, rather than to introduce a persuasive train of reasoning.’ See his chapter on ‘*Pistis* and Platonism’, forthcoming in Teresa Morgan and Barbara Kowalzig, *Thinking about Thinking Gods: Beliefs and Conceptions of the Divine in the Ancient World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

only a third survived) probably originating in the late fifth century BC. According to Gábor Betegh, who worked extensively on the text and its interpretation, the main purpose of the author was to offer an allegorized and philosophically acceptable interpretation of an Orphic cosmogony (dating back to the sixth century BC).<sup>61</sup> In column 4, he quotes from Heraclitus, combining two lines that were previously thought to be separate fragments.<sup>62</sup> Here is what is left of the next column in his reconstruction:

terrors (...) consult an oracle (...) they consult an oracle (...) for them we go into the oracular shrine to inquire for oracular answers, whether it is right (...) the terrors of Hades, why do they disbelieve (ἐν Ἄιδου δεινὰ τί ἀπιστοῦσι)? Not understanding dreams, nor any of the facts, on the basis of what kind of warning would they believe (διὰ ποίων ἄν παραδειγμάτων πι[ι]στεύοιεν)? Overcome by fault and by pleasure as well (ὑπὸ τ[ῆς τε] ἀμαρ<ί>της καὶ [τ]ῆς ἄλλης ἡδον[ῆς]), they neither learn, nor believe ([οὐ] μανθ[άνο]υσιν [οὐδὲ] πιστεύουσι). Disbelief (ἀπι[ι]στή) and lack of understanding [? are the same thing]. For if they neither understand, nor do they learn (μη[δ]ὲ γινώ[σ]κως[ι]ν), [it is not possible that they believe] ([οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως πιστεύσου]σιν) even when they see (...) disbelief ([τ]ῆν ἀπιστι[ῆν]) (...) appears. (Derveni papyrus, column 5.1–14)<sup>63</sup>

The many gaps leave a lot of room for interpretation. What is clear from this fragment is that *apistia* (or *apistiē* in Ionic dialect) is equated to a lack of a higher, true understanding, and this absence of faith and knowledge is linked to improper conduct (pleasure and sin). Betegh's own comments on this passage are important enough to include here:

The author explicitly claims in the last preserved lines of column 5 that lack of faith and lack of knowledge are two sides of the same coin. As one gains knowledge about the divine, that is as one understands the way the divinity governs the world, and hence takes up the correct cognitive attitude towards it, one naturally, by the very same gesture, assumes faith in it as well. (Betegh 2004, 90)

61 This is one of the main theses of Betegh 2004, who also maintains that the author is a priestly figure, involved in the performance of Orphic rituals of which he gives an account (see i.a. at 350). Cf. for discussion Kouremenos, Parássoglou & Tsantsanoglou 2006, 51.

62 See Lebedev 1989, 42.

63 Text and translation Betegh 2004, 12–13. See for Burkert's translation, Burkert 2014, 118, and for Janko's text and translation, Janko 2002, 10–11.

Indeed, instead of a dichotomy between knowledge and faith, both are part of this higher grasp of reality.

That the author is ‘applying, with slight variation, a sentence of Heraclitus (B86)’, that is, the sentence just cited here, is the argument of another Derveni specialist, Walter Burkert.<sup>64</sup> He connects this usage of *apistia* to its occurrence in Plato’s allegorical interpretation of an Orphic myth in the *Gorgias* (493a–d). In this myth, the souls in the underworld pour water with leaky sieves into leaky vessels and these sieves, according to Plato’s Socrates, represents pleasure-driven people who cannot retain knowledge due to *apistia* and forgetfulness (493c: δι’ ἀπιστίαν τε καὶ λήθην). Both authors thus seem to share this sense of *apistia*, a lack of epistemological trust, proof, or conviction, versus deeper understanding and knowledge. Or to put it more precisely, both partake in a similar, Orphic-Heraclitan epistemological-religious discourse. The Platonic material as a whole, though, as we shall see in the next subsection, is more complex.

If *apistia* is so unpreferable according to this Derveni author, it is interesting to see in what people are supposed to ‘trust’. As Burkert suggests, the author could well be ridiculing the use of oracles, where people go asking about the ‘terrors of Hades’ while they ‘are disregarding the real sources of “belief”’: dreams and ‘single facts’ (*paradeigmata*).<sup>65</sup> Betegh compares the views of the author here to the tenth book of Plato’s *Laws*, yet at the same time he describes the epistemology of the author as closer to Heraclitus than Plato, in that ‘the personal understanding on the part of the initiand is indeed crucial for the success of the ritual.’<sup>66</sup> The Derveni author shares the near-ubiquitous claim in the philosophy of the period that most people lack the specific knowledge initiates do possess, yet follows Heraclitus in claiming that the data (*paradeigmata*, and cf. column 13, line 5: *pragmata*) are there, and knowledge may in principle be attained, even as most people miserably fail at seeing beyond what is sensible. Only the happy few manage to attain knowledge, understanding, and *pistis*.

In all three of these early authors, then, we have seen how *pistis* language is used to express something close to true knowledge of things divine. For the Presocratics, *pistis* is a cognitive-religious mode held in high regard.

64 Burkert 2014, 108, and at 109: ‘through ἀπιστίη men block their own chances of knowledge; they should just look instead, and pay attention. (...) The Heraclitus parallel suggests a similar understanding even for our author: there are things to be seen and to be learned which escape many people on account of disbelief.’

65 Burkert 2014, 108.

66 See Betegh 2004, 90, n. 50 and for the quote, Betegh 2004, 360.

#### 4.3.2 *Plato: Pistis as an Intermediate, Yet Highest Worldly Type of Cognition*

It is, however, not Parmenides's or Heraclitus's epistemologies, but the far more influential usage of *pistis* by Plato that has caused its 'image problem' as not much beyond 'opinion'. In his scepticism towards sense perception, Plato seems to have been highly indebted to Parmenides.<sup>67</sup> Yet Plato also, the general assumption goes, relegated *pistis* to the ever-changing world of the senses, a world cut off ontologically and epistemologically from the immutable world of the forms.<sup>68</sup> Here the question into the epistemological status of *pistis* touches upon the so-called 'two worlds-theory': a schematic depiction of Plato's epistemological views that is subject to extensive scholarly debate. According to this theory, different forms of cognition (knowledge, opinion) are set over different objects (intelligibles, sensibles), which leads to a strong separation between the two realms and types of cognition. The main question—was Plato committed to a two-worlds-theory, was he committed in all respects (ontologically and epistemologically) and to the same extent in all his dialogues?—cannot be pursued at length here.<sup>69</sup> I will confine myself to discussing a few passages from different dialogues that have a particular bearing on how Platonic *pistis*, used as a technical epistemic term, can be understood, and to exploring possible directions in which the interpretations of these passages might lead.

For our purposes here, then, we need not be concerned with offering a comprehensive judgement on the status of *pistis* in Plato's epistemology (if such a unified system even exists). Such an endeavour would necessarily include a more thorough account of the purpose and place of each passage within the dialogue and of the dialogue in the Platonic corpus as a whole. In fact, there exists one monograph, in which this has been attempted: Angelica Taglia's *Il concetto di pistis in Platone*.<sup>70</sup> She aims to demonstrate that, when it comes to the evaluation of *pistis*, a development can be traced across the dialogues with an increasingly positive role for *pistis*. Where relevant, I will refer to her

67 Palmer 1999, 17–30, chapter 2: 'Eschatology and Epistemology'.

68 According to Schunack (1999, 314), this demotion of *pistis* was due to its historical-personal character centred on faith in divine oracles, and to the elevation of the gods in philosophical circles to the immaterial and eternal realm.

69 In an article on Plutarch's epistemology, I have outlined three different positions on Plato's adherence to the two-worlds theory: Sierksma-Agteres 2015a, 59–60. For the three positions in question, see Fine 1990 and Fine 1978; Gonzalez 1996; Smith 2000.

70 Taglia 1998. The first part of this work pertains to the evaluation of *pistis* and persuasion (*πειθω, πειθομαι*) in the city-state and in diverse political climates and will hence be taken up in chapter 5 on persuasion (§5.3.2 *infra*).

argument. My own aim, however, is to demonstrate that there is a broad range of meanings, interpretations, and questions to which Plato's writings give rise, including meanings of high cognitive value that could fall in the category of 'firm cognition'. This broad range is subsequently drawn upon in Hellenistic and Roman philosophy, which will be considered in the sections hereafter (§4.3.2–§4.3.5).

The most iconic passage when it comes to epistemic categories in Plato is the analogy of the divided line in book VI of the *Republic* (509d–511e), immediately before the even more famous allegory of the cave.<sup>71</sup> The character Socrates uses this analogy to explain two different 'types and places': the intelligible and the visible (509d: τὸ μὲν νοητοῦ γένους τε καὶ τόπου, τὸ δ' αὖ ὄρατοῦ). The intelligible corresponds to the first two parts of a line, namely (a) understanding/knowledge (νόησις)<sup>72</sup> and (b) thought (διάνοια); the visible or sensible corresponds to third and fourth part of (c) belief (πίστις) and (d) conjecture (εἰκασία). Together they represent four conditions of the soul (511d: παθήματα ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γιγνόμενα), and as such they are associated with different corresponding objects, whose stability accounts for their respective epistemic status: 'conjecture' to 'shadows, the reflections in water and in those surfaces which are solid, smooth and shiny, and everything like this' (510a) i.e. images of sensibles, 'belief' to 'the living creatures around us, all natural things and the whole class of artificial things' (510a) i.e. sensibles, 'thought' to 'the visible forms (...) although considering not the actual things, but those they resemble' (510d) i.e. sensibles as representatives of the Forms, and 'understanding' to 'Forms themselves' (511c). The line is divided according to a specific, unequal ratio so that the intelligible objects and cognitive modes are cut off from the

71 The analogy of the divided line is well known in Platonic circles in later centuries, cf. e.g. Plutarch (early second century AD) and Alcinous (mid-second century AD). Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 3 (devoted to the question which of the two main segments of the line is larger), 1001D: 'to each of the four he assigns its own peculiar criterion: intelligence to the first and thought to the mathematical segment (νοῦν μὲν τῷ πρώτῳ διάνοιαν δὲ τῷ μαθηματικῷ) and to the perceptibles belief (τοῖς δ' αἰσθητοῖς πίστιν) and conjecture to matters of images and semblances (εἰκασίαν δὲ τοῖς περὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα καὶ τὰς εἰκόνας).' Alcinous, *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae* 7.5, 162.17–19, translation Dillon 1993, 15: 'He also postulates the existence of "belief" and "conjecture" (καὶ πίστιν καὶ εἰκασίαν). Of these, belief relates to sense-objects (τῶν αἰσθητῶν), while conjecture is of images and reflections (τῶν εἰκόνων καὶ εἰδώλων).'

72 Plato is not entirely consistent in the names of the sections, which might be facetiously on purpose, for at the beginning of the passage on the divided line, he remarks that he does not want to be seen as splitting hairs over a name (509d: σοφίζεσθαι περὶ τὸ ὄνομα). At *Republic* 533e–534a, the top section is called knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and the combination of knowledge and thought is called understanding (νόησις).

sensible objects/modes, and these two parts are again divided according to the same ratio, so that you get  $a+b : c+d = a : b = c : d$  (509d). Furthermore, we read that ‘just as reality is to impermanence, understanding (νόησις,  $a+b$ ) is to opinion (δόξα,  $c+d$ ), and as understanding is to opinion, so knowledge (α) is to belief (c) and thought (b) to conjecture (d)’ (534a).

The questions this analogy leaves us with have to do with the ‘two-worlds theory’: how strict is the separation between different sections and what is the meaning of the ratio between them? To start with the latter question, Plato does give some indications as to what the ratio between the lengths of the sections is analogous to: the ratio between the four types of cognition and their objects pertains to a measure of ‘truth’ (ἀλήθεια) and/or to a measure of ‘clarity’ (σαφήνεια).<sup>73</sup> The unavoidable yet surprising outcome of the proportions of the sections is that the length of the section representing belief (πίστις) is equal to the one representing ‘thought’ (διάνοια). This would mean that *pistis* and ‘thought’ share a similar degree of clarity and/or truth. In a comprehensive study into the meaning of this parallel between *pistis* and *dianoia*, Damien Storey defends this ‘simple answer’ to the question of why these sections are equal in length against many possible challenges.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, he offers an explanation of the ratio of the different sections by explaining their relationship in terms of image/likeness/copy to model/paradigm/original: conjecture concerns shadows and such (d), which are images of sensible objects (c), and thought is directed towards images (b) of the Forms themselves (a).<sup>75</sup> Arguably then, both *pistis* and thought are directed towards sensible particulars—although the latter towards sensibles used as images of Forms<sup>76</sup>—which accounts for their similarity in clarity and truth.

73 Cf. 509d: ‘and you will have in the first segment of the visible section images in relation to each other by their clarity or obscurity (σαφηνεία και ἀσαφεία πρὸς ἄλληλα)’; 511e: ‘and put them in proportion according as you think each contains a measure of clarity (σαφηνείας μετέχειν) to the degree that its objects contain a measure of truth (ἀληθείας μετέχειν)’.

74 Storey 2022. The author kindly allowed me to read his unfinished draft, dated February 2016.

75 A direct textual witness to this underlying principle is 510a: ‘And would you be willing to agree that the division of truth to falsehood (ἀλήθεια και μῆ) is in this ratio: as opinion is to knowledge (ὡς τὸ δοξαστὸν πρὸς τὸ γνωστὸν), thus resemblance is to what it resembles (οὕτω τὸ ὁμοιωθὲν πρὸς τὸ ᾧ ὁμοιώθη)?’, which could be rephrased as  $c+d : a+b = \text{image} : \text{original}$ .

76 Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 250b: ‘but only a few, approaching the images through the darkling organs of sense, behold in them the nature of that which they imitate (θεῶνται τὸ τοῦ εἰκασθέντος γένος), and these few do this with difficulty’.



The relevance of this interpretation to the present study is twofold. Firstly, it ascribes a considerable amount of truth and clarity to *pistis*. This connection between cognates of truth and cognates of *pistis* is confirmed in different dialogues. In the *Timaeus*, it is said about the account (λόγος) of the World Soul that ‘whenever it is concerned with the sensible (...) opinions and beliefs arise which are firm and true (δόξαι καὶ πιστεῖς γίγνονται βέβαιοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς):’<sup>77</sup> It also has an ethical equivalent, for in the *Laws* the man who partakes in truth (ἀλήθεια) is said to be a ‘trustworthy person (πιστὸς)’, whereas the lover of lies is an ‘untrustworthy person (ὁ δὲ ἄπιστος):’<sup>78</sup> Even when it comes to Plato’s analysis of its etymology, ‘faithful’ (πιστόν) is connected to words like ‘knowledge’ (ἐπιστήμη), ‘firm’ (βέβαιον), and ‘inquiry’ (ἱστορία) and is explained as possessing the quality of stopping (ἴστημι), i.e. stopping the movement of our soul towards things, thus enabling stability.<sup>79</sup>

Secondly, our discussion of *pistis* in the divided line analogy shows that although *pistis* is only the third category ‘in line’, it is more closely connected to the intelligible realm than appears at first sight.<sup>80</sup> In this regard the conceptual pair of image and original is of particular interest.<sup>81</sup> It recurs in the *Timaeus*, where *pistis* is used in an equation not unlike those in the divided line analogy. One of the preliminary statements of the character Timaeus when he offers his narrative on the formation of the universe is that the cosmos needs to be an image (εἰκῶν) of some model (παράδειγμα) and that any account (λόγος) of both ought to match its object (29b), therefore:

The accounts of that which is copied after the likeness of that model, and is itself a likeness, will be analogous thereto and possess likelihood (ὄντος δὲ εἰκόνοσ εἰκότασ ἀνά λόγον τε ἐκείνων ὄντασ); for as being is to becoming, so is truth to belief (ὅ τί περ πρὸσ γένεσιν οὐσία, τοῦτο πρὸσ πίστιν ἀλήθεια). (Plato, *Timaeus* 29c)

77 Plato, *Timaeus* 37b–c.

78 Plato, *Laws* 730b–c.

79 Plato, *Cratylus* 437a.

80 Cf. also Edwards forthcoming: ‘*Pistis* is thus not only an uncritical assent to the phenomena but an incipient perception of the reality behind them; the seen is an indispensable propaedeutic to the contemplation of that which transcends all seeing.’ On the principle distinction yet factual proximity of the larger categories of *doxa* and *epistēmē/noēsis*, see Trabattoni 2016, 23–24.

81 On the relationship of this pattern of original-image to the ethical process of *homoiōsis*, see chapter 5, §5.3.4 *infra*.

Timaeus connects the realms or objects of being and becoming to truth (ἀλήθεια) and belief (πίστις) respectively. This seems to be in contradiction to what my conclusion based on the divided line analogy, where *pistis* is said to have a considerable amount of truth. Fortunately, this problem can be overcome by distinguishing between truth proper, connected to the unchanging object of being, and truth as an attribute in a derivative sense, in which epistemic conditions of the souls can partake to a certain degree.<sup>82</sup> Yet, rather than emphasizing the poor quality of *pistis* as opposed to truth proper, this passage from the *Timaeus* shows the function of *pistis* as the epistemic condition to approach the sensible world *par excellence*. In the words of Jan van Ophuijsen:

We find here neither revaluation nor demotion of *pistis*. (...) For this is the highest activity of the soul in relation to the process-aspect of things, to perceptual change (...). *Pistis* is the 'adequation' of the soul to the phenomenal realm (...) [which] is not to be discarded lightly: it includes the gods and the coming-to-be of an All that is best of what has come to be: the sum total, or rather comprehensive unity of visible goodness and beauty. (Van Ophuijsen 2000, 128)

Since *pistis* is thus concerned with the sensible world, including the universe itself and the Olympian gods, it can even be considered to be used here in a 'religious' sense: it pertains to understanding of the entire physical (and, to some extent metaphysical) structure human beings are part of. Likewise, according to Daniel Babut, this is not a question of faith versus reason; rather, it is a matter of different degrees of knowledge. The traditional gods are on an intermediate ontological level and, correspondingly, *pistis* is the intermediate epistemological level:

This intermediate position on the ontological map logically corresponds to an intermediate level or degree as regards knowledge types—that of 'faith' (πίστις) compared to 'truth' (ἀλήθεια). One could also say that, just as the gods of tradition are the reflection, on a lower plane, of the absolute Divine, so the uncertainty as regards them responds, in some way, to the difficulty of perceiving the Principle supreme, the Idea of Good.

82 I owe this suggestion to a paper by Antonio Cimino, 'Pistis and Truth', presented and discussed on 9 April 2015 in a meeting of our NWO-funded research group 'Pauline Pistis in Contemporary Philosophy'.

(...) Whatever has been said, there is no conflict between reason and faith, because both retain their value, yet on different planes. (Babut 1974, 94–95)<sup>83</sup>

*Pistis* thus functions in the *Timaeus* as the manner in which people may know things on earth and in the heavens, though it does not reach as far as the highest ontological realm.

The question to ask, then, is not so much where *pistis* belongs in the order of cognitive states, but rather what level of cognition is humanly attainable according to Plato. In fact, one possible answer is offered in the immediate context of the previous citation from the *Timaeus*. In proceeding with his speech, Timaeus warns his audience, by hinting at the previous wordplay between likeness (*εἰκῶν*) and likelihood (*εἰκῶς*), that:

we should be content if we can furnish accounts that are inferior to none in likelihood (*μηδενὸς ἧττον παρεχόμεθα εἰκότας*), remembering that both I who speak and you who judge are but human creatures, so that it becomes us to accept the likely account (*τὸν εἰκότα μῦθον*) of these matters and forbear to search beyond it. (Plato, *Timaeus* 29c–d)

In other words, according to Timaeus, as humans we ought to be content with the epistemic condition of conviction (*πίστις*), corresponding to the ontological condition of a likeness or image (*εἰκῶν*), characterized by becoming and likelihood.

This modest estimation of human epistemic capabilities as Plato's own stance on the attainability of knowledge proper was not only recognized throughout Hellenistic philosophy, with the sceptical Academy as its more extremist proponent;<sup>84</sup> it is also a viable position in present-day scholarship.

83 My translation of: 'À cette place intermédiaire sur le plan ontologique correspond logiquement un niveau ou un degré intermédiaire quant au mode de connaissance—celui de la *πίστις* par rapport à *l'ἀλήθεια*. On pourrait dire aussi que, de même que les dieux de la tradition sont le reflet, sur un plan inférieur, du Divin absolu, de même l'incertitude en ce qui les concerne répond, en quelque façon, à la difficulté de percevoir le Principe suprême, l'Idée du Bien. (...) Quoi qu'on en ait dit, il n'y a pas de conflit entre raison et foi, car l'une et l'autre conservent leur valeur, mais sur des plans différents.'

84 If we look at the Stoa, for example, similar caution is taken. See e.g. Inwood 2002, 147 on Seneca: 'We cannot, he claims, have knowledge of god, the foundation of all things. (...) This theological language is not anti-empirical, nor is it anti-rational. (...) A properly pious appreciation of the relationship of human nature to the divine will induce us to be epistemically modest and to anticipate (itself quite a rational view) that progress in the explanation of the natural world will be cumulative and slow.'

Franco Trabattoni's *Essays on Plato's Epistemology* is as one recent example in which even the central books of the *Republic* are put forth to establish that 'it is not true that according to Plato man can attain complete knowledge of ideal reality'.<sup>85</sup> The distinctive quality of the philosophers, Trabattoni argues, is not their possession of genuine knowledge, of which only the *sophoi*, i.e. gods can boast, but their aspiration to attain genuine knowledge, hence their name '*philo-sophoi*'.<sup>86</sup>

That brings us to the meaning of love in Plato's epistemology. The depiction of philosophy as not so much love—as the prefix suggests—but rather as a burning desire for wisdom was actually a Platonic adaptation of the earlier conception according to which a philosopher was already in possession of this beloved wisdom.<sup>87</sup> The *Symposium* offers this adaptation in the context of a lively set of speeches, in which not the nature of philosophy, but the nature of *Erōs* is under consideration. Socrates, the human 'embodiment' of *Erōs* in the dialogue,<sup>88</sup> presents us with the philosopher as in-between figure: he knows that his human cognition is insufficient yet this increases his yearning for wisdom, his philosophical *erōs*. Thus, 'Erōs reminds humans of their distance from what transcends them, yet at the same time, it links them to the transcendent.'<sup>89</sup> The idea is that humans can reach from love for instances of beauty

85 Trabattoni 2016, 140. For references to other proponents of the so-called 'third way' interpretation of Plato, between scepticism and dogmatism, see his note 38 on pp. 159–160.

86 Trabattoni 2016, 162. Cf. for the second century reception of this idea Alcinous's definition of philosophy as 'striving for wisdom (ὄρεξις σοφίας) (...) and wisdom is the knowledge of things divine and human (ἐπιστήμη θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων)' in Alcinous, *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae* 1.1, 152.2–6, translation Dillon 1993, 3. The latter definition of wisdom may be Stoic rather than Platonic in origin: cf. Brouwer 2014, 9–18.

87 See e.g. Dörrie 1996, 22–38. In Stoic thought both meanings occur: cf. Brouwer 2014, 42–43.

88 Cf. Osborne 1996, 93–94: 'Ignorance is a well-known Socratic characteristic, but it is peculiarly relevant here given that as the analysis proceeds we shall find love identified with the philosopher's desire for wisdom; that desire, we are persuaded, cannot occur in one who is already wise, but only in one who lacks wisdom. Only if one lacks can one love, and hence Eros, the archetype of the lover and the philosopher, must be one who lacks both wisdom and beauty. Socrates, like Eros, is notorious for being one who lacks wisdom and desires the knowledge that he lacks.'

89 Scott & Welton 2009, 186, cf. also at 186: 'The fact that Socrates embodies Erōs is connected with his being a master in the art of Erōs. (...) To say that he knows Erōs is another way of talking about his human wisdom, his awareness of his own ignorance, since this awareness is inseparable from his longing for wisdom. Philosophic Erōs implies that one senses one's own ignorance, one's lack of and need for wisdom; yet understanding Erōs is the basis for philosophic insight into human nature. (...) In the case of Plato's Socrates, Socrates's awareness of his ignorance is inseparable from some partial recollection of the Forms.'

on this earth towards a more abstract knowledge of beauty: ‘so that he comes to know the very essence of beauty’ (ἵνα γινῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἔστι καλόν).<sup>90</sup> The ontological and epistemological connection between particular sensibles and universal intelligibles in the same dialogue will return in our discussion of Plutarch (§4.3.5) and Paul (§4.4.3). Moreover, the conceptual closeness of (a lack of) knowledge and love that we encounter in the *Symposium*, will be taken up again in our discussion of *1 Corinthians* 13 (§4.4.4). In Paul’s thought, *pistis* seems to take up the role of Platonic *Erōs*: a firm bridge to the divine yet also a provisional, temporal mode of cognition that reminds humans of their dependence upon the divine and ultimate.

To sum up, in analysing *pistis* as a technical epistemological term in Plato, we have seen that it possesses a non-negligible amount of truth and clarity and that it is the highest cognitive condition directed at the entire sensible world, which may well be all that human beings, including philosophers, can attain in this life. What I have not yet addressed is the occurrence of different qualities of *pistis*. For Plato not only mentions ‘true belief’ (πίστις ἀληθῆς) and ‘correct belief’ (πίστις ὀρθή) but also ‘erroneous belief’ (πίστις ψευδῆς) and ‘belief without knowing’ (πίστις ἄνευ τοῦ εἰδέναι).<sup>91</sup> The passages in which these different qualities of *pistis* are explicitly discussed may help us to answer one final question: whether Plato gave any indications that *pistis* can actually become stronger, and if so, how. Or, put differently, is there an avenue from the sensible world to the intelligible, and if so, how are we to envision the function of *pistis*?

A connection between the epistemic dispositions of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and belief (πίστις) is offered in the *Gorgias*, a dialogue where one would perhaps least expect it, since it is famous for its radical distinction between the sophist, represented by *Gorgias*, and the philosopher, impersonated by Socrates. Indeed, in the *Gorgias*, the sharp distinction is made between ‘having learnt’ (μεμαθηκέναι) and ‘having believed’ (πεπιστευκέναι).<sup>92</sup> However, after strongly distinguishing between learning/knowledge (μάθησις/ἐπιστήμη) and belief or persuasion (πίστις), which can be either erroneous or true, Socrates reasons (and *Gorgias* agrees) that two forms of persuasion exist: ‘Then would you have us assume two forms of persuasion (δύο εἶδη (...) πειθοῦς)—one providing belief without knowing, and the other knowledge (τὸ μὲν πίστιν

90 Plato, *Symposium* 211c.

91 Plato, *Gorgias* 454d, *Republic* 601e, *Gorgias* 454d, and *Gorgias* 454e respectively.

92 Plato, *Gorgias* 454c.

παρεχόμενον ἄνευ τοῦ εἰδέναι, τὸ δ' ἐπιστήμην)?<sup>93</sup> The business of rhetoric is considered to be persuasion of the first kind, whereas learning is a type of persuasion said to produce true knowledge.<sup>94</sup> The inclusion of *pistis* along with *epistēmē* under the heading of persuasion at least suggests some relationship between the two. Nevertheless, Plato does not offer any further specifications as to the precise degree of similarity, nor does he comment on the place of true and erroneous *pistis* in this scheme. According to Taglia's thesis about a development in meaning of *pistis* within Plato's dialogues, this passage belongs to the first phase, in which *pistis* is the opposite of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη).<sup>95</sup> Later, in the *Republic*, she observes, instead of 'phases of every single cognitive act' they constitute 'levels of thought which constitute the dimension of someone's entire life'.<sup>96</sup>

If we turn to the final book of the *Republic*, we do get a glimpse of how Plato imagines the connection. The subject under discussion is the epistemic value of poetry. Three skills are distinguished: using, making, and imitating (ἄιδεω, χρῶμαι, μιμνήσκω). Three skills are distinguished: using, making, and imitating (ἄιδεω, χρῶμαι, μιμνήσκω).

So the one who knows reports (ὁ μὲν εἰδὼς ἐξαγγέλλει) on the good and bad pipes, the other takes his word for it and will make them accordingly (ὁ δὲ πιστεύων ποιήσει)? Yes. Then the maker of this same instrument will have a correct opinion (ὁ μὲν ποιητῆς πίστιν ὀρθὴν ἔξει) about its good and bad points through his cooperation with the expert and his being obliged to listen to him, but it's the user who has the knowledge (ὁ δὲ χρώμενος ἐπιστήμην)? Very much so. (Plato, *Republic* 601e–602a)

Using an object (like rains and a bridle or a flute) is said to produce knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), making it correspond to having a correct belief (πίστις ὀρθή). From

93 Plato, *Gorgias* 454d–e. This passage (–455a) is also interesting for its usage of various *pist-* cognates, all belonging to the epistemological semantic field of *pistis*: *πειπτευκέναι*, *πίστις*, *πειπτευκότες*, *τὸ πιστεύειν*, *πιστευτικῆς*, *πειπτικὸς*.

94 Cf. Trabattoni 2016, 38: 'So, when Plato draws a distinction between teaching and persuasion, as in the Phaedrus passage above (277e8–9) or in Tim. 51e, the real difference lies between the fleeting persuasion achieved by orators, poets, and sophists, and the far more lasting persuasion aroused by the philosopher.'

95 Taglia 1998, 142: 'La già osservata caratterizzazione della *pistis* come una credenza priva di garanzie di verità ha dunque come risvolto la contrapposizione, giustificata sul piano delle procedure, con l'*episteme*.'

96 Taglia 1998, 159 (translation my own): '*Pistis* ed *episteme* non sono quindi nella repubblicana fasi di ogni singolo atto conoscitivo, ma livelli di pensiero che possono costituire la dimensione dell'intera vita di un uomo.'

the remainder of the conversation, we learn that imitating—which includes the art of poetry—equals knowing nothing of value (602b: τόν τε μιμητικὸν μηδὲν εἰδέναι ἄξιον λόγου περὶ ὧν μιμεῖται).

Fortunately, this additional trichotomy of cognition, which again shows the intermediate position of *pistis*, is not all we can infer from this passage. In contrast to *epistēmē*, *pistis* is a category of cognition which depends on an authority that has had direct acquaintance with the object in question. Only then it becomes *orthēs*, ‘correct’ belief. For this reason, it is a type of indirect cognition, dependent on the testimony of others. Hence, ‘your *pistis* is appropriate in proportion to the credibility of the object or authority that you place it in.’<sup>97</sup> This connection between *epistēmē* and *pistis* is also confirmed by the allegory of the cave in the same dialogue: the people inside the cave are dependent on the testimony of the one returning from outside the cave (516e ff.), who has seen ‘justice itself’ (517d: αὐτὴν δικαιοσύνην) to reach a correct belief, which is as much as can be achieved in the dim situation they are in.<sup>98</sup>

The indirectness of *pistis* is also emphasized by Taglia, even when it comes to what she views as the highest status of Platonic *pistis* in the *Laws*. In this later work, *pistis* in relationship to the gods (περὶ θεῶν) is deemed the ultimate ingredient to the *paideia*, the education of the wardens of the city (as it concerns faith versus godlessness)—I will discuss this passage (Plato, *Laws* 966d) in §8.3.1 below. *Pistis* then represents ‘contact with the non-mediated divinity of the laws, which allows for an understanding of and serves to guarantee conformity of the polis laws with the cosmic order.’<sup>99</sup> In this phase, Taglia still emphasizes the dependence of *pistis* on *epistēmē*:

*Pistis* is, therefore, a state which is still below *epistēmē*, one which is guaranteed by *epistēmē*. Since, however, unlike in the *Republic*, piqued

97 Van Ophuijsen 2000, 124.

98 For this argument, I make use of the traditional interpretation of the cave allegory, according to which the four segments of the divided line analogy are linked to four different stages in the ascent out of the cave: from seeing the shadows on the wall, to distinguishing the objects lit by the fire themselves, to discerning the objects outside the cave lit by the sun, and ultimately beholding the sun itself. An interesting insight into a possible meaning of *pistis* in the cave is offered by Corrinne Praus Sze (1977), who argued that *pistis* is the ultimate sophistic trait: it moves beyond sense perception (the level of knowledge of poets and ordinary people) to knowledge of real phenomena. According to Praus Sze, however, Plato did not consider *pistis* to be a necessary step in the ascent to *epistēmē*.

99 Taglia 1998, 44 (translation my own): ‘la *pistis* rappresenta un contatto con la divinità non mediato dalla legge, che consente di comprendere e garantire la conformità delle leggi della *polis* all’ordine cosmico’.

knowledge of *pistis* is a divine knowledge, the relationship of *pistis* with human knowledge has changed. The human *epistēmē* collaborates with *pistis* and makes it possible, but the very compatibility with *pistis* indicates the limit of human knowledge, its lack of autonomy. (Taglia 1998, 44)<sup>100</sup>

It is doubtful whether the passage in the *Laws*, on which Taglia builds the final part of her argument, should indeed be seen as part of an epistemological discourse. Nevertheless, it confirms the provisionality and indirectness of *pistis* as a cognitive state, while it also suggests that there is a connection possible with knowledge proper.

I conclude with one final thought about what distinguishes *pistis* from lower cognitive powers. Both the discussion on poetry and the cave-allegory in the *Republic* offer some more insight into the distinction between the two lower mental states, which, in a manner analogous to the divided line passage, could be named conjecture (*eikasia*) and belief (*pistis*). The people who still look at the shadows do not even ask after the real existence of their objects and are very much like the poets or imitators and their audience in *Republic* x, who do not even consider the actual use of their object, do not know ‘whether they’re good and correct or not’ and do not ‘gain the right opinion (δόξαν ὀρθήν)’ (602a). Jessica Moss highlights this psychological distinction as a ‘distinction between passively accepting appearances and actively making affirmations about how things are.’<sup>101</sup> Thus, based on her analysis of passages from the *Theaetetus*, the *Republic*, and ‘later Plato’, it can be considered a Platonic precursor to the eventual Sceptic and Stoic distinction: ‘*eikasia* and *pistis* correspond to Hellenistic appearance-reception and assent.’<sup>102</sup> The first entails a passive yielding to an impression, without questioning its reality or goodness. The second an active process of reflection or calculation, *logismos*, based on which one (correctly or falsely) assents, aiming at the truth, i.e. the real object underneath it.<sup>103</sup>

100 My translation of: ‘La *pistis* è perciò ancora, in quest’ultima fase, uno stato inferiore all’*episteme*, che dall’*episteme* riceve garanzie. Poiché però ora, a differenza sulla *Repubblica*, il sapere offetto di *pistis* è un sapere divino, il rapporto della *pistis* con il sapere umano è cambiato. L’*episteme* umana collabora con la *pistis* e la rende possibile, ma proprio la sua compatibilità con la *pistis* segnala il limite del sapere umano, la sua mancanza di autonomia.’

101 Moss 2014, 236.

102 Moss 2014, 221.

103 Cf. for a different view Morgan 2015, 152: ‘Its [*pistis*’s] problem is not the process by which it draws conclusions, which may be fully rational, but the data it uses to do so, which are



The argument is convincing, yet regardless of whether or not this psychological and inquisitive meaning of *pistis* can truly be attributed to Plato, it may very well have given rise to the Hellenistic developments, which we will turn to now. Since Plato evidently limited the epistemic scope of *pistis* to the sensible world, yet was not explicit about the attainability of anything beyond *pistis*, it could perform a whole range of epistemic functions to those who considered themselves heir to his philosophical legacy. I have selected three of these heirs: Aristotle, Philo, and Plutarch. Together, they are illustrative of what constituted the semantic domain of *pistis* as a cognitive category by the time Christians began to participate in this discourse.

#### 4.3.3 *Aristotle: All-round Use of Pistis in Connection with Perception, Reasoning, and First Principles*

Plato himself is not the only one accused of confining *pistis* to the sublunary world and thus separating it from the realm of knowledge and reason. There is a vivid scholarly debate about the manner in which for instance ‘Middle Platonist’ Plutarch uses *pistis* and cognates. But before we leap to Plutarch and his supposed fideism, we ought to have a look at the period in-between, where Plato’s legacy was taken up and developed in different directions, amongst these the Peripatetic tradition, grounded in the teachings of Aristotle.

In the Aristotelean corpus, a strictly epistemological usage of *pistis* (i.e. representing a formal cognitive faculty or category of cognition) is relatively rare and the connection with a specific type of knowledge as its object is all but completely absent. The fourfold categorization of Plato’s divided line analogy did find its way into Aristotle’s own teachings as four cognitive faculties, but *pistis* is here replaced by *doxa* (opinion).<sup>104</sup> This is in itself telling, for as further usage of *pistis* in Aristotle confirms, *pistis* is thought of in a more univocal ‘positive’ light. If *pistis* is used in epistemological contexts, its meaning approximates being persuaded, in accordance with Aristotle’s more technical treatment of the term in the reified sense of ‘proof’ in his *Rhetoric*.<sup>105</sup> As a persuasion, it can be either weak or strong, and it can be equally strong when it

---

of poor quality because they come from the physical world, along with the decision to use such data, which shows that one has not grasped the illusory nature of this world.’

104 *Eikasia* is also replaced by *aisthēsis*, and the higher faculties are alternately called *epistēmē*, *nous*, or *dianoia*. See Aristotle, *On the Soul* 428a5: αἴσθησις, δόξα, ἐπιστήμη, νοῦς; *Metaphysics* 1074b35: ἡ ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ διάνοια.

105 E.g. *Posterior Analytics* 2.3.90b14 (‘Induction too affords sufficient grounds for this position (ἰκανὴ δὲ πίστις καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἐπαγωγῆς)'). See §5.3.1 below.

concerns true knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) as when it pertains to opinion (δόξα).<sup>106</sup> While the typical rhetorical usage will be discussed in the next chapter (§5.3.1), it is relevant to look at a few more instances here, where *pistis* is used in a less technical, yet overtly rhetorical sense.

The relationship between *pistis* and apprehension (ὕποληψις) is discussed in his treatise on dialectic reasoning, *Topics*. Aristotle considers knowledge a species of the genus apprehension. Conviction (πίστις) and apprehension, though, are not related as species and genus:

neither is conviction apprehension (οὐδ' ἡ πίστις ὑπόληψις); for it is possible to have the same apprehension even without being convinced of it (τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόληψιν καὶ μὴ πιστεύοντα ἔχειν), whereas this is impossible if conviction is a species of apprehension (εἴπερ εἶδος ἡ πίστις ὑπολήψεως). (Aristotle, *Topics* 125b35–38)

The explanation Aristotle offers here is that in a similar manner, the same animal (a genus) cannot be a man (a species) and not a man, so since an apprehension can be one of which someone can be convinced and not convinced, apprehension is not the genus of *pistis*. A little further, though, Aristotle admits that people generally do consider belief (*pistis*) as belonging to the genus apprehension, for they speak of it as an intensified apprehension (ἡ πίστις ὑπόληψις σφοδρά), with 'intensified' functioning as its differentiating quality.<sup>107</sup> As we shall see below, this definition of *pistis* as a strong, fortified type of apprehension, which is recorded hesitatingly by Aristotle, is later taken up in complete accord by the Stoics (see §5.3.6 below).

*Pistis* is not only an intense form of apprehension; in the corpus Aristotelicum it is also closely connected to reason (λόγος). In *On the Soul*, Aristotle wonders whether imagination (φαντασία) is similar to opinion (δόξα). It is not, he concludes, for opinion is necessarily followed by *pistis*, which implies

106 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.3.4 (1146b27–30): 'if weakness of conviction be the criterion for deciding that men who act against their conception of what is right must be said to opine rather than to know the right (εἰ οὖν διὰ τὸ ἡρέμα πιστεύειν οἱ δοξάζοντες μᾶλλον τῶν ἐπισταμένων παρὰ τὴν ὑπόληψιν πράξουσιν), there will really be no difference in this respect between Opinion and Knowledge (οὐθὲν διοίσει ἐπιστήμη δόξης); since some men are just as firmly convinced of what they opine as others are of what they know (ἐνιοὶ γὰρ πιστεύουσιν οὐδὲν ἥττον οἷς δοξάζουσιν ἢ ἕτεροι οἷς ἐπίστανται).'

107 See *Topics* 126b17–20: '[A]mazement is generally regarded (δοκεῖ) as excessive astonishment and conviction as intensified apprehension (ἡ πίστις ὑπόληψις σφοδρά), so that astonishment and apprehension are the genus (ὥστε γένος ἡ θαυμασιότης καὶ ἡ ὑπόληψις), while excess and intensification are the differentia.'

persuasion and ultimately reason. Hence, *pistis* is described as a distinctively human capacity, lacking in animals:

But opinion implies belief (ἀλλὰ δόξη μὲν ἔπεται πίστις)—for one cannot hold opinions in which one does not believe (οἷς δοκεῖ μὴ πιστεύειν; and no animal has belief (τῶν δὲ θηρίων οὐθενὶ ὑπάρχει πίστις), but many have imagination. Again, every opinion is accompanied by belief, belief by conviction, and conviction by reason (ἔτι πάση μὲν δόξη ἀκολουθεῖ πίστις, πίστει δὲ τὸ πεπεῖσθαι, πειθοὶ δὲ λόγος); but although some creatures have imagination, they have no reasoning power. (Aristotle, *On the Soul* 428a20–25)

The place of *pistis* in this catalogue of human capacities is telling: it stands etymologically as well as pragmatically close to being convinced (πεπεῖσθαι), wherefore it is necessarily part of each act of opining and always implies the use of rational discourse or reason.<sup>108</sup> In a sixth-century commentary on Aristotle's *On the Soul* attributed to Simplicius, the author explains that '*pistis* is the assent to what is known as true (πίστις δὲ ἐστὶν ἢ ὡς ἀληθεῖ τῷ γνωσθέντι συγκατάθεσις), wherefore it does not exist without reasonable arguments (διὸ καὶ ἀλόγοις οὐχ ὑπάρχει).<sup>109</sup> This epistemological use of *pistis* as a firm grasp recurs in Stoic thought (see §5.3.5) and in Philo (see §4.3.3). As for Aristotle's use, it is in any case clear that *pistis* cannot be thought of without reason (λόγος).<sup>110</sup>

So what type of reason is Aristotle speaking of? In *On the Soul*, where his aim is not to solve epistemological problems but to give an account of perception, reason is an activity of the soul—that of receiving the form or essence of what is perceived. Yet in other treatises reason seems to function in a more general epistemological sense of 'reasoning' and 'rational argumentation'. We learn that, according to Aristotle, a conviction (πίστις) may be based

108 For his definition of δόξα as involving λόγος, Aristotle is probably indebted to Plato (*Theaetetus* 189e–190a; *Sophist* 263e ff.), wherefore by λόγος, he means rational deliberation within the soul, not with others: see Sorabji 1995, 200.

109 (Pseudo-)Simplicius, *On Aristotle's De Anima* 3.3 (on *On the Soul* 428a18), translation is my own. The same definition of *pistis* is found in some manuscripts of the treatise *On Emotions*, falsely attributed to Andronicus of Rhodes: Ἀκολουθεῖ δὲ τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἡ ὁσιότης καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ <ἡ> πίστις καὶ ἡ μισοπονηρία. [Ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἢ ὡς ἀληθεῖ τῷ γνωσθέντι συγκατάθεσις.] (Pseudo-Andronicus of Rhodes, *Peri pathôn* 2.8.3). For the critical edition, see Glibert-Thirry 1977, 257.

110 On Aristotle's use of *pistis* here, see also Gerson 2009, 82: 'Conviction [i.e. *pistis*] requires that one affirm or deny a combination of thoughts as representing reality. It requires, we might say, a propositional attitude.'

on inductive reasoning from observations, but can also be involved in deductive reasoning from premises.<sup>111</sup> To illustrate the first point, Aristotle states that the immortal nature of the heavens deserves *pistis* based on repeated observations of its immutability.<sup>112</sup> The connection between observation and reason as means to convince, to create *pistis*, is evident in ethical contexts as well. After correcting the bare 'knowledge is virtue' teaching he ascribes to Socrates,<sup>113</sup> Aristotle states that we need to 'aim for *pistis* in these matters by means of rational arguments', which in turn include 'phenomena used as evidences and examples':

in the case of virtue it is not the knowledge of its essential nature that is most valuable (οὐ τὸ εἰδέναι τιμιώτατον τί ἐστίν) but the ascertainment of the sources that produce it (τὸ γινώσκειν ἐκ τίνων ἐστίν). For our aim is not to know what courage is but to be courageous, not to know what justice is but to be just, (...) And about all these matters the endeavour must be made to seek to convince by means of rational arguments (ζητεῖν τὴν πίστιν διὰ τῶν λόγων), using observed facts as evidences and examples (μαρτυρίοις καὶ παραδείγμασι χρώμενον τοῖς φαινομένοις). For the best thing would be if all mankind were seen to be in agreement with (συνομολογοῦντας) the views that will be stated, but failing that, at any rate that all should agree in some way. (Aristotle, *Eudemean Ethics* 1.5.18 (1216b20–31))

*Pistis*, in this context, is a persuasion brought about by reason (λόγος), which includes sensible or subjective examples and strives to make all people live virtuously. In fact, from the *Analytics*, we know that Aristotle considered examples (παραδείγματα) the rhetorical variant of inductive reasoning.<sup>114</sup> This

111 Pace Urmson (1990, 135) who claims that *pistis* means 'a less than demonstrative proof' based on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* 90b14, quoted above, which is translated/paraphrased as 'the proof from induction is sufficient', whereas *pistis* is obviously used not in a technical epistemological, but rhetorical sense there, and the whole phrase reads, '[i]nduction too affords sufficient grounds for holding that definition and demonstration are not the same'.

112 Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 270b12–18.

113 Cf. §2.4.4 *supra*.

114 Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 1.1.71a5–12: 'Similarly too with logical arguments, whether syllogistic or inductive (περὶ τοὺς λόγους οἳ τε διὰ συλλογισμῶν καὶ οἳ δι' ἐπαγωγῆς); both effect instruction by means of facts already recognized, the former making assumptions as though granted by an intelligent audience, and the latter proving the universal from the self-evident nature of the particular. The means by which rhetorical arguments (οἱ

is the type of reasoning that, according to this passage, leads to conviction (*πίστις*), which in itself is a prelude to virtue, a necessary additional step following up on the Socratic acquisition of relevant knowledge.

These findings demonstrate that the act of reasoning that brings about *pistis* can be inductive, based on repeated perceptions or rhetorical proofs and examples. *Pistis* is not limited to this type of reasoning, though. In the *Physics*, we learn that the *pistis* or conviction that the reversing of a movement involves ‘stopping’, can be based not only on empirical observation but also on reasoning as such (ἡ πίστις οὐ μόνον ἐπὶ τῆς αἰσθήσεως ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ λόγου).<sup>115</sup> The type of reasoning that follows is of a deductive nature, arguing from accepted or evident premises such as the one that ‘one cannot arrive and depart at the same point in time’. Similarly, in the introduction of the *Topics*, where different types of deductive reasoning are discussed, *pistis* is said to be partake in reasoning as demonstration (ἀπόδειξις), the type that produces knowledge (ἐπιστήμη),<sup>116</sup> and proceeds ‘from premises which are true and primary’ (ἐξ ἀληθῶν καὶ πρώτων) as opposed to dialectical reasoning, ‘from generally accepted opinions’ (ἐξ ἐνδόξων):<sup>117</sup>

Things are true and primary which command belief through themselves and not through anything else (ἔστι δὲ ἀληθῆ μὲν καὶ πρώτα τὰ μὴ δι’ ἐτέρων ἀλλὰ δι’ αὐτῶν ἔχοντα τὴν πίστιν); for regarding the first principles of science it is unnecessary to ask any further question as to ‘why,’ but each principle should of itself command belief (ἐκάστην τῶν ἀρχῶν αὐτὴν καθ’ ἑαυτὴν εἶναι πιστήν). (Aristotle, *Topics* 100b18–21)

Aristotle here presents the first principles, the axioms, as objects of *pistis*.<sup>118</sup> They are evident and trustworthy in and of themselves and can thus be used as certain premises in a demonstrative syllogism.

---

ῥητορικῶι) carry conviction are just the same; for they use either examples, which are a kind of induction (ἢ γὰρ διὰ παραδειγμάτων, ὅ ἐστιν ἐπαγωγῆ), or enthymemes, which are a kind of syllogism.’

115 Aristotle, *Physics* 262a19–20.

116 Cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 1.2.71b20–25. Yet cf. Barnes 2014, 43–45, who sharply differentiates between syllogisms that offer explanatory proof and hence knowledge and syllogisms that do not and offer (reasonable) faith.

117 Aristotle, *Topics* 100a27–31.

118 Cf. Barnes 2014, 55–57 for a discussion of Clement’s and Theodoretus’ (lack of) understanding of Aristotle’s use of *pistis* as directed towards the first principles.

In accordance with this role of *pistis*, having *epistēmē* is defined by Aristotle as having a conviction (*pisteuō*) arrived at in a certain way, with certain knowledge of the first principles:

A man knows a thing scientifically (*ἐπίσταται*) when he possesses a conviction arrived at in a certain way, and when the first principles [on which that conviction rests] are known to him with certainty (*ὅταν γὰρ πως πιστεύῃ καὶ γνώριμοι αὐτῷ ὧσιν αἱ ἀρχαί*)—for unless he is more certain of his first principles than of the conclusion drawn from them he will only possess the knowledge in question accidentally. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.3.4 (1139b33–35))<sup>119</sup>

Here, a conviction of the first principles appears to require more than their appearance; it must be acquired in some particular way (*πῶς*). This short statement is elucidated by a statement on the nature of *phronēsis* further on in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. This quality is not in reach of the young, we learn here, because first principles (*ἀρχαί*) are known based on experience (*ἐξ ἐμπειρίας*), whereas ‘the young can only repeat them without being convinced of their truth’ (*τὰ μὲν οὐ πιστεύουσιν οἱ νέοι ἀλλὰ λέγουσιν*).<sup>120</sup> In this context, *pistis* is used in contrast to speech: in order to achieve knowledge, a seasoned conviction (*pistis*) of the first principles, as opposed to mere parroting leading to accidental knowledge, is necessary.

To sum up, we have seen that according to Aristotle, *pistis* and the act of *pisteuō* represent an intensified form of apprehension, that in many examples, *pistis* is connected to reason (*λόγος*), and that it is used across the epistemological spectrum as arising from repeated perception, subjective evidence, deductive reasoning, and even from the first principles themselves. In accordance with his more positive stance on sense perception, Aristotle’s epistemological usage of *pistis* lacks ‘Platonic’ suspicion or confinement to sensible particulars. It is a human, strong, and reasonable conviction that is even used in conjunction with *epistēmē* as a seasoned knowledge of the first principles.<sup>121</sup>

This usage of *pistis* language to indicate the grasping of true knowledge recurs in the wake of Aristotle. In the pseudo-Aristotelean treatise *On the*

119 The context here is the nature of *phronēsis*.

120 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.8.6–7 (1142a19–20).

121 Frazier strongly separates such Aristotelian usage of *pistis* from Plato’s, yet while I would grant that for the most part Aristotle’s usage is best understood within the semantic domain of persuasion (my chapter 5), I still see strong connections to Plato’s usage of *pistis* as a hierarchical category of knowledge. Cf. Frazier 2017, 194: ‘Such a notion of *πίστις* has nothing to do with *πίστις* as a Platonic *δόξα* that is inferior to knowledge.’

*Cosmos* (*De mundo*), which is difficult to date precisely but must have been written between the first century BC and the second AD, the unknown author comes up with several metaphors in order to explain the workings of ‘the leader and author of all things, unseen except to reason (ἀόρατος ὢν ἄλλω πλήν λογισμῶ)’.<sup>122</sup> In this context, the verb *pisteuō* is used to indicate how humans may after all perceive the divine influence behind all natural processes in the world.<sup>123</sup>

It is a similar idea that we must have of the universe: by a single inclination all things are spurred to action and perform their peculiar functions—and this single agent is unseen and invisible (καὶ ταύτης ἀοράτου καὶ ἀφανούς). Its invisibility is no impediment either to its own action or to our belief in it (οὔτε ἐκείνη πρὸς τὸ δρᾶν οὔτε ἡμῖν πρὸς τὸ πιστεῦσαι); for the soul, whereby we live and build households and cities, though it is invisible is perceived through its deeds (ἀόρατος οὖσα τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτῆς ὁράται). (Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Cosmos* 399b10–17)

This is an important pagan witness to the language of ‘believing the invisible’, yet without any trace of anti-intellectualism. Instead, *pisteuō* is akin to reason and indicates gaining knowledge of something absolute, something beyond the ability of the senses. It is good to keep this contrast between ‘faith’ and ‘sight’ in mind when we turn to Paul (§4.4.3 in particular). The idea that an invisible divine power can be ‘seen’ through its actions was, at least, shared among these authors (see Rom 1.20, on which see §2.4.1 above).

The positive attitude of Aristotle towards *pistis* was also used in the second century AD by Clement of Alexandria to underline the indispensability of ‘faith’ for attaining the ultimate principles. In his *Miscellanies* (*Stromateis*), Clement refers to Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* (specifically 1.2.71b33–72a5) in order to demonstrate that ‘Sensation is the ladder to Knowledge; while Faith, advancing over the pathway of the objects of sense, leaves Opinion behind, and speeds to things free of deception, and reposes in the truth.’<sup>124</sup> Aristotle’s use of *pistis* in connection with the first principles is thus exploited by Clement in order to defend its centrality in Christian teachings. My argument in this chapter is that such an understanding of *pistis* as an epistemological bridge to divine knowledge can already be discerned in Paul’s letters, wherefore Paul’s

122 Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Cosmos* 399a31–33.

123 On the date, see Forster & Furley 1955, 340.

124 Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 2.4.13, translation Roberts & Donaldson 1869. On Clement’s defence of *pistis* as a valid epistemological mode, see Wyss 2017.

epistemological usage of *pistis* may be understood as a contribution to this Platonic discourse.

#### 4.3.4 *Philo: Pistis as Penultimate Virtue of Stability That Consists of Trusting the Trustworthy*

Both from within Plato's corpus and from the works of his most famous student there is no reason, so it seems, to disregard *pistis* as nothing more than something to set off true knowledge. But what happened, one might ask, when its philosophical usage blended into the monotheistic religions?<sup>125</sup> If *pistis* is directed at God, does its meaning correspondingly shift towards irrational allegiance? This is indeed suggested in histories of philosophy such as the one written by Giovanni Reale:

We are in the presence of a profound overturning of a perspective in comparison with the moral rationalism of the Greeks (...) [T]he break with Hellenic rationalism involves the introduction of a new virtue, that of faith, which is placed at the very apex of all the virtues. (...) The new 'wise man' is the man who has faith in God, who places all his trust in Him, giving all to Him, trying in all possible ways 'to follow Him' and 'to imitate Him.' (Reale 1990, 202)

This is an astounding example of the imposition of the Enlightenment dichotomy between faith and reason on ancient philosophy. It suggests that the cleft between Philo and his philosophical predecessors and contemporaries is unbridgeable, while Academics, Stoics, and Epicureans were in perfect agreement on their rational approach to metaphysics and ethics. My main argument here is that while Philo expands the previous philosophical usage of *pistis* to include relational and divine elements, it remains a particularly rational category.

In the large corpus of the Alexandrian Jewish Platonist Philo, *pistis* does function in ways different from his pagan philosophical predecessors.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> By moving from Aristotle to Philo of Alexandria, I am well aware of leaping over the important phase of Hellenistic philosophy, including, among others, the schools of the sceptical Academy, Epicureanism, and Stoicism. These philosophical traditions, however, will be addressed more fully in the next chapter, in which the epistemological perspective on *pistis* is expanded to include persuasive and relational elements.

<sup>126</sup> There has been much debate regarding the philosophical school to which Philo adheres most, whether it be the Stoics, Pythagoreans, or Peripatetics. In his particular period, however, the schools were very much in contact, polemicizing their rivals and borrowing



Whereas up until now the discourse was strictly epistemological, concerned with sensible or intelligible objects of *pistis*, in Philo, the element of interpersonal trust is blended with the more cognitive colouring of *pistis*. In contrast with the scant interest in *pistis* in Aristotle, Philo's usage of the term has received a fair amount of scholarly attention. Thus, instead of discussing and weighing all the instances of *pistis* as if I were working from scratch, I will instead refer to trends in scholarly literature, critically review them if necessary, and illustrate this with relevant passages, with a focus on the epistemic value of the *pistis* vocabulary.

There are some problems with doing justice to Philo, to both his reliance on sources and his original application of them.<sup>127</sup> For one thing, there is the enormous gap in contemporary references. Both on the Jewish and on the Greek side, he stands very much alone in the landscape of extant material.<sup>128</sup> Some careful comparisons yield significant results, though. For our purposes, an interesting aspect in which he is in convergence with the limited Pythagorean-Platonic sources of the period is the distance between the divine and the world. According to Mauro Bobazzi, this was an important new tendency in imperial Platonism: 'Eudorus, Plutarch's teacher Ammonius, the pseudo-Timaeus and the pseudo-Archytas of the treatise on principles all agree in calling the first principle "God", moreover, 'these authors agree in insisting on the separateness and superiority of the first divine principle.'<sup>129</sup>

A second problem in dealing with Philo is a lack of consistency within the large Philonic corpus. This may be partly due to a conscious method: in his large number of commentaries on Scripture, he takes his starting point from the texts and combines this with his philosophical legacy and insights.<sup>130</sup>

---

from each other at the same time. I use 'Platonist' here in a broad sense, as referring to philosophers that appropriated large parts of Plato's heritage. On the question of whether Philo can be called a 'philosopher', cf. Runia 2001b, 286: 'not a Greek philosopher in the ordinary sense', and Hirsch-Luipold 2005, 164: 'dann ist meines Erachtens gegenüber der genannten These Runias die Frage zu stellen: "What is a Greek philosopher (of the first century A.D.) in the ordinary sense?" Die Antwort auf diese Frage sollte nicht von außen her über eine vorgängige Definition dessen, was als Philosophie zu gelten hat—im Sinne eines bestimmten Verständnisses aristotelischer Philosophie oder im Sinne eines modernen Verständnisses etwa der analytischen Philosophie—, präjudiziert werden, worauf dann die Quellen der Analyse entsprechend ausgewählt werden.'

127 For these interpretative problems, see Runia 2001b, 286–287.

128 On the philosophical landscape, cf. Daniélou 2014, 37–52.

129 Bonazzi 2008b, 236 and 237 respectively.

130 Cf. the perhaps overly reductionistic view of Hadas-Lebel 2012, 175: 'Philosophical doctrines are never set forth for their own sake. When the scriptural text calls for a philosophical interpretation, Philo borrows elements from the most appropriate doctrine for the occasion.'

While this may explain some irregularities, others may be traced back to differences in genre between commentaries and more general philosophical expositions. Of the latter specific cluster of writings, the Philonic authorship has often been disputed, or the different views espoused are explained as a result of their original setting in the classroom, representing received instead of personal teachings.<sup>131</sup> An example of an inconsistency, analogous to the issue of an utterly transcendent God, is his alternation between identifying God with the monad or the one and placing him above even these philosophical principles.<sup>132</sup> I cannot delve deeper into this general interpretative problem here. We will encounter similar differences in Philo's usage of *pistis*, however, and the issue of God's transcendence will prove helpful here.

A first thing that comes to the fore when we compare Philo's usage of *pistis* to that of Plato and Aristotle is that it can be roughly divided into two categories: (1) instances in which Philo explains usage of *pistis* in the Septuagint, where it is most often directed at God (and often related to Abraham or Moses) and (2) more familiar, general usage of *pistis* language, mostly in the reified sense of 'proof', 'pledge', or 'evidence' yet also conveying actions of trusting or believing.<sup>133</sup>

To illustrate the second category, instances of animals changing colour are considered 'clear proofs of the impossibility of apprehension' (πίστεις ἐναργεῖς ἀκαταληψίας).<sup>134</sup> In this example, we see that Philo clearly shares Plato's scepti-

131 Daniélou 2014, 40, who refers to Bousset 1915, 134–152.

132 Cf. for example, *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.3 ("The "one" and the "monad" are, therefore, the only standard for determining the category to which God belongs), *On the Special Laws* 2.176 ('the monad, which is an incorporeal image of God'), *On the Virtues* 213 ('the One, the Primal, the Uncreated and Maker of all') with *On Rewards and Punishments* 40 ('better than the good, more venerable than the monad, purer than the one'), *Questions and Answers on Exodus* 2.68 ('He Who is elder than the one and the monad and the beginning').

133 Adolf von Schlatter (1963 [1882], 576) and, following him, Dennis Lindsay (1993, 56) distinguish between four main categories, namely (1) pledge, security, proof; (2) trustworthiness in the execution of a duty; (3) trust; (4) conviction. However, this distinction is based on meanings that are often closely related in singular texts, as both Schlatter (at 577) and Lindsay (at 59) acknowledge. Lindsay regards the category of 'pledge, security, proof' as 'purely secular' (57), which seems somewhat artificial since it often concerns religious 'proofs' and since the modern notion of the 'secular' has no equivalent in antiquity. Martina Böhm (2017, 165–167) distinguishes between 'religious' and 'non-religious' usage, categories that for the most part correspond with my division here, and observes (at 166) that 'religious' usage is relatively rare and mostly concentrated in specific texts.

134 Philo, *On Drunkenness* 175.

cism of sense-perception.<sup>135</sup> Similar to Aristotle's distinction of types of *pistis*, not only can *pistis* be based on examples, but also on reason (λόγος). The ideas about parents outranking children are 'self-evidently clear' (δῆλον μὲν ἐκ τῆς ἐναργείας); yet logical proofs will ratify their truth still further (αἱ δ' ἐκ λόγου πίστεις ἔτι μᾶλλον ἐπισφραγιούνται τὴν ἀλήθειαν).<sup>136</sup> Words may be trusted or not: the 'wonders' Moses and Aaron performed before Pharaoh were meant to establish trust in what they had to say: 'thinking that the sight would convert them from the prevailing unbelief to belief in his words (ἀπιστίας εἰς πίστιν τῶν λεγομένων μεταβαλεῖν).'<sup>137</sup> And oaths in particular are meant to establish faith in things difficult to trust: 'Matters that are in doubt are decided by an oath, insecure things made secure (τὰ ἀβέβαια βεβαιούται), assurance given to that which lacked it (τὰ ἄπιστα λαμβάνει πίστιν).'<sup>138</sup>

The cases in which *pistis* is used in the sense of 'evidence' are quite numerous; if we follow the analysis of David Hay, they together make up 93 cases, that is 59.6 percent of all Philo's uses of *pistis*.<sup>139</sup> While the former examples speak of 'proofs' of truths that we would not consider 'religious', many of these occurrences of reified *pistis* are used to substantiate claims about God, Scripture, and providence.<sup>140</sup> Unlike Hay, who wanted to argue for the likelihood of a similar reified usage of *pistis* in the New Testament (cf. §3.4.1 above), our question here is whether Philo's *pistis* vocabulary shows traces of fideism, a supra-rational trust regardless of rational evidence to the contrary. To further investigate this question, we should now turn to Philo's interpretation of the biblical stories of Abraham and Moses.

Perhaps one of the more suspect passages when it comes to fideism is a description of the future-oriented trust of Abraham, based solely on God's promise:

Thus he testifies to the trust which the soul reposed in God (μαρτυρίαν πίστεως ἣν ἐπίστευσεν ἡ ψυχὴ θεῷ), exhibiting its thankfulness not as called out by accomplished facts, but by expectation of what was to be.

135 Cf. Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 3.224: 'but when irrational sense gains the chief place, a terrible confusion overtakes it.'

136 Philo, *On the Special Laws* 2.227. See also Philo, *On the Special Laws* 4.156: 'The strict test of truth (...) can only be tested by proofs founded on reason (ἀληθείας δὲ βᾶσανος αἱ σὺν λόγῳ πίστεις).'

137 Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 1.90.

138 Philo, *On Dreams* 1.12.

139 Hay 1989, 465, see p. 464, n. 14 and 15 for all specific passages.

140 E.g. *On Dreams* 2.220, *On the Confusion of Tongues* 156, *On Providence* 2.72 (112). For more examples, see Hay 1989, 465–467.

For the soul, clinging in utter dependence on a good hope (ἐκκρεμασθεῖσα ἐλπίδος χρηστής), and deeming that things not present are beyond question already present by reason of the sure steadfastness of Him that promised them (διὰ τὴν τοῦ ὑποσχομένου βεβαιότητα), has won as its meed faith, a perfect good (πίστιν, ἀγαθὸν τέλειον); for we read a little later 'Abraham believed God' (Gen 15.6). (Philo, *On the Migration of Abraham* 43–44)

Abraham's *pistis* is an 'utter dependence on a useful hope' placed in 'things not present'. Does this mean it is naive, fabulous, irrational type of faith? Two remarkable aspects of *pistis* are mentioned here which are part of Philo's standard description of the term: its connection to 'stability' (βεβαιότης) and its definition as a 'perfect good' (ἀγαθὸν τέλειον), the first a common epistemological quality, the second a typical ethical qualification (though, as will be made clear, one that is inextricable from cognitive activity). From descriptions of these two aspects in different works, we learn more about Philo's conception of faith.

As for the stability, this is the ultimate quality of God as opposed to the instability and variability of creation.<sup>141</sup> In its connection to *pistis*, it stands for cognitive surety, a stable disposition of the wise, against doubt, double-mindedness, and hesitation, qualities of the unstable disposition of the fool (cf. the next chapter, esp. §5.3.6, on the Stoic usage of *pistis* in relation to the wise).<sup>142</sup> Philo explains that Moses was a 'wise man' (σοφός) because (according to Deut 5.31) he had this divine privilege to stand with 'God who ever stands fast' (τοῦ ἐστῶτος αἰεὶ θεοῦ).<sup>143</sup> Philo explains that this 'standing with God' is the privilege to

put off doubt and hesitation, the qualities of the unstable mind (ἵνα ἐνδοιασμὸν καὶ ἐπαμφοτερισμὸν, ἀβεβαίου ψυχῆς διαθέσεις ἀποδυσάμενος), and put on that surest and most stable quality, faith (καὶ βεβαιωτάτην διάθεσιν, πίστιν, ἐνδύσῃται). (Philo, *On the Confusion of Tongues* 31)

141 E.g. Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain* 23: 'Now that which is unwaveringly stable (ἀκλινῶς ἐστῶς) is God, and that which is subject to movement is creation. He therefore that draws nigh to God longs for stability (στάσεως ἐφίεται), but he that forsakes Him, inasmuch as he approaches the unresting creation is, as we might expect, carried about.'

142 Cf. Daniélou 2014, 152: 'Indeed, for Philo, faith is essentially the act by which the soul adheres to God's immutable realm, turning away from the unstable world of sensible life. (...) its precise meaning is the mind's adhesion to intelligible realities that are stable and establish the mind in the realm of immutability.'

143 Philo, *On the Confusion of Tongues* 31.

Moses's yearning for seeing the divine nature (Ex 33.13), a difficult endeavour, is explained as a hope 'to obtain at length a view free from all falsehood (ἴν' ἦδη ποτέ ἀψευδοῦς δόξης μεταλαβῶν), and to exchange doubt and uncertainty for a most assured confidence (ἀβεβαίου ἐνδοιασμοῦ βεβαιοτάτην πίστιν ἀλλάξῃται).'<sup>144</sup> Moses considered wisdom to be the attempt to receive God himself as inheritance, and Philo warns that these are not 'opinions held by men who halt between two opinions (τὰ δὲ δόγματα οὐκ ἐπαμφοτερίζοντων ταύτ' ἐστίν), but by men possessed by steadfast faith (ἀλλὰ βεβαία πίστει κατεσχημένων).'<sup>145</sup> In describing *pistis* as a firm mental disposition, Philo approximates Stoic usage of the term as a quality of sages (see §5.3.5).

Philo also describes *pistis* in ethical terms as a 'perfect good', 'the most perfect of the virtues', and 'the queen of the virtues'.<sup>146</sup> Interestingly, this virtue of *pistis* is not in any sense at odds with the action of *pisteuō*. Rather, in the passage quoted above (*On the Migration of Abraham* 43–44) as elsewhere, the virtue of faithfulness consists of the action of believing or trusting, expressed in the Septuagint and accordingly by Philo with the verb *pisteuō*, and this does not seem to be problematic for Philo.<sup>147</sup>

*Pistis* is often mentioned as a virtue in connection with the figure of Abraham, whom Philo also regards as a sage.<sup>148</sup> He fled his home with the Chaldeans, a people characterized by Philo as divinizing creation itself and as holding 'that there is no originating cause outside the things we perceive by our senses' (οὐδὲν ἔξω τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἴτιον ὑπολαμβάνοντες εἶναι).<sup>149</sup> He then learned that God is the 'Father of all things, conceptual and sensible' (ὄλων πατὴρ νοητῶν τε αὖ καὶ αἰσθητῶν) and eventually became the prototype of faith.<sup>150</sup>

144 Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain* 12–13.

145 Philo, *On Planting* 70.

146 Philo, *Who Is the Heir?* 91 and *On the Life of Abraham* 270, respectively. Cf. the categorization by Martina Böhm (2017, 170–179), who distinguishes between the sense of (1) trust in the universal paradigm of Mosaic Law, (2) a changed perception of reality resulting in the prize ('Prämie') of consistent trust, and (3) trust in divine providence in history. When it comes to comparing Philonic and Pauline usage of *pistis*, however, Böhm emphasizes (at 180) the importance of acknowledging that within one horizon of faith ('Glaubenshorizont') both know radically different horizons of thought ('Denkhorizonte') and horizons of experience ('Erfahrungshorizonte'), whereby she contrasts Philo's elite and philosophical and Paul's socially diverse and apocalyptic orientation.

147 This insight invalidates arguments that the noun must mean an act of belief in the context of the verb: see §1.5 above. I will return to Philo's conflation of the quality and attitude of *pistis* in chapter 6 (§6.3.5).

148 Philo, *Who Is the Heir?* 91.

149 Philo, *On the Virtues* 212.

150 Philo, *On the Virtues* 214.

And, therefore, he is the first person spoken of as believing in God (διὸ καὶ πιστεῦσαι λέγεται τῷ θεῷ πρώτος), since he first grasped a firm and unswerving conception of the truth (ἀκλινὴ καὶ βεβαιάν ἔσχεν ὑπόληψιν) that there is one Cause above all (ἐν αἴτιον τὸ ἀνωτάτω), and that it provides for the world and all that there is therein. And having gained faith, the most sure and certain of the virtues (κτησάμενος δὲ πίστιν, τὴν τῶν ἀρετῶν βεβαιωτάτην), he gained with it all the other virtues (συνεκτάτω καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἀπάσας). (Philo, *On the Virtues* 216)

*Pistis* as a virtue is here explicitly linked to a cognitive acknowledgement of God's existence and providence,<sup>151</sup> not as a dogmatic statement one can believe or not regardless of evidence or reason, but rather as a firm conviction (βεβαία ὑπόληψις), looking beyond the sensible to the divine cause of all that exists.

While in this regard *pistis* as such is a virtue, in another sense whether it is virtuous or not is a matter of its object. Philo resumes his earlier point a little further on, namely that Abraham 'put his trust (πιστεύσαντα) in nothing created rather than in the Uncreated and Father of all.'<sup>152</sup> According to Philo, this is indeed a sage's prerogative, a task for an 'Olympian' mind:

to trust in God alone and join no other with Him is no easy matter, by reason of our kinship with our yokefellow, mortality, which works upon us to keep our trust placed in riches and repute and office and friends and health and strength and many other things. To purge away each of these, to distrust created being, which in itself is wholly unworthy of trust (ἀπιστήσαι γενέσει τῇ πάντα ἐξ ἑαυτῆς ἀπιστῶ), to trust in God, and in Him alone, even as He alone is truly worthy of trust (μόνῳ δὲ πιστεῦσαι θεῷ καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν μόνῳ πιστῶ)—this is a task for a great and celestial understanding (μεγάλης καὶ ὀλυμπίου ἔργον διανοίας) which has ceased to be ensnared by aught of the things that surround us. (Philo, *Who Is the Heir?* 93)<sup>153</sup>

This dual object of *pistis*, created and uncreated being, seems to be derived from the general Platonic opposition between the sensible, which is not to

151 Cf. Philo, *On the Virtues* 215: 'he went forth never faltering in his ardour to seek for the One, nor did he pause until he received clearer visions, not of His essence (τῆς οὐσίας), for that is impossible, but of His existence and providence (τῆς ὑπάρξεως αὐτοῦ καὶ προνοίας).'

152 Philo, *On the Virtues* 218.

153 See on this particular passage also §5.3.4. Cf. for the use of (*a*)*pisteuō* towards worldly things and towards God: Philo, *On the Life of Abraham* 269.

be trusted, and the intelligible.<sup>154</sup> However, credit for the application of this duality to the Abrahamic faith in God needs to be given to Philo.<sup>155</sup>

According to Dennis Lindsay, it is the here-and-now utilitarianism of this dualistic faith that differentiates Philonic faith from both Old Testament and early Christian faith: 'Philonic faith is a direct link to the good things in life', whereas 'faith in Christ for the Christian mission was *faith in the cross*', by which he means faith in an eschatological blessing despite earthly misery.<sup>156</sup> Lindsay seems to follow Bultmann here, who, in his analysis of *pistis* for the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, had stated that 'πίστις is not to be misunderstood as though it were itself eschatological fulfilment. It is not, as in Philo, a δίαθεσις of the soul.'<sup>157</sup> This opposition between *pistis* as realized confidence and as a provisional and struggling category seems exaggerated. As we will see in the discussion of 2 *Corinthians* 3–5 (§4.4.3), Paul makes use of a similar, Platonic duality when he draws a contrast between *pistis* and mere earthly sight or worldly appearances (even as he never verbally contrasts faith in God to faith in sensibles). Moreover, while there certainly is an eschatological orientation in Paul, faith is particularly connected to gaining provisional knowledge of God and seeing new things *in the present*. Pauline faith is not only 'faith in the cross'; it is also faith in the resurrection, an event that is not merely future-orientated.

Lindsay also considers Philo's faith an 'intellectual faith, with little or no emphasis upon personal commitment' and thus close to the philosophical faith of 'secular Hellenism'.<sup>158</sup> Again, he seems to follow Bultmann, who states that while Philo always considers God the object of faith, his concept of God is 'pure being' emptied of 'historical action'. Hence, faith is 'desecularisation in a purely negative sense'.<sup>159</sup> It is a virtue 'which man develops in his own strength'

154 See Plato, *Phaedo* 83a–b, quoted in §4.5.1 below. Cf. also Bultmann's article on *pistis* in the TDNT (1968), p. 202: 'In so far as πίστις means turning from the corruptible and turning to the eternal Philo follows the Platonic tradition.'

155 Cf. Lindsay 1993, 60: 'The idea that faith might be placed in some object other than in God, however, is not a part of the OT-Hebrew understanding of faith. Philo is using Greek ethical categories when he sets up this contrast between faith in God and faith in material, created things.'

156 Lindsay 1993, 70 and 72 respectively. Cf. p. 185: 'The utilitarian faith of Philo'. See also Lindsay 2008, 162–163: 'This "utilitarian" faith—a faith that serves to ensure the good life is precisely the opposite of the faith described in *Hebrews* 11, where faith is associated rather with suffering and hardship.'

157 Bultmann 1968, 221.

158 Lindsay 1993, 185.

159 Bultmann 1968, 202.

and which is not focused on man's relation to God, but rather 'as in the Stoa, it is a relation to himself.'<sup>160</sup> I will address this issue, the dichotomy between cognitive and relational faith, in full in the next chapter. Yet in view of the passages we just discussed, it seems unfair to consider Philo's faith, also cast as an 'utter dependence', impersonal calculation rather than personal commitment.<sup>161</sup>

From the Philonic scheme in which *pistis* in God is opposed to *pistis* in mutable creation and its temporary charms, we can also understand why *pistis* is occasionally opposed to reasoning (λογισμός). While explaining by means of allegory the denunciation of Moab (Num 21.27–30), he calls the trust in God of both Abraham and Moses a 'true teaching' (ἀληθὲς δόγμα) and juxtaposes it with 'trusting in vain reasonings' (τὸ πιστεῦειν τοῖς κενοῖς λογισμοῖς) or in 'dim reasonings and insecure conjectures' (τοῖς ἀσαφέσι λογισμοῖς καὶ ταῖς ἀβεβαίαις εἰκασίαις).<sup>162</sup> It is precisely this latter type of trust that Philo deems deceptive (ψεῦδος) and irrational (ἄλογος), because it is opposed to reason or knowledge proper. Thus, though she comes from a different perspective, I can fully subscribe to Teresa Morgan's conclusion on Philo:

Abraham's relationship of *pistis* with God parallels an intra-human relationship closely. It is certainly not a deliberately non-rational leap into the unknown and unknowable, a cognitive-affective move unparalleled in the human sphere. (Morgan 2015, 154)

The divine stability ascribed to faith, along with its portrayal as the supreme virtue to look beyond the sensible, demonstrate that according to Philo *pistis* directed at God is not irrational in nature. Rather, it is rational *par excellence*, considering its connection to the intelligible realm.

While Philo may thus be cleared of accusations of fideism, he is often contrasted with Plato in their respective evaluations of *pistis* on the epistemological scale. For Philo, *pistis* is not so much a human level of knowledge or a first step towards more heavenly levels, but the eventual goal of religious life. Such a contrast had previously been drawn by Adolf Schlatter and Emile Brehier, yet it is often repeated in more recent scholarly contributions.<sup>163</sup> Teresa Morgan calls Philo's departure from Plato 'a substantial one, given that Plato treats

160 Bultmann 1968, 202.

161 See for instance also Oertelt 2014, 275–277, who emphasizes the two-sidedness of trust and trustworthiness in Philo's usage of *pistis* and places it in the context of friendship rather than dominion.

162 Philo, *On the Special Laws* 3.228–229.

163 See Brehier 1908, 223, who refers to Schlatter 1963 [1882], 55–105.



*pistis* as the opposite of the understanding of truth', and she suggests this is due to biblical roots.<sup>164</sup> Mark Edwards puts it thus: 'in contrast to Plato, who held that *pistis* is always bound to the phenomenon, Philo asserts that that which is, God himself, is the proper object, not of knowledge but of *pistis*'.<sup>165</sup> Finally, Jean Daniélou deems Philo's concept of faith 'very original': 'the term does not have the same meaning as in Plato in whom faith involves δόξα and is opposed to knowledge'.<sup>166</sup>

I would agree with Morgan that Philo's attention for the biblical prominence of the term necessitated giving *pistis* a more prominent place among the cognitive faculties. Yet, the development that took place regarding the role of *pistis* did not solely arise out of the need to account for the role of faith in the Septuagint; its roots can be traced back to the openness to the epistemic value of *pistis* which we discovered already in Plato and which was further exploited by Aristotle.<sup>167</sup> In that sense, Philo's usage of *pistis* is indeed a blend: a creative rephrasing of its abundant use in specific Septuagint passages, drawing from the broad spectrum of epistemic functions it fulfils in Platonic, Aristotelean, and—as we shall see in the next chapter—also Stoic philosophy.<sup>168</sup>

And if I may suggest a final explanation, this development in the use of *pistis* was understandable in precisely the philosophical milieu Philo participated in. It was the logical consequence of the increasing tendency to ascribe complete transcendence to God, placing him above the level of ideas, principles, the one or the monad, in other words, above the level of supreme knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). This idea of utter divine transcendence coincided with a specific sceptical approach which did not limit itself to the sensibles, but, in the words of David Runia, 'here appears also to be applied to the intelligible realm' and 'thus cuts across the Platonist division between intelligible and sense-perceptible things'.<sup>169</sup> While Philo is optimistic about the possibility of ascertaining God's existence and providence, he is highly sceptical about gaining knowledge of his nature or his qualities, thus heralding 'the end of Hel-

164 Morgan 2015, 193, cf. 152–153.

165 Edwards forthcoming.

166 Daniélou 2014, 152.

167 On Philo's acquaintance with Aristotle, see Runia 2001a, 34: 'Philo is acquainted with the central doctrines of Aristotle, based on reading of both school treatises and exoteric works now lost.'

168 On the connection to Stoic usage of *pistis*, see Brehier 1908, 223.

169 Runia 2001b, 302. On Philo's complicated position regarding God's unknowability, cf. Calabi 2008 chapter 3.

lenistic theology'.<sup>170</sup> From this perspective, it is only reasonable that a different cognitive power is required in matters pertaining to God, one extending from the first principles to the ultimate transcendent while being neither irrational nor unwarranted. *Pistis* fulfils these criteria as a reasonable, trusting conviction in the trustworthy, transcendent God.

Such a discourse of transcendence and scepticism may suggest that Philo's *pistis* becomes a mystical or supra-rational grasp, a blind leap of faith. As we will see in more detail in Plutarch's works (§4.3-5), however, this is an improper way to describe the transition from the sensible to the intelligible or from the mortal to the divine as it was understood in Middle Platonism. In both Philo's and Plutarch's epistemology, the world as it exists is in fact caused by, dependent on, and participating in the ultimate divine reality. They share an intimate connection as original (παράδειγμα) to copy (εικόν). For Philo, the relatively minor step of trust in God is therefore a logical, rational, and necessary one.

According to Philo, even human *pistis* is a reflection of the divine quality *pistis*: a mimetic pattern I will discuss more thoroughly in chapter 6. As we have seen, human *pistis* is a virtue that appropriates the stability of that in which it is vested. But, as Philo explains, this faithfulness and stability is taken over only to the extent that it is an image (εικόν) of the *pistis* of God. For even Abraham briefly did not believe in the prophecy that he was to receive a child at his age:

But perhaps it may be said, why did he, when once he had believed, admit any trace or shadow or breath of unbelief whatsoever (ὅτι πεπιστευκῶς ἴχνος ἢ σκιάν ἢ αὐραν ἀπιστίας δέχεται τὸ παράπαν)? It seems to me that this question amounts to a wish to make out the created to be uncreated, the mortal immortal, the perishable imperishable, and if it is not blasphemy to say it, man to be God. Such a person asserts that the faith which man possesses should be so strong as to differ not at all from the faith which belongs to the Existent (τὴν γὰρ πίστιν, ἣς ἔλαχεν ἄνθρωπος, οὕτω βέβαιον φησι δεῖν εἶναι, ὡς μηδὲν διαφέρειν τῆς περὶ τὸ ὄν), a faith

<sup>170</sup> Runia 2001b, 303. Cf. for instance *On the Posterity of Cain* 167–169, where Philo states on the one hand that 'the Being that in reality is can be perceived and known, not only through the ears, but with the eyes of the understanding (τοῖς διανοίας ὀμμασιν), from the powers that range the universe, and from the constant and ceaseless motion of His ineffable works', yet on the other hand that 'it is quite enough for a man's reasoning faculty (ἀνθρώπου (...) λογισμῶ) to advance as far as to learn that the Cause of the Universe is and subsists. To be anxious to continue his course yet further, and inquire about essence or quality in God, is a folly fit for the world's childhood.'

sound and complete in every way. For Moses says in the Greater Song, ‘God is faithful (θεὸς πιστός) and there is no injustice in Him’ (Deut 32.4), and it argues great ignorance to think that the soul of man can contain the unwavering, absolutely steadfast excellences of God (τὰς θεοῦ ἀρετὰς τὰς ἀρρεπείας καὶ παγιωτάτας). Enough for man is the power to possess the images of these (εἰκόνας αὐτῶν), images in the scale of number and magnitude far below the archetypes (τῶν ἀρχετύπων ἐλαττωμένας). (Philo, *On the Change of Names* 181–183)

In perfect accordance with Platonic ontology, then, human *pistis* stands in relation to divine *pistis* as image to original, imitating it and participating in it, yet never escaping mortal deficiencies. It is the object of *pistis* that determines its epistemic value. *Pistis* in sensibles, if even for a moment of doubt, renders one instable, whereas continually putting all one’s trust in the ultimate stability of God slowly turns the believer into a sage.

Although Philo can be regarded as a sceptic whose scepticism extended to the knowability of the nature of God, it was also due to his high regard of Scripture in general and faith in a personal God in particular, that he did not submit to the sceptical Academy and their insistence on suspension of judgment.<sup>171</sup> Especially in this nonconformity to the sceptics, Philo can be seen as foreshadowing the more dogmatic tradition of Middle Platonism, poetically imagined by Mireille Hadas-Lebel as ‘the swallow announcing the forthcoming spring.’<sup>172</sup> When we move on to Plutarch, summer has arrived in full bloom. The question is, where does that leave the epistemological status of *pistis*? And, eventually, how can we situate Paul amidst this discourse?

#### 4.3.5 *Plutarch: Pistis as Golden Mean between Gullible Superstition and Irrational Scepticism*

Unlike the authors we have discussed so far, there is a lively discussion in scholarly literature on the specific question whether Plutarch’s use of *pistis* and cognates can be considered fideistic. The starting point of this discussion is the work of the French Plutarchan scholar Daniel Babut, who, taking

171 Cf. Runia 2008, 50: ‘Philo is acutely aware of the limits of human knowledge, but he is far from being a true sceptic. The wise man sits in judgment and delivers his verdict on the really important questions. For Philo this certainly does not mean any kind of autonomy of thought, but a deference to Scripture written by the wise man *par excellence* with the aid of divine inspiration.’

172 Hadas-Lebel 2012, 177: ‘In the second century, Middle Platonism would develop, but already with the beginning of the first century from which no Alexandrian writing survived, Philo might be seen as the swallow announcing the forthcoming spring.’

up the views he expressed in his monograph *Plutarque et le stoïcisme*, claims that Plutarch came up with a new meaning of *pistis*, ‘explicitly or implicitly opposed to λόγος, in the sense of “faith”’.<sup>173</sup> In this sense, *pistis* even surpasses true knowledge:<sup>174</sup>

Socratic ignorance, Platonic insistence on the limits of human knowledge, and the Academic theory on the suspension of judgment led him [Plutarch] to develop a new concept, that of ‘faith’ (πίστις), which took on a sense completely different from what it meant before. Whereas for Plato, πίστις was a poor substitute for true knowledge, the prerogative of reason, Plutarch affirms in a famous passage of the *Dialogue on Love* the autonomy and even the pre-eminence of the former over the latter. (Babut 1994, 580)<sup>175</sup>

In Babut’s understanding of Plutarch, it was his Platonism, particularly the scepticism of the New Academy that prompted this completely new concept, a supra-rational and religious use of *pistis*.<sup>176</sup> Together with the new notion of faith, Babut argues, Plutarch deviated from Plato in establishing the autonomy of religious belief, independent from the true knowledge of philosophy.<sup>177</sup> However, such a portrayal of Plutarch as the inventor of some sort of fideism has rightly not gone unchallenged.

Babut builds his argument for the pre-eminence of this new type of faith on a specific passage from the *Dialogue on Love* (or *Amatorius*). In this passage, the father character Plutarch responds to the character Pemptides, who had just expressed his doubts on *Erōs* being declared a god:

173 Babut 1994, 580, n. 170: ‘explicitement ou implicitement opposé à λόγος, au sens de “foi”.

174 Babut 1969, 516, n. 5.

175 ‘L’ignorance socratique, l’insistance platonicienne sur les limites de la connaissance humaine, la théorie néo-académicienne de la suspension du jugement l’ont conduit en effet à élaborer un concept nouveau, celui de foi (πίστις), qui prend un sens entièrement différent de celui qu’il avait normalement jusque là. Car tandis que pour Platon la πίστις n’est qu’un succédané de la connaissance vraie, l’apanage de la raison, Plutarque affirme, dans un texte fameux du dialogue *Sur l’amour*, l’autonomie et même la prééminence de la première sur la seconde.’

176 Babut 1969, 581: ‘une foi religieuse en une Vérité supra-rationnelle’.

177 Babut 1969, 579: ‘Surtout, l’idée d’une séparation des domaines de la croyance religieuse et de la philosophie, avec pour corollaire l’autonomie de la première par rapport à la seconde, est totalement étrangère à la pensée platonicienne.’ Cf. Babut’s opposite judgment of Plato (Babut 1974, 94–95): ‘Le recours à la tradition n’implique en aucune façon une subordination de la philosophie à la religion, mais plutôt le moyen le plus adéquat de se conformer aux données objectives du problème religieux.’

'Pemptides,' he said, 'it is, I believe, a grave and dangerous matter that you are broaching; or rather, you are altogether shaking our unshakable opinion about the gods (τὰ ἀκίνητα κινεῖν τῆς περὶ θεῶν δόξης) when you demand an account and proof of each of them (περὶ ἐκάστου λόγον ἀπαιτῶν καὶ ἀπόδειξιν). Our ancestral ancient faith is good enough (ἀρκεῖ γὰρ ἡ πάτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις). It is impossible to assert or discover evidence more palpable (ἐναργέστερον), "Whatever subtle twist's invented by keen wit". This faith is a basis, as it were, a common foundation, of piety (αὕτη καὶ βάσις ὑφειστώσα κοινὴ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν); if confidence and settled usage (τὸ βέβαιον αὐτῆς καὶ νενομισμένον) are disturbed or shaken at a single point, the whole edifice is enfeebled and discredited.' (Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 756B)

We have already seen in chapter 2 how 'father Plutarch's' defence of the divinity of *Erōs* comprises more than a simple appeal to the ancient *pistis* of his forefathers: the three ultimate sources of our knowledge on the gods, poets, legislators, and philosophers, no matter how divided they are, all explicitly agree on this issue. That is what prompts and grounds the character Plutarch's *pistis* and, if we allow the author to agree with his own younger persona here, Plutarch's *pistis*.<sup>178</sup> This contextual evidence on the trifold foundation (including philosophy) of this *pistis* should already give anyone pause before charging Plutarch with supra-rational fideism.

Babut's views on this matter in general and this passage on particular, however, have already been thoroughly criticized by another French specialist in Plutarch, Françoise Frazier. She gradually developed her criticism across four articles, emphasizing the objective character of Plutarchan *pistis* against Babut's supra-rational, fideistic reading.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, she has shown that the 'reason' (λόγος) that Plutarch sets against *pistis* in the *Dialogue on Love* is not philosophical reason, as Babut maintains, but rather 'the punctilious ratiocination which pretends to call the gods to account and opens under our feet the abyss of atheism.'<sup>180</sup> In Plutarch, she demonstrates, *pistis* covers the reasonable middle ground between irrational superstition and irrational atheism.

178 Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 763E. See my §2.3.5 on *theologia tripartita* in Plutarch. Cf. Frazier 2005, 132–134.

179 Frazier 1999; Frazier 2005; Frazier 2007; Frazier 2008. Her position on Plutarch is also summarized in English in her article on *pistis* in Neoplatonism: Frazier 2017, 190–194.

180 Frazier 2007, 89: '[L]a raison critiquée n'est pas non plus la raison du philosophe, chassant les fumées de la superstition, mais la ratiocination vétilleuse qui réclame des comptes aux dieux et ouvre sous nos pas le gouffre de l'athéisme.' She refers to Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 757B: 'You surely perceive the abyss of atheism that engulfs us (τὸν ὑπολαμβάνοντα

Frazier's stance has been comprehensively summarized and, in turn, critiqued by George van Kooten, who offers a third variant reading of Plutarchan *pistis* as non-fideistic, but not entirely 'objective' either. As he argues, it is as much at home in a philosophical environment as it is in the setting of mystery religion.<sup>181</sup> In his reconstruction of Frazier's argument, Van Kooten points to the underlying assumption that modern, Christian faith is fideistic, super-rational, supernatural, and subjective in nature. Thus, he argues, 'Frazier maintains Babut's fideistic definition of πίστις but applies it to Christianity', and in order to defend Plutarch's rationalism, she downplays the subjective elements in Plutarch.<sup>182</sup> Apart from emphasizing this connection of *pistis* to both subjective religious experiences and objective philosophical enquiry, Van Kooten discerns different levels of substantiation in Plutarch's use of *pistis*: Plutarch differentiated between 'misfounded faith' and 'strengthened faith', wherefore we should not label his use of *pistis* in general 'fideistic'.<sup>183</sup> This differentiation in types of *pistis* is very much akin to Philo's differentiation in objects of *pistis*, as we will see.

Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, finally, criticizes Van Kooten's earlier article (2012) for making use of the same categories he seeks to overcome: fideistic-religious versus rational-philosophical usage.<sup>184</sup> Both Hirsch-Luipold and Van Kooten

---

βυθὸν ἡμᾶς ἀθεότητος) if we list each several god on a roster of emotions, functions, and virtues.'

- 181 As argued in a forthcoming chapter: Van Kooten 2023. For an earlier review of Plutarchan *pistis*, yet without this in-depth engagement with Babut and Frazier, see Van Kooten 2012.
- 182 See Van Kooten 2023: 'she allows this definition to influence her own depiction of Plutarch's πίστις insofar as she seemingly deliberately paints it in starkly non-subjective colours, apparently intending to distinguish it as clearly as possible from a fideistic tint.'
- 183 Van Kooten 2023, referring to *Table-Talk* 624A ('one of those stories that are believed without good grounds'), *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 151F ('a good many things (...) come to be believed quite contrary to fact'), *On the Malice of Herodotus* 855E–F ('[sophists] are not really inducing any firm belief in their cause'), *Table-Talk* 725B ('an unskilful, unprofessional, unsystematic (ἄτεχνος) faith') and for the strong variant to *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* 35E ('our faith gains an added strength and dignity') and *On Isis and Osiris* 369B ('a strong and almost indelible belief').
- 184 Hirsch-Luipold 2017, 256: 'Auch wenn van Kooten in seinen abschließenden Bemerkungen dahin zielt, dass bei Plutarch philosophische und religiöse Verwendungen gerade ineinander gehen, greift diese Unterscheidung religiös-nicht-rationaler von philosophischen Verwendungsweisen zu kurz, (...) und sie birgt die Gefahr, die gängige Entgegensetzung von Rationalität und Religion wieder einzuführen, die van Kooten gerade als modernes Konstrukt zu überwinden sucht.' The fideistic 'uses', though, seem to represent possible readings that are explicitly countered in Van Kooten's article, which renders this critique somewhat misplaced. Cf. for his thoughts on Van Kooten's interpretations: 261, 262, and 263.

agree, nonetheless, that the difference between both categories is not helpful for understanding Plutarch on his own terms—or Paul for that matter. According to Hirsch-Luipold, ‘the religious search for God and the philosophical pursuit of truth are inseparable for Plutarch.’<sup>185</sup> More specifically, he argues that ‘ancestral faith’ is an authoritative ground for Plutarch’s philosophical quest for truth, especially because humanity’s corporeal state prohibits any direct access: it is only rational to acknowledge our limitations when it comes to the divine.<sup>186</sup> This provisionality of human knowledge of God, emphasized in Hirsch-Luipold’s reading of Plutarchan *pistis*, is also perfectly in line with of Plato’s epistemology (as discussed in §4.3.2) and the role of *pistis* therein.

As part of my own contribution to this particular debate, I want to broaden the perspective to include the earlier contributions to this epistemic discourse of *pistis* in the ‘Platonic tradition’ since Parmenides, to discuss some less well-known Plutarchan passages, and to readdress Babut’s position on the influence of the contemporary philosophical landscape, particularly the challenge of Academic scepticism. Together, these insights confirm the thesis that Plutarch’s usage of *pistis* must be seen as part of a cognitive-religious or philosophical-religious discourse. The increase in *pistis* usage by Plutarch as compared to other authors within this discourse, so I will argue, is due to its capacity to express a moderately positivist stance on the possibility of attaining divine truth.

To start with the influence of the sceptical movement in Plato’s Academy, the question is whether their challenge to a positive epistemology did in fact cause Plutarch to opt for supra-rational fideism. In the first place, over the past decades the image of the New Academy has undergone a major change, such that it can no longer be considered ‘sceptical’ in any significant, modern sense of the word. By taking the polemical context of the source material and the dialectical approach of the Academics into account, their position has been found to be much more open to the possibility of knowledge and truth than was suggested by nineteenth-century scholarship in the footsteps of Eduard Zeller.<sup>187</sup> Rather than taking on religion, morality, or objectivity, the Academics attacked certain Stoic and Epicurean *dogmata*. The sharp contrast between sceptics and dogmatists as such was constructed in post-Hellenistic times, and the terms were given their technical meaning by Sextus Empiricus (late second to early third century AD). This insight considerably alters our understanding

185 Hirsch-Luipold 2017, 259.

186 Hirsch-Luipold 2017, 270–271 and cf. p. 269.

187 For an overview of the history of research and current debates, see Opsomer 1998, 9–13.

of the intellectual landscape that Plutarch entered, and while I will continue to use the conventional terms 'sceptical' and 'dogmatic' in this study for lack of better descriptions, it is good to emphasize the actual subtle and relative differences in the ancient context.<sup>188</sup>

The Platonists of Plutarch's day took different approaches to the sceptical current in their tradition, with Arcesilaus and Carneades as its most famous representatives. While some, such as Numenius, chose to distance themselves from the more sceptical among Plato's successors, others, including Plutarch, tried to keep the peace, as is evidenced by Plutarch's lost work *On the Unity of the Academy since Plato* (Lamprias catalogue nr. 63). Plutarch himself is generally thought to have embraced a middle-position by advocating a 'positive, if undogmatic, philosophical system' and being a sceptic, yet 'in a rather weak sense'.<sup>189</sup> How should these characterisations be understood and what implications do they have for Plutarch's use of *pistis*?

In an earlier article of mine (2015a), I explored Plutarch's epistemology in order to determine whether and, if so, how he thought it was possible to gain true knowledge based on natural phenomena, to journey from the sensible realm to the metaphysical. I established that even as he shares Plato's strong separation between sensible objects and faculties and intellectual objects and faculties, and despite his overall distrust in the senses, he did remain open to the possibility of transcending their domain, based on his confidence in human intellection and philosophy. It is precisely in the conclusion of his discussion of the lengths of Plato's divided line, the analogy that assigns such specific objects to different cognitive faculties, that he emphasizes the ability of the human intellect to reach the divine level via sensible objects:

But furthermore it is not right of them to be disdainful even of the intelligible and intellectual faculty in us men (ἐν ἡμῖν νοητῆς καὶ νοεράς δυνάμεως καταφρονοῦσιν), for because it is ample and stout it transcends all that is perceptible (περίεστι παντὸς τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ) and reaches as far as things divine (μέχρι τῶν θείων ἐξικνεῖται). The most important point, however, is that, when in the *Symposium* Plato explains how one must manage the matter of love by diverting the soul from the beautiful objects that are perceptible to those that are intelligible (μετάγοντα τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τῶν

188 Jan Opsomer (1998, e.g. p. 12, p. 269) coins the term 'zetetic' to summarize his thesis on the Platonic-Academic synthesis in Plutarch's thought.

189 Boys-Stones 1997a, 41. Cf. Tarrant 1985, 133: 'Plutarch himself (...) retained the allegiance to both sides of Plato [i.e. the sceptical, Socratic and the positive, allegedly Pythagorean side], and to the New Academy.'



αἰσθητῶν καλῶν ἐπὶ τὰ νοητά), his own injunction is not to subjugate oneself and play the slave to the beauty of a particular body or practice or of a single science but to desist from petty concern about these things and turn to the vast sea of the beautiful. (Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 3, 1002E)

Plutarch's employment of the imagery of the *Symposium* is appropriate here.<sup>190</sup> It draws on a basic ontological pattern underlying his epistemology. Elsewhere, he used several different expressions to emphasize the connection between the intelligible, metaphysical and the sensible, physical world:

The relation of the partaken in to the partaker is that of cause to matter, model to copy, power to effect (ὄν αἰτία τε πρὸς ὕλην ἔχει καὶ παράδειγμα πρὸς εἰκόνα καὶ δύναμις πρὸς πάθος). And it is chiefly by this relation that the absolute and always identical differs from what is caused by something else and is never in the same state. (Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 1115E)<sup>191</sup>

Both worlds, then, are ontologically related: the one is 'being' proper, the other is caused by, modelled after and partaking in 'being'.<sup>192</sup> And, reversely, the philosopher can journey from the one to the other, by studying the higher causes behind earthly matter, the model behind earthly examples, the powers behind earthly effects. The metaphor of a journey is actually used by Plutarch, for he states that

when the natural philosopher sets out to find the truth as a matter of speculative knowledge (τῷ δὲ φυσικῶ θεωρίας ἕνεκα μετιόντι τἀληθές), the discovery of immediate causes is not the end, but the beginning of his journey to the first and highest causes (ἀρχὴ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ πρῶτα καὶ ἀνωτάτω πορείας). (Plutarch, *On the Principle of Cold* 948C)

190 I will return to Plutarch's reception of Plato's *Symposium* in his *Dialogue on Love* in the context of my discussion of 2 *Corinthians* 3–5; see §4.5.1.

191 See Sierksma-Agteres 2015a, 67–69 for the context and a more elaborate discussion of this text.

192 In the words of Eleni Kechagia (2011, 234), 'the sensible things are not simply imitations of the Forms or bearers of a property of which the Form is the ideal exemplar; what's more, they owe their reality to the Forms since it is the Forms that make them be what they are.'

His emphasis on this goal implies at least the theoretical possibility of attaining it, even if the process could take time.

In different treatises, we learn more about how he values these different causes. Contemporary physicists ‘ascribe everything to bodies and their behaviour’ and neglect the higher cause, whereas poets and religious writers of old ascribed everything to Zeus as the highest cause and ‘made no approach towards the compelling and natural causes (ταῖς δ’ ἀναγκαίαις καὶ φυσικαῖς οὐκ ἔτι προσήεσαν αἰτίαις).<sup>193</sup> Instead, one ought to heed both. He then connects the two causes to what seems like a variant of the four Aristotelean *causae* we also find in Philo. He names the divine cause both the *causa finalis* and the *causa efficiens* (τὸ δι’ οὗ καὶ ὑφ’ οὗ) and equates the physical cause to the *causa materialis* and the *causa instrumentalis* (τὸ ἐξ ὧν καὶ δι’ ὧν).<sup>194</sup> There is no opposition between religion and science here; the philosopher transcends the physical cause(s) to reach the metaphysical one(s).

In Plutarch’s universe, God and the entire noetic world are brought together into one, transcendent cause, both paradigmatic and efficient, which simplifies the layered structure of earlier Platonists.<sup>195</sup> In *To an Uneducated Ruler* (*Ad principem ineruditem*), this transcendence of God, as completely set apart from the changing matter, is immediately connected by Plutarch to the visible images of God. The sun and the justice and knowledge of him in the ruler

193 Plutarch, *The Obsolescence of Oracles* 436D–E.

194 Cf. Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 2, 1001C, quoted in §6.3.3 below. Philo here omits Aristotle’s *causa formalis* and included a *causa instrumentalis*, as became common Platonic practice (cf. Simplicius, *Metaphysics* 1.1, Diels 3.16–19). He ascribes this cause to the Logos of God. Cf. Philo, *On the Cherubim* 125–127: ‘For to bring anything into being needs all these conjointly, the “by which (τὸ ὑφ’ οὗ),” the “from which (τὸ ἐξ οὗ),” the “through which (τὸ δι’ οὗ),” the “for which (τὸ δι’ ὅ),” and the first of these is the cause, the second the material, the third the tool or instrument, and the fourth the end or object. (...) We shall see that its [the universe’s] cause is God, by whom (ὑφ’ οὗ) it has come into being, its material the four elements, from which (ἐξ ὧν) it was compounded, its instrument the word of God, through which (δι’ οὗ) it was framed, and the final cause of the building is the goodness of the architect.’ For the development of these prepositional phrases and their use as broadly shared philosophical vocabulary including usage in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christian texts, see Sterling 1997; McFarland 2015a. For a similar usage of prepositions in Pauline letters (esp. 1 Cor 8.6, Rom 11.36, Col 1.16–17), see Van Kooten 2014, 282–283.

195 Cf. Ferrari 2005, 16: ‘Da Gott zugleich Demiurg und Vorbild (παράδειγμα) ist, muss er Wirkursache und paradigmatische Ursache der Welt sein.’ And cf. Brenk 2005, 46: ‘[I]n a revolutionary way he subordinated the paradigmatic cause represented by the world of the Ideas to the efficient cause, the Demiourgos. God is not only the principal cause of the genesis of the world but the Ideas seem subordinate to Him.’

reflect the beauty of God, and these images are meant to lead people to imitate God with the help of philosophy:

For it is neither probable nor fitting that god is, as some philosophers say, mingled with matter, which is altogether passive, and with things, which are subject to countless necessities, chances, and changes. On the contrary, somewhere up above in contact with that nature which, in accordance with the same principles, remains always as it is, established, as Plato says, upon pedestals of holiness, proceeding in accordance with nature in his straight course, he reaches his goal. And as the sun, his most beautiful image (μίμημα τὸ περικαλλές αὐτοῦ), appears in the heavens as his mirrored likeness to those who are able to see him in it (δι' ἑσόπτρου εἶδωλον ἀναφαίνεται τοῖς ἐκεῖνον ἐνορᾶν δι' αὐτοῦ δυνατοῖς), just so he has established in states the light of justice and of knowledge of himself (τὸ ἐν πόλεσι φέγγος εὐδικίας καὶ λόγου τοῦ περὶ αὐτὸν) as an image (ὥσπερ εἰκόνα) which the blessed and the wise copy (ἀπογράφονται) with the help of philosophy, modelling themselves after the most beautiful of all things. But nothing implants this disposition in men except the teachings of philosophy (ταύτην δ' οὐδὲν ἐμποιεῖ τὴν διάθεσιν ἢ λόγος ἐκ φιλοσοφίας παραγενόμενος). (Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 781F–782A)

We see here an excellent example of how Plutarch's ontology, cosmology, theology, epistemology, and ethics are intertwined. The distance that separates humans from the holiness of God is immediately bridged by the existence of earthly images of God and the possibility of ethical assimilation to God.<sup>196</sup> The metaphor of reflection in a mirror, used to explain the relationship between the divine and visible images of the divine, is something we will come back to, as it is also used by Paul in the context of epistemology and ethics (see §4.4.3 and §4.4.4 below).

It might seem farfetched to involve Plutarch's whole epistemology in evaluating his usage of *pistis*. Indeed, apart from the recapitulation of Plato's divided line, *pistis* does not have any particular epistemological role in these more technical passages. Yet this more elaborate treatment shows the limited extent to which he succumbed to epistemological scepticism and whatever need he might have felt to turn to new concepts or a new vocabulary, as Babut suggested.

196 On the God and the ruler as personified law, see §3.3.7 above. On assimilation to God (*homoïsis theōi*), see §6.3.4 below.

So far, we have seen Plutarch's positive approach to gaining true knowledge. But even where he seems more Academic or sceptical in his approach, his Platonism or dogmatism is not far behind. In the words of Jan Opsomer, throughout his works, 'Plutarch makes an honest effort to combine harmoniously Platonic with "Academic" themes.'<sup>197</sup> When the stability of the sensible world is sharply questioned, as in Ammonius's speech in the *On the E at Delphi*, it is reasonable to take hermeneutical caveats into account such as the difference between persona and author and the rhetorical aim of the speech, which is to emphasize that God is an unchanging being.<sup>198</sup> Plutarch himself unproblematically included sceptical methods into formulating positive *dogmata*. In *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* (*De Stoicorum repugnantiis*) he considers the sceptical approach of arguing both sides of a question in positive terms as a method that leads to apprehension of the truth.<sup>199</sup> Even the suggestion to turn to *epochē*, suspension of judgement, at the end of the *On the Principle of Cold* (*De primo frigido*) can be read either as awareness that 'a purely physical explanation of the world can never suffice for the true philosopher', since 'the final explanation is always of a metaphysical nature'.<sup>200</sup> Furthermore, as George Boys-Stones has demonstrated, even in those works that are usually

197 Opsomer 1998, 15.

198 In this case it is even more complicated, for we have to distinguish between the character 'Ammonius', the historical person Ammonius, between the character 'Plutarch' and the author by the same name. Cf. Brenk 2014, 91: 'Even in such a major and sublime speech at the end of a dialogue, then, Plutarch could not have endorsed all of Ammonius's views. He may, instead, have decided to suggest Ammonius's own teaching, while possibly introducing some strands of Alexandrian Platonism, including something from Eudorus. In contrast, though, with Philo and Plutarch, Eudorus's "Gods" are more principles than real or personal Gods.' Cf. Opsomer 2009, 173: 'In some respects Ammonius's speech is more extreme—or one could say: one-sided—than what we usually find in Plutarch, i.e. when Plutarch speaks in his own name. This is in particular the case for "Ammonius" depiction of the sensible world (...) and the sceptical consequences he draws from it. (...) This depiction of the sensible world could also be explained by the context. The aim of the speech—which undeniably is strongly rhetoric—is to make clear that god is real, unchanging being, and to this end a stark contrast with becoming may have seemed appropriate. This is something which Plutarch can have done in his own name.'

199 Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1037C: 'They frame arguments on either side, however, without having an apprehension of either, their notion being that, if anything is apprehensible, only or especially in this way would the truth yield an apprehension of itself (κατάληψιν ἑαυτῆς τὴν ἀλήθειαν παρέχουσαν).' Cf. Boys-Stones 1996.

200 Opsomer 1998, 215–216, where he refers to Donini 1986, 211. According to George Boys-Stones (1997a, 44) the *epochē* need not be taken as a sign of Plutarch's scepticism, for 'what he actually does is to advise us to suspend judgement if his own arguments (which were in favour of earth as the principle of cold) were "neither less nor much more plausible" than those put forward in favour of alternative views (955C). (...) and, as a matter of

considered his most sceptical, such as *On Stoic Self-Contradictions*, he ‘felt himself able to draw positive conclusions from his Scepticism’, wherefore these works ‘can and should still be read as vehicles for an expression of his Platonism.’<sup>201</sup> This Platonism was not fideistic, yet, as I have shown, it was building on Plato’s own epistemological route from the sensible to the intelligible, from the human to the divine.<sup>202</sup>

We may now ask how this affects our reading of Plutarch’s usage of *pistis* and whether it can be seen in line with or in contrast to the earlier Platonic tradition. There is an obvious increase in both Philo and Plutarch in relating *pistis* vocabulary to the divine. It is dubious, however, whether there was any concrete direct or indirect (namely via Ammonius or Eudorus) contact between both authors; rather, they share in a common tradition.<sup>203</sup> What stands out in Plutarch is that *pistis* receives a seemingly fideistic colouring in those contexts where the transcendence of the divine is emphasized. In this respect, we see an effect similar to Philo’s usage of *pistis*: if God is equated with (or even seen as being above) the level of intelligibles, one cannot simply know or understand his powers or workings in this world, for they are mediated through the untrustworthy senses.

On the other hand, in both authors, God represents more than an abstract principle: in both Philo and Plutarch, God is depicted with a number of personal features.<sup>204</sup> In dealing with the world, he is both separate (as opposed to Stoic immanentism) and personally involved (as opposed to both Aristotelean and Epicurean abstractions).<sup>205</sup> According to an insightful article that compares their respective theologies, it is due to the allegorical method they both employ that Philo’s Jewish God becomes more transcendent, whereas

---

fact, it is clear that Plutarch did think that the position he had championed was “much more plausible”. Cf. also Boys-Stones 1997b, 228.

201 Boys-Stones 1997a, 55.

202 Cf. also Opsomer’s critique of the position of Babut: ‘Plutarch’s Academism is indeed not an appeal to the irrational. Plutarch’s Academic philosophy is based on an ideal of philosophical inquiry, on the awareness of the limits of human reason, but also on the conviction that (divine) truth is ultimately rational and intelligible. (...) The rational and the divine are on the same side’. See Opsomer 1998, 184.

203 See Opsomer 2009, 170 and Brenk 2014, 91.

204 See the comparison of the personal characteristics of God in both authors in Hirsch-Luipold 2005, 156–161, based on the following aspects: 1) Contact between God and humans; 2) Historical creation; 3) Salvation; 4) Contact effectuated by God; 5) Divine interference on a worldwide and personal scale.

205 Cf. on the differences between these theologies Jiménez 2005, 108.

Plutarch's Academic God becomes more personal and historical.<sup>206</sup> *Pistis* can address both aspects of their transcendent-yet-personal God. While speaking of simply 'knowing' God would not acknowledge the distance, the personal aspect renders it highly appropriate to express epistemological-relational trust in God. As a further survey of some relevant passages will show, this was indeed seen as the most reasonable option by Plutarch.

The 'reason' behind Plutarch's usage of *pistis* is especially evident in contexts where he explicitly discusses the ideal attitude towards the divine. In *On Superstition* (*De superstitione*), the use of *pistis* language is sometimes viewed as taking on a fideistic flavour, since it is contrasted with atheism and associated with the superstitious person that fears the gods.<sup>207</sup> Atheism, on the other hand, is described as ignorance-engendered distrust (*apistia*) in the helpful qualities of God.<sup>208</sup> Hence, *pistis* is associated with knowledge of God and with trust in divine providence. It is true that, conversely, the superstitious person is said to 'believe' in the gods; however, the question is whether Plutarch would thus consider superstition and *pistis* equivalents. There seem to be two types of *pistis* in play, 'belief' that coincides with fear and 'trust' that coincides with positive expectations of the gods' benevolence. For the superstitious person does not completely trust the gods at all; s/he thinks that they are 'untrustworthy' (ἄπιστος):

You see what kind of thoughts the superstitious have about the gods; they assume that the gods are rash, faithless (ἀπίστους), fickle, vengeful, cruel, and easily offended; and, as a result, the superstitious man is bound to hate and fear the gods. (Plutarch, *On Superstition* 170E)

206 Hirsch-Luipold 2005. See esp. at 151–152: 'als Folge der jeweiligen Methode bildhafter Deutung wird der personal-geschichtliche Gott der jüdischen Tradition bei dem Schriftausleger mit platonischer Brille transzendenter, während der transzendente Gott der akademischen Tradition bei dem delphischen Priester persönlicher und geschichtlicher wird.'

207 Esp. *On Superstition* 170F: 'The atheist thinks there are no gods (οὐκ οἶται θεοὺς εἶναι ὁ ἄθεος); the superstitious man wishes there were none, but believes in them against his will; for he is afraid not to believe (ὁ δὲ δεισιδαίμων οὐ βούλεται, πιστεύει δ' ἄκων φοβεῖται γὰρ ἀπιστεῖν).' It is described by Van Kooten (2012, 218) as seemingly fideistic, only appearing in a less fideistic light when compared with passages from different dialogues. *De Superstitione* itself also offers a richer picture though.

208 Plutarch, *On Superstition* 165C: 'In fact, the atheist, apparently, is unmoved regarding the Divinity, whereas the superstitious man is moved as he ought not to be, and his mind is thus perverted. For in the one man's ignorance engenders disbelief in the One who can help him (ἡ γὰρ ἄγνοια τῷ μὲν ἀπιστίαν τοῦ ὠφελούντος ἐμπεποίηκε), and on the other it bestows the added idea that He causes injury.'

This way, superstition founds and grounds atheism.<sup>209</sup> Thus, especially if you do not place your trust in the trustworthiness of God, you lapse into the abysses of either atheism (disbelief in the existence and distrust of the providence of the Deity) or superstition (belief in the existence of the Deity but distrust of the providence of the Deity). In the first case, there is too little pre-occupation with the gods, in the second too much. Concerning the divine, true *pistis* is the golden mean of reasonable trust in divine providence (cf. §8.3.3 below on *apistia* and the social-religious aspects of this discourse).

This is a consistent Plutarchan approach to *pistis* in religious contexts, confirmed by different dialogues. If a god behaves differently from how humans would expect, for instance when the Delphic oracles stopped being pronounced in verse which threatened their *pistis* (trustworthiness), Plutarch argues that we should first examine our own reasoning (*logismos*) and not blame the god (like the superstitious person) or simply give up (like the atheist would).<sup>210</sup> This is no abandonment of reason, but a condemnation of intellectual laziness and at the same time an acknowledgement of intellectual shortcomings.<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, in *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* (*Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum*), we learn that only when *pistis* is 'cured' from superstitious fear is it considered the ideal attitude:

Now we should, I grant you, remove superstition from our belief in the gods (τῆς περὶ θεῶν δόξης (...) ἀφαιρεῖν τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν) like a rheum from the eye; but if this proves impossible, we should not cut away both together and kill the faith that most men have in the gods (μὴ συνεκκόπτειν μηδὲ τυφλοῦν τὴν πίστιν, ἣν οἱ πλείστοι περὶ θεῶν ἔχουσιν). (Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1101C)

209 Plutarch, *On Superstition* 171A: 'but superstition provides the seed from which atheism springs, and when atheism has taken root, superstition supplies it with a defence (ἡ δὲ δεισιδαιμονία τῇ ἀθεότητι καὶ γενέσθαι παρέσχεν ἀρχὴν καὶ γενομένη διδωσιν ἀπολογίαν).'

210 See Plutarch, *The Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse* 402B (οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ μάλιστα πρὸς τὴν τοῦ χρηστηρίου πίστιν ἀντιβαίνων λόγος) and the final sentence of this treatise, 409D: 'And if they cannot ascertain to their satisfaction the reason for the change, they go away, after pronouncing judgement against the god (τοῦ θεοῦ καταγρόντες), but not against us nor against themselves for being unable by reasoning to attain to a comprehension of the god's purpose (ὡς ἀδυνάτων ὄντων ἐξικνεῖσθαι τῷ λογισμῷ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ διάνοια).'

211 Schunack (1999, 321) describes Plutarch's answer in terms of an exercise in 'religious hermeneutics' ('auf der Ebene religiöser Hermeneutik') in order to relieve the tension between religion and science.

There is a characteristic leniency here towards the people's religious needs: not everyone can take a philosopher's perspective regarding the divine, not everyone is well-suited for reasonable trust in the gods.

A similar leniency recurs, for example, in an interesting passage that has to my knowledge not yet been cited in this debate on Plutarchan *pistis*, from the final section of the biography of Coriolanus. The topic is the reported miracle of a bleeding and talking statue, dedicated to Fortuna Muliebris to honour Coriolanus's mother after she convinced her son to stop the Volscian attack on Rome. Plutarch finds it hard to believe this miracle, though he believes that the deity might make use of it as a sign (the verbs used here are *πείθω* and *δοκέω*). He explains possible natural causes of such sights and noises and mentions the possibility that, if we must accept the accounts because of the 'numerous and credible (*πιθανοίς*) witnesses', it may be a matter of a dreamlike illusion. There nevertheless follows an interesting allowance for belief in this phenomenon, based on the ground (he uses the noun *πίστις* for 'ground/argument') of the transcendence and unknowability of God:

However, those who cherish strong feelings of good will and affection for the Deity, and are therefore unable to reject or deny anything of this kind, have a strong argument for their faith in the wonderful and transcendent character of the divine power (*μέγα πρὸς πίστιν ἐστὶ τὸ θαυμάσιον καὶ μὴ καθ' ἡμᾶς τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεως*). For the Deity has no resemblance whatever to man, either in nature, activity, skill, or strength; nor, if He does something that we cannot do, or contrives something that we cannot contrive, is this contrary to reason (*παράλογόν ἐστίν*); but rather, since He differs from us in all points, in His works most of all is He unlike us and far removed from us. But most o[f] the Deity's powers, as Heraclitus says, 'escape our knowledge through incredulity (*ἀπιστίη διαφυγγάνει μὴ γινώσκεισθαι*).' (Plutarch, *Marcus Coriolanus* 38.3–4)

We have already taken a close look at Heraclitus's saying (see §4.3.1 above). What interests me here is how Plutarch explicitly rejects the idea that divine transcendence (God's not being like us) implies that incredible divine action is contrary to reason. *Pistis* does not replace knowledge in case of a miracle; it is rather a lack of *pistis* that renders divine powers unknowable.

This is a very balanced approach, yet when it comes to miracles, Plutarch has been accused of 'a genuine unwillingness to think through his difficulties':

In Plutarch we find no solution for the problem of miracle. His caution in such matters does not reflect a naive piety but a genuine unwillingness



to think through his difficulties. His middle ground, ‘nothing too much’, is an indication that he cannot face the real contradiction between traditional religion and natural science and philosophy. He solves the contradiction for himself by disregarding it. (Grant 1952, 68)<sup>212</sup>

It is, however, not indecisiveness or disregard, but rather a positive choice to embrace both natural science and traditional religion and to avoid both radical religious scepticism and radical religious gullibility. In a very similar passage, when it is a statue of Juno that had allegedly spoken to give permission for her relocation to Rome, we indeed find a consideration that sounds a lot like what we encountered in *On Superstition*: both too much *pisteuein* and too much *apistein* are equally due to human weakness and equally risky:

But in such matters eager credulity and excessive incredulity (καὶ τὸ πιστεύειν σφόδρα καὶ τὸ λίαν ἀπιστεῖν) are alike dangerous, because of the weakness of our human nature, which sets no limits and has no mastery over itself, but is carried away now into vain superstition, and now into contemptuous neglect of the gods (ὅπου μὲν εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν καὶ τύφον, ὅπου δ’ εἰς ὀλιγωρίαν τῶν θεῶν καὶ περιφρόνησιν). Caution is best, and to go to no extremes (ἢ δ’ εὐλάβεια καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ἄγαν ἄριστον). (Plutarch, *Camillus* 6.4)

So even though one can have too much of *pistis*, such that it turns into credulity, or too little, such that it becomes religious neglect, the thrust of Plutarch’s argument throughout different treatises is that belief and trust in divine interference is rational and sound.

Returning to Babut’s initial critique of super-rationalism, if Plutarch chooses to rely on ancestral faith as he did in *The Dialogue on Love*, he is not offering some kind of shortcut or detour around the ordinary rational and intellectual route. He did embrace the authority of the combined voices of respected lawgivers, poets, and philosophers. Few would not do so in his day, and indeed, philosophy itself developed in a direction in which fresh interpretations and creative applications of an authoritative tradition took the place of

---

212 Cf. on Grant’s judgement and for a more nuanced view of Plutarch’s dealings with miracles Betz 2007 esp. p. 54: ‘These miracle stories can either be believed in a naive way, or, more rationally, interpreted as metaphors, parables, and examples. The former would amount to superstition, the latter may serve philosophical education and even lead to scientific experiments.’

giving birth to new ideas more or less independently from a textual ‘establishment’.<sup>213</sup> His appeal to *pistis* in this instance is a sign of his own intellectual modesty and respect for the intellectual work of others, not an audacious leap of faith or a supra-rational truth-claim. In general, in the works of Plutarch, we see that *pistis* vocabulary is used in ‘religious’ contexts to do justice to both the unknowability of the absolute transcendent (which the superstitious deny) and the knowability of the just and interfering Deity (which the atheists deny). Faith is the golden mean of reasonable trust in a God, whose appearance in Middle Platonism had become both more elusive and more personal. This cognitive-religious colouring of *pistis* in Middle Platonism provides an excellent guide for understanding several passages from the Pauline letters.<sup>214</sup>

#### 4.4 Pistis as Firm but Provisional Knowledge of God in Paul’s Letters

Until now, this chapter has mainly been concerned with refuting or, rather, qualifying the claim that in the pagan context of early Christianity, *pistis* was considered knowledge of poor quality or not even knowledge at all. In the previous section, we have seen how it would do more justice to our extant sources in the Platonic tradition to describe its role in epistemological matters as a highly versatile category, usually representing a secure and stable type of knowledge or epistemological attitude. In the Hellenistic-Roman period, it came to be seen as a human cognitive category that was able to bridge the gap to the divine and intelligible realm.

The argument one might expect in the final sections would then involve a rehabilitation of Pauline *pistis*: ‘faith’ would turn out to communicate pre-

213 For a more elaborate discussion of this dogmatizing trend, see §5.3.1 *infra*. Cf. Morgan 2015, 156: ‘Plutarch adds to his Platonism a pious acceptance of tradition, Philo a pious acceptance of the truth of scripture, but these too are widely paralleled within, if not beyond, their traditions; they certainly do not constitute new leaps of faith.’

214 This is a point of divergence from Morgan 2018b, 260: ‘[a]side from the doubtfulness of the suggestion that most first-century Christians would have been familiar with far-from-popular Platonic discourse, Platonic use of  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  at this period is rather different from Christian.’ Yet cf. for a similar conclusion Hirsch-Luipold 2017, 257: ‘Dass hier ein paganer Philosoph die religiöse Tradition zur Begründungsinstanz von Wahrheitsaussagen macht, und dies (...) gerade in Auseinandersetzung mit den Wahrheitsaussagen anderer philosophischer Entwürfe und unter Verwendung des Begriffs der *pistis*, ist für die Untersuchung des Paulus von großer Bedeutung. Wird der religiöse Zusammenhang des Begriffs bei dem paganen Philosophen deutlich, dann lassen sich umgekehrt die religiösen Aussagen des Paulus als Beitrag im Streit um die Grundlagen der Wahrheit verstehen.’

cisely such grounded, highly valued knowledge. However, that is only part of the story. Whereas faith and faithfulness occupies a central place in Paul's message, it is not without its ontological, ethical, and temporal limits. This section explores different passages across the (undisputed) Pauline letters in which *pistis* functions within a cognitive semantic field. In this way, texts that are otherwise unrelated reveal coherence in Pauline thought that may else go unnoticed. At the same time, this approach will demonstrate flexibility in the usage of *pistis* including both provisional and more resolute aspects, similar to what we have seen in pagan literature.

#### 4.4.1 *Abraham Grew Strong in His Pistis (Rom 4.19): Human Stability and Growth of Conviction and Faithfulness*

Given the many admonitions and thanksgivings referring to it, the strength or firmness of the *pistis* of his addressees is of continuous concern to Paul. It is the one thing he appears to be most interested in when asking after the well-being of the communities he founded and visited (Phil 1.27; 1 Thes 3.5–6). This concern for the stability of *pistis* seems to indicate that *pistis* can also be very much a human, cognitive attitude in its Pauline usage. How rational is this human, mental capacity, and how does it relate to the cosmic (chapters 2–3), behavioural (6), and relational (chapters 7–8) semantic domains?

Let us begin with some general observations about this cognitive *pistis* language across the Pauline letters. There is a curious Pauline construction that does not occur in any available non-Christian Greek sources yet finds a parallel in Philo (see §4.3.4 above) to denote a firmness or stability in faith(fullness), namely by combining *pistis* with the verb 'to stand' (στήκω).<sup>215</sup> This combination may well be due to their connection to the Hebrew stem יָדַח, the stem that is so often translated in the Septuagint by means of the *pistis* lexicon. There is some wordplay with this stem in *Isaiah* 7.9, for instance: 'If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all', which the Septuagint renders with a cognitive expression as 'If you do not believe (καὶ ἐὰν μὴ πιστεύσητε), neither shall you understand (οὐδὲ μὴ συνιήτε)'.<sup>216</sup> In the final section of *1 Corinthians*, it occurs in an enumeration of imperatives: 'Keep alert, stand firm in faith (στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει), be courageous, be strong' (1 Cor 16.13). But it is also used in declarative statements, such as 'but you stand through faith' (Rom 11.20: σὺ δὲ τῇ πίστει ἕστηκας) or 'for you stand firm in faith' (2 Cor 1.24: τῇ γὰρ πίστει

215 For Philo, see §4.2.3 above, in particular Philo, *On the Confusion of Tongues* 31. The connection may be related to different uses of the Hebrew verb *aman* as 'to believe' or 'to be established'.

216 Cf. Wong 1996, who thinks this translation involves the intrusion of a marginal gloss.

ἑστήκατε). Standing firm in or by faith seems to have a paradigmatic relation to standing 'in the Lord' (1 Thes 3.8: ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκατε ἐν κυρίῳ, cf. Col 2.5): the expressions can be used interchangeably.

The vocabulary involved suggests that *pistis* is something in relation to which a community cannot only stand but also be strengthened or encouraged (1 Thes 3.2: τὸ στηρίζαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν), excel (2 Cor 8.7: ἐν παντὶ περισσεύετε, πίστει καὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει), and increase or grow (Phil 1.25: προκοπὴν (...) τῆς πίστεως;<sup>217</sup> 2 Cor 10.15: αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν). Even more specifically, *pistis* is something that can be perfected when lacking (1 Thes 3.10: καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν). We may also compare the thanksgiving section of what has come to be known as the second (probably deutero-Pauline) letter to the Thessalonians:

We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly (ὑπεραυξάνει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν), and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith (ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν καὶ πίστεως) during all your persecutions and the afflictions (ἐν πάσιν τοῖς διωγμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ ταῖς θλίψεσιν) that you are enduring. (2 *Thessalonians* 1.3–4)

Here, faith is closely related to steadfastness, capable of growth, and particularly evident during troubled times. Through its capacity to reach out above human circumstances and draw strength from a relationship with a stable God, *pistis* is able to offer stability to the addressees.

This emphasis on standing, strengthening, and perfecting faith shows that the mentality of faith comes in degrees, not in a binary on-or-off setting or in a 'once-in-a-cosmic-lifetime' revelation like the faith-discourses we encountered in the previous chapters. The characteristics and dynamics that render it a typically human state of mind come to the fore in light of the discourse discussed in these chapters on the *pistis* mentality.

This vocabulary of increase and decrease in *pistis* is very similar to the manner in which contemporary philosophical sources speak of the process of attaining virtue. Here too, especially in Stoic thought, there is something of a paradox, as on the one hand, one who has any virtue has them all, and on

<sup>217</sup> The full phrase reads εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως. I here take the genitive *pisteōs* to refer to both progress and joy, alternatively it may refer only to joy.

the other, progress in virtue is possible.<sup>218</sup> We already established that *pistis* itself was seen as a prelude to virtue by Aristotle and as the virtue par excellence by Philo. In the next two chapters, sources from even more philosophical traditions will confirm that *pistis* and *fides* language is perfectly at home in the context of striving for perfection. The Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca, for instance, describes this effort as one of continuous movement, going forth while there is endurance, but falling back as soon as zealous and faithful striving diminishes:

That which is short of perfection must necessarily be unsteady, at one time progressing, at another slipping or growing faint; and it will surely slip back unless it keeps struggling ahead (*nisi ire et niti perseveraverint*); for if a man slackens at all in zeal and faithful application (*ex studio et fideli intentione*), he must retrograde. (Seneca, *Epistles* 71.35)

Seneca defines virtue in the same letter as ‘a true and never-swerving judgement’ (*iudicium verum et inmotum*).<sup>219</sup> Whereas for Paul, *pistis* comprises more than true judgement per se, it is sometimes connected to a verb of judging or distinguishing (Rom 4.20: διακρίνω) and his emphasis on the aim of stability perfectly fits the language belonging to this topos of moral perfection.<sup>220</sup> *Pistis* in this context is very much a human virtue capable of growth, closely related to steadfastness, stability, and endurance.

As a survey of the *pistis* vocabulary in the undisputed letters demonstrates, the reverse of a stable kind of *pistis* is also possible, since firmness of faith(fullness) is threatened by testing/tempting (1 Thes 3.5: πειράζω) or tribulation (1 Thes 3.3: θλίψις) and may be weakened by distrust (Rom 4.20; Rom 11.20). Distrust or faithlessness (ἀπιστία) as a noun occurs four times and only in *Romans*. Three times the noun is used in reference to certain Jews in their relationship with God: their *apistia*, (Rom 3.3: ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν), ‘distrust’, will not revoke the divine faithfulness (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ); they may be broken off because of their *apistia* (Rom 11.20: τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ ἐξεκλάσθησαν); and they may stay or persist in it (Rom 11.23: ἐπιμένωσι τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ). In these three instances, *apistia* seems to belong to a social semantic domain—a field I address more fully in chapter 7 and 8 (esp. §8.4.1 on *apistia* in *Romans*). It indicates a breach of trust. The adjective *apistoi* is more common, yet it is only used in 1 and 2

218 On the various approaches to this paradox in Stoicism and Middle-Platonism, see Roskam 2005.

219 Seneca, *Epistles* 71.32.

220 See also §5.3.5 on Stoic confidence and §6.3.2 on philosophy as practice of virtue.

*Corinthians* and even then as a designation of people: on this usage, I will also elaborate in chapter 8 (§§8.4.2–4).

That said, one instance of the noun *apistia* (Rom 4.20) seems to be particularly ‘cognitive’ or ‘psychological’ in nature, as it relates to Abraham and his attitude towards God’s promise. Here, the noun *apistia* is used as the opposite of having a firm mental disposition of *pistis*:

Hoping against hope, he trusted that (ἐπίστευσεν εἰς) he would become ‘the father of many nations’, according to what was said, ‘So numerous shall your descendants be.’ He did not weaken in trust (μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει) when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. He did not contest the promise of God out of disloyalty (εἰς δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ), but he grew strong in his loyalty (ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει) as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced (πληροφορηθεὶς) that God was able to do what he had promised. (*Romans* 4.18–21)

This section of the letter (*Romans* 4), often deemed crucial for understanding Paul’s *pistis* language, will return briefly in our discussions about individuality versus communality in faith (see §6.4.2) and extensively when it concerns the nexus of faith, grace, promises, works, and law (see §7.4.4). Paul’s main purpose seems to be to explain his thesis about how one is made righteous outside the sphere of the law through an exegesis of Abraham, who ‘trusted God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness’ (Rom 4.3: ἐπίστευσεν; see Gen 15.6).<sup>221</sup> As Paul develops his interpretation of Abraham’s story in *Genesis*, he employs a wider range of *pistis* language. *Pistis* in the passage quoted appears to be a mental conviction regarding the truth of a divine promise and is thereby a mental judgement on the trustworthiness of God. Abraham ‘grew strong’ (4.20: ἐνεδυναμώθη) with respect to his *pistis*,<sup>222</sup> which developed into a strong conviction (4.21: πληροφορηθεὶς) and is explicitly contrasted with *apistia*, indicating some form of distrust or a lack of faith (4.20).

From the perspective of this chapter, i.e. the Platonic discourse on *pistis* as a category of knowledge, what is remarkable about this passage is indeed this cognitive approach to faith. At the same time, *pistis* in this context seems not only to be cognitive in nature; it also seems to be a rather gullible or irrational attitude on Abraham’s part: it is faith in the face of sensible evidence to the

221 On the Midrashic qualities of the passage, see Dunn 1988b, 197–198.

222 Cf. Hodge 2007, 93: ‘was empowered by faithfulness’.

contrary in the form of their ‘as good as dead’ bodies. As the critics mentioned in the introduction to this chapter would argue, this text confirms that Paul’s Abrahamic faith is irrational or blind. Yet, is it indeed a type of ‘blindness’ that prompts Abraham to ‘become more powerful’ (4.21: ἐνεδυναμώθη) regarding *pistis*?

Here, a comparison with Philo’s insights into Abraham’s story in *Genesis*, as we discussed above (§4.3.4), is helpful. In Philo’s interpretation of Abraham’s *pistis*, we have seen how it was praised precisely for being directed towards what is eternal and divine, instead of towards instable and temporary worldly sensibles. Paul’s thinking appears to be driven by similar contrasts here, as is evidenced by his addition about how Abraham’s *pistis* is directed towards God (Rom 4.17: οὗ ἐπίστευσεν θεοῦ), who not only can create life out of death but also ‘calls into existence the things that do not exist’ (καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα).<sup>223</sup> This rather abstract characterization indicates that for Paul, to trust God is to trust being over non-being, intelligibles over sensibles, as all being originates from God (cf. 1 Cor 8.6). The internal logic of this passage indicates that far from being ‘blind’, Abraham’s trust is focused on what ‘is’—what is actual, real, and stable, and hence trustworthy as it stems from the ultimate source of stability and faithfulness. Read in this light, Abraham’s *pistis* was not deemed strong by Paul because of its irrationality, but rather it was strong in spite of the naturally impossible circumstances, as it was focused on what ‘is’, on true knowledge, an attitude which testifies to Abraham’s philosophical disposition. Our modern faith in sensibles thus threatens to interfere with our reading of ancient sources with their high regard of intelligibles, resulting in the anachronistic stigma of irrationality being applied to ancient philosophical idealism.

On the other hand, Paul recognizes that Abraham’s *pistis* is still a human virtue and therefore imperfect, for if Abraham would not have experienced any uncertainty this would have amounted to him being divine, which is, Philo also argues, a blasphemous suggestion (see *On the Change of Names* 181–183). Concerning this human factor, Philo seems to do more justice than Paul to the episode of *Genesis* 16, where Abraham agrees to lay with Hagar as substitute for Sarai.<sup>224</sup> Still, the imperfection of human *pistis* is evident from Paul’s language of growth: as inner disposition or virtue, it must be nurtured in order

223 On this phrase in relation to Stoic thought and *creatio ex nihilo*, see Van Kooten 2017, 136–146.

224 Abraham’s lack of faith elicited diverse treatments across Jewish literature: see also Dorman 2017, 152 on how in *Jubilees*, Abraham’s laughter is explained as displaying happiness instead of disbelief.

to grow, for it is in continuous danger of becoming weaker instead of stronger. Abraham's *pistis* was a faith that gradually grew inside him, and through this it transformed his character, his status in God's eyes, and, ultimately, his circumstances as well. The faith of Abraham that was reckoned as righteousness was, according to Paul, a tested and matured trust in the divine reality that remained unshaken as the decades past.<sup>225</sup>

Particularly in Paul's passages on Abraham, it becomes evident that even though the sense of a mental attitude (resulting in virtuous actions) is absolutely present here (cf. chapters 5 and 6 below as well), it cannot be easily set apart from the semantic domain of *pistis* as relational trust, allegiance, and loyalty (as foregrounded in chapters 7 and 8 below). Unfortunately, especially in context of the *pistis Christou* debate (on which see chapter 6 below), the meanings of faithfulness and faith, trustworthiness and trust are often played off against each other: 'it is not Abraham's obedience/faithfulness that is in view, since there is no command to follow at this point.'<sup>226</sup> This judgement seems to take faithfulness in a very narrow sense; obviously one can be loyal in a relationship without following specific orders. In fact, the active trust of Abraham is not only an expression of his personal allegiance to God; it also enables the establishment of a long-term covenant, a relationship of mutual allegiance between God and the line of Abraham.<sup>227</sup> In light of the relational markers in the direct context, it makes perfect sense to read the verb *diakrinesthai* (Rom 4.20: διακρίνεσθαι) not internally and cognitively as 'hesitate', 'doubt', or 'waver'—this sense is not attested prior to the New Testament—but relationally as 'dispute'.<sup>228</sup> Abraham's ability to see beyond bodily appearances towards the promise of God, his *pistis* in the sense of an internal cognitive mode directed at the divine, was what enabled him to honour this relationship and remain 'externally' and relationally committed.

225 Cf. also the reading of the author of 1 *Makkabees* (at 1 Makk 2.52): 'Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation (Ἀβραάμ οὐχὶ ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός), and it was accounted to him as righteousness?'

226 Nicholson 2014, 195, referring also to Dunn 2002, 265.

227 Caroline Johnson Hodge emphasizes the motive of lineage and descent in this passage and argues that 'faithfulness does not refer only to an inner disposition; rather, faithfulness is Paul's shorthand for the covenant between God and Abraham' (Hodge 2007, 87). Another important case for a more relational understanding of faith (even) in *Romans* 4 was made by Benjamin Schliesser (2007). In the previous chapter (§3.4.1) I discussed Schliesser's thought on the twofold structure of faith as, on the one hand, a salvation-historical sphere of power and, on the other, the human attitude by means of which one can participate in this sphere.

228 As argued more generally by Peter Spitaler (2007) and specifically for *Romans* 4.20 by Benjamin Schliesser (2012).



Likewise, as we saw in our discussion of Philo's usage of *pistis* (§4.3.4), the cognitive aspect of firm trust turns out to be firmly embedded in a relationship of reciprocal trust and trustworthiness, particularly when it comes to Abraham and God. Philo states, for example, that 'God, marvelling at Abraham's faith in him (τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν πίστεως ἀγάμενος), repaid him with faithfulness (πίστιν ἀντιδίδωσιν αὐτῷ) by confirming with an oath the gifts which he had promised.'<sup>229</sup> We find similar logic in Paul's treatment of Abraham: his firm conviction that God would be of good faith establishes a bond of trust, a relationship of reciprocal divine-human faithfulness that would, in Paul's reading, eventually incorporate all nations. The epistemological and psychological human attitude of trust is what prompts and substantiates the relational bond of trust.

The human face of faith need not theologically 'condemn us' to a Pelegianistic standpoint on the origin of faith.<sup>230</sup> From a linguistic point of view, we are dealing with a genuinely different semantic domain of *pistis* here, in which *pistis* is not so much conceived as something that comes entirely from God as an outside source—a conception we encountered in the previous chapter—but in which the mental, human component is dominant. According to Paul, these two themes could coexist in perfect harmony, for as we saw in our discussion of *Philippians* 3.17–21, epistemological and ethical transformation goes hand in hand with the cosmic return of a just ruler: both are effectuated by the same *energeia* (see §3.4.2, and on *energeia* also §5.4.3). A final relevant parallel in this regard is found in (deutero-Pauline) *Colossians* (1.19–23), where the divine reconciliation with all things, including the addressed 'you', is given an additional disclaimer: 'provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in faith (εἰ γὰρ ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἑδραίοι)' (Col 1.23). Here too, the focus on Christ's (or God's)<sup>231</sup> definitive interference and ultimate purpose does not lead to a neglect of the human component: that too is clearly present, expressed in familiar terms of maintaining firmness or stability in faith.

#### 4.4.2 *As Surely as God Is Pistos (2 Cor 1.18): Divine and Apostolic Reliability*

In many instances Christ is the object of knowledge and *pistis* in Paul's letters. What, then, is the precise role of a community leader? Most of the texts

229 Philo, *On the Life of Abraham* 273.

230 On Pelagius's views on faith and merit, see e.g. Evans 2010, 117–118.

231 The subject of the verb ἀποκατήλλαξεν (v. 22) is uncertain. Moreover, some manuscript traditions have the passive form ἀποκατηλλάγητε, which is linguistically awkward, yet preferred by some for that precise reason.

mentioned above place Paul and his companions, like Timothy, in the position of teacher of this *pistis*, this 'faith(fullness)', or rather, in our present context, 'firm conviction'. To fulfil this position adequately, however, teachers must of course be stable and trustworthy (*pistos*) themselves. In this regard, it is an interesting observation that six out of a total of seven occurrences of the non-substantivized adjective *pistos* in the undisputed letters can be found in the Corinthian correspondence (the other in 1 Thes 5.24). As far as we can tell from the letters themselves, this congregation is notorious for questioning the status of the apostle.

If we take a closer look at these adjectives, we notice that, in the undisputed letters, three of them are attributed to Paul or Timothy and four of them refer to God.<sup>232</sup> In the three former cases, *pistos* concerns the trustworthiness of apostles. Paul names them 'servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries' and as stewards they need to be trustworthy (1 Cor 4.1–2). Hence, when Paul sends Timothy to Corinth, he is praised for his trustworthiness as a recommendation (1 Cor 4.17). This being *pistos* (πιστός εἶναι) gives one a means of knowing (γνώμη) that is both different from the 'authority of the Lord' (ἐπιταγήν κυρίου) and at the same time realized 'by the mercy of the Lord' (ἡλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου) (1 Cor 7.25). In all these instances, *pistis* vocabulary is involved in the semantic field of knowledge, but serves as an intermediate category, firm yet not divine.

How does this picture change when it is said of God that he is *pistos*? The issue at stake in all four cases referring to God is the stability or perfection of the faithful. At the beginning of 1 *Corinthians*, various expressions in Paul's thanksgiving point to this process of perfection: it is spoken of in terms of an enrichment in Christ in all reason and knowledge (1.5: ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει),<sup>233</sup> as a strengthening of the testimony of/about Christ<sup>234</sup> (1.6: τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν), and as being strengthened by Christ up to the end (1.8: ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους) so as to be irreproachable on the day of the Lord.<sup>235</sup> In this context, which abounds in epistemological vocabulary, it is said that God is faithful (1.9: πιστὸς ὁ θεός). Later in the letter, the call to abstain from idolatry is underlined by the

232 Cf. LXX *Deuteronomy* 9.7; 32.4: Θεὸς πιστός. But also Pindar, *Nemean Ode* 10.54 'Indeed, the race of the gods is trustworthy (καὶ μὲν θεῶν πιστὸν γένος).'

233 Cf. LXX *Proverbs* 22.21: διδάσκω οὖν σε ἀληθῆ λόγον καὶ γνώσιν ἀγαθὴν ὑπακούειν.

234 Depending on how one reads the genitive. In the manuscript tradition, the variant θεοῦ is also attested (i.a. in the original hand of the Vaticanus).

235 Joseph Fitzmyer (2008, 130, 133) understands the overly positive evaluation of the Corinthians here as a *captatio benevolentiae*.

example of Israel in the desert. This call is phrased in familiar language: they are to remain standing if they are subjected to a test (10.12–13), for ‘God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength’ (10.13: πιστός δὲ ὁ θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε). At the end of *1 Thessalonians*, a similar reassurance is given. Paul wishes his addressees to be sanctified entirely by God (5.23: ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς) so that their body, mind, and spirit are irreproachable (5.23: ἀμέμπτως) at the ‘coming of our Lord Jesus Christ’. This is affirmed by the words ‘the one who calls you is faithful, and he will do so’ (5.24: πιστός ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει). In all three cases, then, the stability of God is expressed by the adjective *pistos* and functions as a guarantee for the stability and ultimate perfection of the Christ-community.<sup>236</sup> Like Philo’s Moses, who derived his stability and faith from his standing close to God (see §4.3.4 above), the addressees will remain standing, because God is *pistos*, stable, and hence trustworthy.

It becomes even more interesting with the fourth instance of the adjective *pistos* as predicate of God in the undisputed letters. This time, Paul appeals to God’s faithfulness to reaffirm his own reliability. In order to explain to the Corinthians why he had not come to Corinth he first rebuts the complaint of inconsistency:

As surely as God is faithful (πιστός δὲ ὁ θεός ὄτι), our word to you has not been ‘yes and no’. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not ‘yes and no’, but in him it is always ‘yes’. For in him every one of God’s promises is a ‘yes’. For this reason it is through him that we say the ‘amen’ (διὸ καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ τὸ Ἀμήν τῷ θεῷ), to the glory of God. But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ (ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστόν). (*2 Corinthians* 1.18–21)

Duplicity or two-mindedness belongs neither to God nor to those who serve him. For Paul, the rhetorical purpose of this language lies in their mutual dependency on God being *pistos*: his relationship with the Corinthians should also be reciprocal, both having the other as ‘a boast’ at the *Parousia* (1.14). They should enjoy the joy of Paul (2 Cor 2.3) and feel his pain (2 Cor 2.5). This is what

<sup>236</sup> Cf. Arzt-Grabner 2017, 249: ‘Auch der paulinische Gott steht als πιστός zu dem einmal Begonnenen. Auf die mit πιστός angesprochene Zuverlässigkeit kann man etwas gründen und aufbauen.’ The same pattern recurs in *2 Thessalonians* as well, were ‘the Lord is faithful’ is exemplified as ‘who will strengthen you (ὃς στηρίξει ὑμᾶς) and guard you from the evil one’ (2 Thes 3.3). Here the pattern of assimilation to God, *homoiōsis Theōi*, as regards divine *pistis* is discernible: on this topos, see esp. §§6.3.4–5 and §§6.4.4–5 *infra*.

the Corinthians have only understood in part (1.14: ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ μέρους), but Paul hopes they will understand fully or *litteratim* ‘up to the end’ at that day (1.14: ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι ἕως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε): he and they have an equal *pistis* (see 1.24, discussed in §5.4.2 below), an equal faithful, stable state of mind, secured by God in Christ. As Paul repeats further on, ‘If you are confident that you belong to Christ (εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἐαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι), remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to Christ, so also do we’ (2 Cor 10.7). Hence, they ought to have confidence in rather than question Paul’s trustworthiness, for like their own it is guaranteed in Christ. To distrust Paul is detrimental to their shared response of faith(fulness) to God.

In this context, the strong connection of trustworthiness to swearing and oaths becomes apparent, a connection we already encountered with Theognis’s account of degeneration in the previous chapter. While trying to explain the oddity of God himself swearing in *Genesis* 4, Philo provides us with an interesting account of how God’s faithfulness can assure human speech:

Now men have recourse to oaths to win belief (τοῦ γε μὴν πιστευθῆναι χάριν (...) καταφεύγουσιν ἐφ’ ὄρκον ἀνθρωποι), when others deem them untrustworthy (ἀπιστούμενοι); but God is trustworthy (πιστός ἐστιν) in His speech as elsewhere, so that His words in certitude (βεβαιότητος ἕνεκα) differ not a whit from oaths. And so it is that while with us the oath gives warrant for our sincerity, it is itself guaranteed by God. For the oath does not make God trustworthy; it is God that assures the oath (οὐ γὰρ δι’ ὄρκον πιστός ὁ θεός, ἀλλὰ δι’ αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ ὄρκος βέβαιος). (Philo, *On the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel* 93–94)

If, as Philo’s words confirm, God’s faithfulness can affirm human sincerity, Paul’s call upon God’s faithfulness to establish (βεβαιόω) his own is wholly understandable given that his own sincerity is in question. And that he does not in fact swear an oath himself, in accordance with Jesus’s teachings (*Matthew* 5.33–37, cf. *James* 5.12), is also understandable. In both Paul’s and Philo’s usage of *pistis* language, God’s *pistis* is the foundation of the human virtue of trustworthiness and stability.

But in addition to Philo’s analysis, Paul invokes Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of God’s promises—that is God’s ‘yes’ to us—and as the one in whom ‘we’ respond affirmatively to these promises.<sup>237</sup> Christ is the firm, unwavering representative of God’s faithfulness and the representative and guarantee of the

237 See also Torrance 1957, 113: ‘Jesus Christ is (...) the embodiment and actualization of man’s *pistis* in covenant with God.’

human ‘amen’ to God, for in him both Paul and the Corinthians are ‘secured’ by God. In fact, as ‘amen’ comes from the same root as the Hebrew near equivalent of *pistis*, it is said here that the reply of human faith(fulness) to God’s faithfulness is because of and through Christ (see also §§6.4.4–5 on Christ as an intermediary *exemplum* and chapter 7 on *pistis* in reciprocal relationships). In this stabilizing, confirming, or securing intermediary function of Christ, we encounter a specifically early-Christian expression.

#### 4.4.3 *By Pistis, Not by Sight (2 Cor 5.7): Faith through Sensible Images towards Ultimate Knowledge*

Taken completely out of context, Paul’s remark that ‘we walk by faith, not by sight (διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους)’ (2 Cor 5.7) is used in popular discourse by ‘fundamentalist Christians’ and ‘fundamentalist atheists’ alike to underline the unbridgeable gap between faith and science, as a simple internet search demonstrates. ‘Sight’ is then taken to refer to empiricism, while faith denotes belief without proof.

Within Christian liturgy too, different interpretations of this verse can be found. The text of the 1844 hymn written by Henry Alford reads:

We walk by faith, and not by sight  
 No gracious words we hear  
 Of him who spoke as none e’er spoke  
 But we believe him near

The interpretation of ‘faith’ as opposed to sight in this song is related to the absence of God, or the absence of evidence of God’s presence, while we are on this earth. The thrust is that ‘we’ would rather walk by sight, but we cannot, not yet at least. Completely different, yet still based on the same Pauline verse, is the hymn written in 1919 by Benjamin M. Ramsey:

Teach me Thy way, O Lord, teach me Thy way  
 Thy guiding grace afford, teach me Thy way  
 Help me to walk aright, more by faith, less by sight  
 Lead me with heav’nly light, teach me Thy way

Walking by faith is here seen not so much as a necessary provisionality of our earthly existence, but as the eventual goal of Christian life. By analogy, walking

by sight is not the clear vision of God Christ-followers long for, but the material view they ought to overcome.<sup>238</sup>

In this subsection, I side with and argue for the interpretation that informs the first hymn, namely that Paul's statement is meant to align faith and sight by their shared object, i.e. God, yet also contrast them as regards the provisional, earthly character of *pistis*. This is all the more evident when we compare Paul's language of 'seeing' in this section with Plato's.

Underlying this confusion in understanding 'faith not sight' terminology are different meanings of sight. We can distinguish between 'plain sight' as sensible perception by means of our eyes and sight as a metaphor indicating a type of cognition, a 'grasping', or a close encounter of a non-natural character, a 'beholding' or, as it later became known, *visio beatifica*. In-between there are many shades of grey, which are particularly well exploited by Platonic philosophy. The way in which a transition from one type of seeing to another is made in the Platonic dialogues and later Platonic tradition may help us to better understand the logic behind Paul's different usages of sight and, ultimately, help us interpret the *pistis* vocabulary in this passage. Therefore, I want to first turn to these Platonic ideas of vision before reading the entire passage (2 Cor 3–5) in this light, after which I will weigh the evidence in favour of both interpretations of 'by faith not by sight'.

A very cautious evaluation of the senses is given in the *Phaedo*, where it is said that philosophy tries to convince souls in their imprisoned state not to trust (*pisteuō*) their eyes or ears, but only their own thought directed at the real, the abstract, the invisible:

The lovers of knowledge, then, I say, perceive that philosophy, taking possession of the soul when it is in this state, encourages it gently and tries to set it free, pointing out that the eyes and the ears and the other senses are full of deceit, and urging (*πειθουσα*) it to withdraw from these, except in so far as their use is unavoidable, and exhorting it to collect and concentrate itself within itself, and to trust (*πιστεύειν*) nothing except itself and its own abstract thought of abstract existence; and to believe<sup>239</sup> that there is no truth in that which it sees by other means and which varies with the various objects in which it appears, since everything of that kind is visible and apprehended by the senses (*εἶναι δὲ τὸ μὲν τοιοῦτον*

238 Cf. for a similar reading BDAG, s.v. *πίστις* 2.d.β: 'Paul contrasts walking *διὰ εἶδους* (...) as the lower degree, with *διὰ πίστεως περιπατεῖν* (2 Cor 5:7).'

239 In the Greek text, this phrase is still dependent on the earlier verb *πιστεύειν*.

αἰσθητόν τε καὶ ὁρατόν), whereas the soul itself sees that which is invisible and apprehended by the mind (ὁ δὲ αὐτὴ ὁρᾷ νοητόν τε καὶ ἀειδέες). (Plato, *Phaedo* 83a–b)

Here the senses do not seem able to lead the soul to the world beyond. The final juxtaposition between what is perceptible or visible and what is intelligible or invisible (ἀειδέες, literally ‘without form’)<sup>240</sup> but still ‘seen’ (ὁράω) by the soul is very much in sync with Paul’s paradoxical aim to look (σκοπέω) not at what is visible (τὰ βλεπόμενα), which is temporary, but rather at what is invisible (τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα), which is eternal (2 Cor 4.18).<sup>241</sup>

In different dialogues, however, Plato elaborates on the connection between what is seen by the human eye and what is intellectually discernible. In the *Timaeus*, the world itself is called ‘a visible living creature embracing the visible creatures (ζῶον ὁρατόν τὰ ὁρατὰ περιέχον), a perceptible God made in the image of the Intelligible (εἰκῶν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεὸς αἰσθητός)’<sup>242</sup> According to Diotima in the *Symposium*, it is by observing instances of beauty, by ‘seeing the beautiful through that which makes it visible’ (ὁρῶντι ᾧ ὁρατόν τὸ καλόν), that one is led to knowledge of beauty, with its ultimate aim being ‘a wondrous vision, beautiful in its nature’ (κατόψεταιί τι θαυμαστόν τὴν φύσιν καλόν) or, more cognitively phrased, ‘so that he comes to know the very essence of beauty’ (ἵνα γνῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἔστι καλόν).<sup>243</sup> At several places in Plato’s oeuvre, he makes clear that the latter type of sight is a metaphor for thinking or grasping with the mind.<sup>244</sup> The former is only useful in so far as it looks beyond what is visible in the narrow sense towards the underlying reality. Precisely in the ordinary perception of particular examples or images one can remember and intellectually perceive the universal in which it partakes.

Plutarch closely follows this scheme in his own *Dialogue on Love* or *Amatorius*. In Plutarch’s version, the function of the god *Erōs* gains strongly religious

240 An interesting choice of words, for *eidos* is most famous as one of Plato’s terms for the intellectual Forms (together with *idea*).

241 Cf. for a different view, Watson 1993, 48: ‘Paul’s description of the things that are seen as *transient* or temporary, and the things that are not seen as *eternal* has quite a Platonic ring, but a distinction between an eternal world of forms and a temporal world of becoming is not what is implied. By “the things that are seen” Paul clearly means the troubles that are his present lot.’

242 Plato, *Timaeus* 92c.

243 Plato, *Symposium* 212a, 210e, 211c respectively. Cf §4.3.2 above.

244 E.g. Plato, *Republic* 507b: ‘And that some of these we say can be seen (ὁρᾶσθαί), but not perceived by the mind (νοεῖσθαι), whereas the Forms can be perceived by the mind, but not seen.’ For more passages, see also Trabattoni 2016, 142: ‘It is evident, therefore, that when Plato speaks of “seeing” the ideas, he is using the verb in a metaphorical sense.’

overtones as ‘divine and reasonable Love’ (θείου και σώφρονος Ἔρωτος), the soul’s ‘physician, its saviour, its guide’ (ἰατροῦ και σωτήρος και ἡγεμόνος), the one ‘who graciously appears to lift us out of the depths and escort us upward, like a mystic guide (μυσταγωγός) beside us at our initiation’.<sup>245</sup> We already saw how for Plutarch the journey to the divine is difficult yet possible due to the strong ontological participation of the sensible in the intelligible realm. In this journey, Love acts as a ‘divine guide towards the truth’ (ἀφικόμενος ἀγωγὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν) through ‘the medium of bodily forms’ (διὰ σωμαίων ἀφικόμενος).<sup>246</sup> In this context, just as we saw before in *To an Uneducated Ruler* (see §4.3.5), Plutarch adds the specific metaphor of the mirror, which is highly relevant because this image recurs in both 1 and 2 *Corinthians* (see also §4.4.4 below):

Love does not approach our souls in isolation by themselves, but through the body (διὰ σώματος). Teachers of geometry, when their pupils are not yet capable of initiation into purely intellectual conceptions of incorporeal and unchanging substance, offer them tangible and visible copies of spheres and cubes and dodecahedrons; in the same way heavenly Love contrives for us, as in a mirror, beautiful reflections of beautiful realities (οὕτως ἡμῖν ὁ οὐράνιος Ἔρως ἔσοπτρα καλῶν καλὰ). These are, however, merely mortal reflections of the divine, corruptible of the incorruptible, sensible of the intelligible (θνητὰ μέντοι θείων και ἀπαθῶν παθητὰ και νοητῶν αἰσθητὰ). By showing us these in the form and hue and aspect of young men radiant in the prime of their beauty, Love gently excites our memory (κινεῖ τὴν μνήμην), which is first kindled by this means. (Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 765A–B)

The underlying theory is that of a prenatal vision in need of being remembered by us human beings; all that remains for Love is to guide us towards this insight.<sup>247</sup> Love offers reflections of the divine which we perceive as in a mirror. Here, the phrasing is very similar to the passage we saw before, where Plutarch spoke of the gods revealing themselves in the sun and in ‘the light of

245 Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 764E–765A.

246 Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 765A. Cf. Frazier 2007, 10: ‘son appartenance au *doxaston* permet d’une certaine manière à Ἔρος de jouer un rôle médiateur’.

247 Cf. Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 2, 1000D–E: ‘[wisdom], which he called passion for the divine and intelligible (περὶ τὸ θεῖον και νοητὸν ἔρωτικὴν), is for human beings a matter not of generation or of discovery but of reminiscence. For this reason, Socrates was not engaged in teaching anything’. Love is even called ‘recollection’ (ὁ Ἔρως ἀνάμνησις ἐστίν) in Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 764E.



justice and knowledge' as 'image through a mirror' (δι' ἐσόπτρου εἶδωλον).<sup>248</sup> The language of earthly images mirroring the divine is a recurring theme throughout Plutarch's oeuvre.<sup>249</sup> The images are merely secondary; they are meant to guide the beholder towards the realities beyond. This, however, is not always the outcome. The same metaphor of the mirror is repeated again a little further on in the *Dialogue on Love* (with the synonymous noun of κάτοπτρον):

Yet most men, since they pursue in boys and women merely the mirrored image of Beauty (ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτροις εἶδωλον αὐτοῦ φανταζόμενον), can attain by their groping nothing more solid than a pleasure mixed with pain. (Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 766A)

According to Plutarch here, people who do not look beyond the mirrored image but instead pursue the image itself do not attain a vision of the divine. This 'gaze on God' is even described as being the chief aim of Platonism by another second-century author, Justin Martyr.<sup>250</sup>

The 'Middle Platonist' reception of Plato in Plutarch's works is interesting not merely because it proves the continuation of the discourse into the first and second century AD, but because it both adds this element of the mirror and takes up the specific subject of love for the beautiful as an example of a more general structure in which the divine, incorruptible, and intelligible are reflected in the mortal, corruptible, and sensible. In the whole argument of 2 *Corinthians* 3–5 we can discern a similar Platonic movement from sensible, earthly, actual sight to intellectual, heavenly, metaphorical sight, much like the one in the *Symposium* and the *Dialogue on Love*. And just as in the passage from the Aristotelean treatise *On the Cosmos*, Paul uses *pistis* language to describe this type of human perception of the invisible.

Throughout 2 *Corinthians* 3–5, a passage that has some characteristics of a Jewish Midrash on *Exodus* 34, Paul compares himself to the figure of Moses. Moses functions as a model and prefiguration albeit one that pales by com-

248 Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 781F, see §4.3.5 *supra*.

249 Cf. *On Isis and Osiris* 382A–B on animals as 'mirrors of the divine'; *Platonic Questions* 3, 1002A on mathematical objects as mirrors of the intelligible; and see *On Isis and Osiris* 372F: εἰκῶν γὰρ ἐστὶν οὐσίας ἐν ὕλῃ ἢ γένεσις καὶ μίμημα τοῦ ὄντος τὸ γιγνόμενον. On Plutarch's understanding of the cosmos as representation of the divine, see Hirsch-Luipold 2002, on the image of the mirror esp. 160–161.

250 Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.6: 'soon I supposed that I had become wise; and was so stupid that I expected to gaze on God at any moment—that being the end of Plato's philosophy.'

parison.<sup>251</sup> Paul refers to the *Exodus* narrative (Ex 34.29–35) by stating that the people of Israel were not able to gaze (ἀτενίζω) at Moses's face because of its glory (δόξα) (2 Cor 3.7) and that Moses actually wore a veil to keep them from gazing 'at the purpose (τὸ τέλος) of the glory'—that is, beyond the visible to the divine glory, which he later (2 Cor 4.4) connects to the face of Christ.<sup>252</sup> The verb used for seeing here (ἀτενίζω) is 'a technical term, used particularly in the context of a divine epiphany or a manifestation of divine power'.<sup>253</sup> So even though the Israelites are in a situation of 'plain sight', the vocabulary indicates that there is more to see than meets the non-metaphorical eye. Paul then connects the present condition of his fellow Jews to those living at the time of Moses, arguing that there is still a veil hiding the old covenant, that there is also a veil over the heart of those listening to it being read (2 Cor 3.14–15), and finally that his own message is hidden for 'those who are perishing' (2 Cor 4.3). Yet, this veil is removed 'when one turns to the Lord' (2 Cor 3.16).<sup>254</sup> Whereas the Mosaic veil, then, was actually barring the ancient Israelites' sight, these further reflections of Paul turn a narrative of plain sight or the obstruction thereof into a figure denoting insight: the grasping or beholding of a divine truth.

This is not where the similarities with the Platonic scheme end, however. The idea of seeing the Form of Beauty mediated by images of beauty (from Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium*) and particularly the idea of mirror images of God (from Plutarch's *To an Uneducated Ruler* and *On Love*) resonate with the Pauline discourse of sight in these chapters. For here also, there are

251 The parallelism between Paul and Moses is emphasized in Stockhausen 1989 (particularly 169–175). However, Stockhausen seems to overlook the small yet significant alterations in favour of Paul's gospel.

252 Arguably, *telos* could also refer to the eventual end or 'abolishment' of the law in Christ, or retain this ambiguity, just as in *Romans* 10.4 (Christ, the *telos* of the law). Yet the visual metaphor fits better with an interpretation of *telos* as a goal beyond what is visible than with abolition of the visible.

253 Such is the conclusion of Strelan 1999 at 255.

254 Apart from the obvious appropriation of *Exodus* here, the motive of unveiling in the face of the divine light is also evident in classical sources, like in the proem of Parmenides's poem, where the poet is led to the goddess to learn 'the unshaken heart of persuasive truth' by the Heliades, who, 'hastening to convey me into the light, threw back their veils from off their faces (ὠσάμεναι κράτων ἄπο χειρῶν καλύπτρας) and left the abode of Night.' (Parmenides, *On Nature* B 1.29, 9–10.) We could also recall Dio Chrysostom's portrayal of Epicureans, who 'have hung before their eyes a curtain of deep darkness and mist (πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν σκότος πολὺ προβαλόμενοι καὶ ἀχλύν)' so they do not recognize the gods (*Orations* 12.36, see §2.4.1).

visible objects on the earth that serve as intermediaries to lead those watching and contemplating to higher, invisible knowledge of God, transforming the viewer into God's likeness and suggesting a process of ethical reform.<sup>255</sup> We already saw that the figure of the earthen vessels (2 Cor 4.7) refers to God's power made visible (2 Cor 4.10: φανερωθῆ) in human bodily appearance, similar to pagan simulacra (see §2.4.3 above). Paul presents himself as such a vessel, having taken part in Jesus's death by affliction and persecution, 'so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible' (φανερωθῆ) in his body or mortal flesh (2 Cor 4.11). The epistemological-theological and the ethical discourses are thus not mutually exclusive but directly linked and mutually reinforcing, as the topos of 'assimilation to the divine' (*homoiōsis theōi*) which I discuss in chapter 6 also confirms.<sup>256</sup>

Earlier in the letter, Paul and the Corinthians are said, much like the Israelites watching Moses, to 'behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror (κατοπτρίζομενοι); only 'with unveiled faces', and are thus 'being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another' (2 Cor 3.18). The verb chosen communicates a type of indirect vision, derived from its relation to the noun 'mirror' (κάτοπτρον), and this meaning is confirmed by the indirectness of being transformed to the Lord's glory through his image.<sup>257</sup> The mirror was often chosen as a metaphor for moral self-improvement and is therefore a useful image in this context to emphasize the actual transformation that takes place: one that is more effective than gazing at Moses, but not yet the direct heavenly view of God.<sup>258</sup>

Read against the background of the Platonic epistemological discourse, this intermediate position stands out even clearer. On the one hand, the vision is as clear as is humanly attainable. As this vision takes place without veils,

255 On the meaning of this verse as religio-ethical transformation, in accordance with Philo, see Rabens 2014b, 317–326.

256 Dain Alexander Smith (Smith 2022) is thus right to pinpoint the ethical, Hellenistic discourse at play (including even more comparative material by Epictetus, Seneca and others), yet he is more hesitant to acknowledge the references to partial and ultimate knowledge of the divine. This epistemological element, observed and compared to 'popular pious philosophical agnosticism' by Downing (1984, 176), I would argue to be part of this same discourse. For a discussion of vision in the context of *homoiōsis theōi*, see Heath 2013, 79–87.

257 Etymology is of course not determinative of the verb's use and it can also be used without a clear connotation to the noun, meaning either 'beholding' or 'reflecting'. Yet this is less likely in this context and in comparison to contemporary usage: see Heath 2013, 218–219.

258 On this usage of the image of the mirror, see Johnson 1988, esp. 636–641, and Weissenrieder 2005.

there is a connection to the ultimate reality beyond what is sensibly perceived, a connection that has greater force and lucidity than the connection via the written Law of Moses. On the other hand, it is still mediated, for from the face of the earth we cannot see any clearer than through an image (εἰκῶν). In a similar manner, the character Timaeus had warned that since the cosmos is only an image, we should not aim at certainty but at likelihood (εἰκῶν), being content with the cognitive capacity of *pistis* (Plato, *Timaeus* 29c; see §4.3.2).

Another textual parallel that has often been referred to is found in the *Book of Wisdom* or *Wisdom of Solomon*, where Wisdom herself is described as<sup>259</sup>

a breath of the power of God and an emanation of the pure glory of the Almighty (τῆς τοῦ Παντοκράτορος δόξης), (...) a reflection of eternal light (ἀπαύγασμα γὰρ ἐστὶ φωτὸς αἰδίου) and a spotless mirror of the activity of God (ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνεργείας) and an image of his goodness (εἰκῶν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ). (...) she renews all things (τὰ πάντα καινίζει), and in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them (κατασκευάζει) friends of God (φίλους Θεοῦ) and prophets. (*Wisdom* 7.25–27)<sup>260</sup>

While speculations about a conscious allusion by Paul are not particularly well-founded, the most interesting conclusion to be drawn from this similarity is that the concepts of God's glory and light, the mirror and image of God, and even the idea of human transformation towards friendship with God were part of the same topos in Paul's literary *Umwelt*.<sup>261</sup>, esp. §6.3.4.

Further on, Christ is explicitly named the 'image of God (εἰκῶν τοῦ θεοῦ)' (2 Cor 4.4).<sup>262</sup> The gospel functions as yet another intermediary to be seen, as Paul speaks of 'seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ' (2 Cor 4.4). Recalling intellectual perception in Plato, this act of seeing the light is in fact an act of knowing and recognizing Christ as image, for this light is 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ). Unlike in the

259 E.g. Watson 1993, 67–68.

260 Greek edition: Ziegler 1962. For a discussion of this passage, see Lorenzen 2008, 56–60, and on the possible Stoic and Platonic terminology p. 56, n. 128.

261 See also Heath 2013, 223: 'There is insufficient verbal or conceptual similarity with *Wisdom* 7.5–6 to suggest allusion, even if Paul knew the text of *Wisdom*, which is far from certain.' For the topos of transformation or assimilation to God in Plato, see chapter 6 *infra*.

262 On this Pauline theme in the context of pagan philosophy, see Van Kooten 2008, section 2.4, 'Paul, the image of God and likeness to Christ'.

Platonic pattern, though, Christ is to be known as the ultimate image, not just one particular instance. Nor is this recognition to be thought of in terms of a recollection (*ἀνάμνησις*) of a prenatal vision of truth. To Paul, the renewed relationship to God is one of 'being made visible' to God (2 Cor 5.11: θεῶ δὲ πεφανερῶμεθα), that is, being recognized and acknowledged by God. Through an image, God is made visible and people can metaphysically see God, and through that same image people become seen by or known to God.

And yet, Paul writes that the 'light in the face of Christ' is not seen by *apistoi*, which brings us to the question of how we can relate *apistia*, 'distrust', 'faithlessness', or 'disbelief' and ultimately its positive *pistis* to this discourse of sight. From a Platonic perspective, it is understandable that the intelligible is not seen by all. In fact, we read in the *Phaedrus* that 'only a few, approaching the images through the darkling organs of sense (δι' ἀμυδρῶν ὀργάνων), behold in them the nature of that which they imitate (θεῶνται τὸ τοῦ εἰκασθέντος γένος), and these few do this with difficulty.'<sup>263</sup> For Philo, most people are also like the Chaldeans, believing that 'there is no originating cause outside the things we perceive by our senses' (οὐδὲν ἔξω τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἴτιον ὑπολαμβάνοντες εἶναι).<sup>264</sup> The cause of this difficulty lies, according to Plato, in the fact that the images do not contain light themselves. By contrast, according to Paul there is enough light reflected on earth, but the minds of the beholders are blinded (2 Cor 4.4: ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων) and Paul's good message is veiled (2 Cor 4.3: κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν).<sup>265</sup>

In both Jewish and pagan sources, the image of having an impediment to clear sight is often used to illustrate the condition of being ignorant of divine truth. In the *Iliad* (5.127–128), Athena takes away the 'mist' from the eyes of Diomedes so that he can discern 'gods and men'. Seneca calls human sight 'dull' for perceiving the divine, wherefore Wisdom chose to show these sights to our minds.<sup>266</sup> Epictetus scolds the Epicurean and Academic philosophers for being completely deaf and totally blind (ἀποκεκωφωμένους), as they deny plain

263 Plato, *Phaedrus* 250b.

264 Philo, *On the Virtues* 212.

265 Plato, *Phaedrus* 250b: 'Now in the earthly copies (ἐν τοῖς τῆδε ὁμοιώμασιν) of justice and temperance and the other ideas which are precious to souls there is no light.'

266 Seneca, *Epistles* 90.28: 'Such are wisdom's rites of initiation, by means of which is unlocked, not a village shrine, but the vast temple of all the gods (*ingens deorum omnium templum*)—the universe itself, whose true apparitions and true aspects she offers to the gaze of our minds (*cuius vera simulacra verasque facies cernendas mentibus protulit*). For the vision of our eyes is too dull for sights so great (*Nam ad spectacula tam magna hebes visus est*).' Cf. 90.34: 'nature he has not followed as the other animals do, with eyes too dull to perceive the divine in it (*oculis secutus est tardis ad divina*).'

perceptions including perceptions of the divine.<sup>267</sup> Lucian describes his own experience of philosophical transformation in similar terms: I started from a 'purblind condition' (τυφλώττουσαν) but 'by degrees grew sharper-sighted in my soul' (τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν ὀξυδερκέστερος κατὰ μικρὸν ἐγίγνομην).<sup>268</sup> Perhaps closest to Paul's reasoning in *2 Corinthians* is the imagery in Enoch's *Animal Apocalypse*, where the closing of the eyes of the sheep (which also happens after the Sinai experience) may signify the Israelites turning away from God or losing knowledge of the divine, while the reverse condition implies knowing God again.<sup>269</sup> The metaphor of impeded sight to denote not recognizing the divine is thus well documented in the literature of the period.

Likewise, in *2 Corinthians*, the metaphors of sight denote cognition, and the inability to see the ultimate truth is described as a cognitive failure: the minds of the Israelites were hardened (2 Cor 3.14: ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν) and similarly, Paul's unbelieving contemporaries have blinded minds. They are called *apistoi*, people without faith, precisely because they cannot see the light of God in his visible image, Christ. It is their lack of *pistis* that defines those whose minds are blinded by the god of this world 'to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God'. Sight, in all of these instances, refers to metaphysical insight beyond what the physical eye can discern, and *pistis* is used in paradigmatic relation to this metaphysical form of sight.<sup>270</sup> A lack of *pistis* in this epistemological context thus comes down to the inability to see the reality beyond sensibles.

If we translate this meaning of the negative *apistoi* (2 Cor 4.4) to the meaning of *pistis* in this passage as a whole, we could say that our attitude towards this ultimate reality, via the mediation of an image, is one of *pistis*. This fits well with the other occurrence of *pistis* (2 Cor 4.13) and with the imagery in general.

267 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.37, see §8.3.3 *infra*.

268 Lucian, *Nigrinus* 4 (the character Lucian is here speaking about his encounter with the philosopher Nigrinus). Cf. also Lucian, *The Runaways* 10, where Philosophy herself speaks of the sophists as 'purblind (λημώντες), as it were, through their dim-sightedness (ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀμβλωτέτειν) they merely glimpsed at times an indistinct, dim presentment (εἶδωλον) or shadow of me, yet thought they had discerned everything with accuracy.'

269 E.g. 1 *Enoch* 89.31–32 and 90.35 respectively. On the meaning of the motive of the eyes closing and opening, see Assefa 2017.

270 Even though this type of sight can be named metaphorical, there is no strict duality in play here between the physical and the metaphysical, precisely because of the way sensible images in this world function as referrals to the intelligible. Paul's metaphorical vision does not exclude bodily participation. The cognitive linguistic idea of 'conceptual metaphors' shows how this modern dualistic interpretation can be overcome in Pauline studies: metaphorical language is rooted in ordinary sensual human experience. See Tap-penden 2016, 11–13, 33–39.

In Paul's application of the words of *Psalm* 115, 'I believed, and so I spoke' (2 Cor 4.13), the emphasis is on *pistis* as a strong conviction in the face of earthly affliction.<sup>271</sup> Here *pistis* is the source of the confidence, the resilience, the 'not failing' which is such a central recurring theme in this section.<sup>272</sup> It was this *pistis*, according to the author of *Hebrews*, that gave Moses confidence on his flight from Egypt 'as though he saw him who is invisible (τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὁρῶν)' (Hebr 11.27). Analogous to the meaning *apistoi* (2 Cor 4.4), *pistis* implies the ability to look beyond the veils, beyond the earthen vessels, and beyond the death of Christ towards the light, the treasure, and the resurrection. It sets those with *pistis*, Paul in particular, apart from those who 'boast in countenance' (τοῦς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους) (2 Cor 5.12). Accordingly, those with *pistis* are able to see the newness of the creation (2 Cor 5.17: ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ) and no longer know 'according to the flesh' (2 Cor 5.16). As in Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love*, people approach 'through the body', yet look beyond. *Pistis* is used in opposition to ordinary sight and in analogy with the mind's eye's view of the divine, via Christ and Paul as mediating mirror images. *Pistis* is seeing the ultimate divine reality through and beyond earthly particularities.

So far, we have looked for Paul's usage of sight in literal and figurative ways in this passage and established that sight is used as a metaphor for knowing God and understanding his gospel. Up until now, *pistis* is used analogously with this to mean the confidence to look through created being towards the divine reality. The question is how this helps us to better understand in what way *pistis* and *eidos*, 'sight' or 'shape' (εἶδος), are being juxtaposed later in this section (2 Cor 5.7).

The problems one faces when interpreting this verse are manifold, though the main problem is seldom addressed explicitly. As for the minor issues, the noun *eidos* can either mean 'form', 'outward appearance' as in the visible object, or 'sight' as in the act of vision.<sup>273</sup> Secondly, *διά* can either denote the means of the walking/living or the accompanying circumstances.<sup>274</sup> Of greater importance for Paul's meaning, however, is the question of which one of our two types of appearance or sight is meant: does it refer to sight or appearances of earthly sensibles or to the metaphorical form or sight of the divine? Put bluntly, is it a statement of 'already' or 'not yet'? The latter option is the most popular in scholarly interpretation. There are exceptions, though. For example, Desta Heliso writes that 'Paul contrasts *διά* εἶδους [περιπατεῖν] (as

271 For my interpretation of this verse, see §6.4.2 *infra*.

272 See 2 *Corinthians* 3.4, 3.6, 3.12, 4.1, 4.16, 5.6–8.

273 Cf. e.g. Harris 2005, 396–397; Lorenzen 2008, 243, n. 197.

274 E.g. Harris 2005, 397.

the lower degree) with *διὰ πίστεως περιπατεῖν* (the higher degree) (2 Cor 5.7) almost in the same way as he contrasts *πνεύματι περιπατεῖν* with *ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς* (Gal 5.16).<sup>275</sup> Thus, *eidōs* would refer to a carnal perspective and *pistis* to a spirit-filled life.<sup>276</sup> Similarly, David Hay reads this verse as indicating that ‘the suffering and obloquy that Paul and other Christians experience are visible and transient, whereas faith looks to things that are unseen and eternal (4:16–18).’<sup>277</sup> And finally, a more substantiated case for *eidōs* indicating earthly appearance was made by Jane Heath, in line with *Isaiah* 52–53, where the shape (*εἶδος*) of the Servant is described as ‘held in no esteem’ (52.14: ἀδοξήσει), and ‘unhonoured and inferior’ (53.3: ἄτιμον καὶ ἐκλείπον).<sup>278</sup> How well do these interpretations fit the immediate context, the larger context of the letter and intertextual material?

From the immediate context, an interpretation of *eidōs* as ‘plain sight’ or ‘earthly form’ is not easily justified. The juxtaposition of ‘faith’ and ‘form/sight’ is used in the context of the contrast between being ‘at home in the body’ and ‘at home with the Lord’ (2 Cor 5.6, 8). This contrast between the situation of the life on earth versus the heavenly life thereafter *in prima facie* suggests that the *eidōs* in question is connected to the divine: we do not walk by direct appearance of God. Still, it is also said in the context of ‘being confident’ (2 Cor 5.6: θαρροῦντε; 2 Cor 5.8: θαρροῦμεν): the question is whether he is confident in spite of his merely indirect view of God, or whether Paul is confident because he has a better view of God through faith than through mere sense perception. Does *gar* (γάρ: ‘for’) in this phrase, ‘for we walk through faith, not through *eidōs*’ (*διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους*), explain Paul’s confidence or his relative distance from the Lord? The only textual clue is that the second mention of confidence is introduced by the particle *de* (δέ: ‘and’, ‘but’), which does not necessarily denote contrast, yet evidently marks the resumption of the speech about confidence. This makes it at least more likely that the concessive phrase starting with *καὶ* is more strongly connected to the explanation in the *gar* phrase than are the parts about being confident.<sup>279</sup>

275 Heliso 2007, 165, n. 1.

276 Cf. for a similar interpretation Morgan 2015, 255, who chooses to interpret *pistis* here as ‘a spiritual gift, (...) we walk by the power of our gift of *pistis* rather than by our own sense of sight’. Cf p. 254: ‘Paul’s *pistis* is not trust seeking knowledge of God or closeness to God.’ Cf. also Watson 1993, 54, who connects ‘sight’ both to experiencing the absence of Christ and to the ‘outward show’ of Paul’s opponents.

277 Hay 2006, 61.

278 Heath 2013, 238–239.

279 See also Harris 2005, 367: ‘δέ (v. 8) is resumptive (“I repeat”), indicating that v. 7 is parenthetical and explanatory (γάρ, “for”), correcting a possible misinterpretation of



In the larger context, the idea of the relative irrelevance of outer appearances is present in the figure of the earthen vessels (2 Cor 4.7–12), in contrasting the ‘momentary affliction’ of the ‘outer human being (ὁ ἔξω (...) ἄνθρωπος)’ (2 Cor 4.16–17), in the metaphor of the ‘earthly tent’ in which we ‘groan’ (2 Cor 5.1–4), ‘in countenance (ἐν προσώπῳ)’ versus ‘in the heart’ (2 Cor 5.12), and in ‘according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα)’ (2 Cor 5.16). Still, in these passages Paul does not seem to be concerned with opposing bodily vices, as in *Galatians* 5.16–21, but rather with offering an apologetic for his own presentation vis-à-vis those who only keep up appearances, while consoling those under the burden of this bodily existence with the knowledge of the glory of the heavenly existence.<sup>280</sup> As we have seen thus far, apart from the warning not to look at the visible (2 Cor 4.18) and not to boast in countenance (2 Cor 5.12), Paul’s expansive vocabulary of sight in this entire section denotes a metaphorical, metaphysical vision of God.<sup>281</sup> This would suggest that it is this figurative, metaphysical type of sight that is foremost in his mind and that it is this type of sight is contrasted to faith.

Intertextuality offers material for understanding *eidos* as earthly form but also for understanding it as heavenly vision. A witness that supports a metaphysical interpretation of *eidos* is found in *Numeri* 12, when God addresses Moses, Miriam, and Aaron in the tabernacle (σκηνή) after the latter two questioned Moses’s behaviour. God then reaffirms Moses’s divine authority by contrasting his conversation with Moses which occurs ‘mouth to mouth’, ‘in appearance (ἐν εἶδει)’, and ‘not in riddles’ with that with ‘ordinary’ prophets, to whom he speaks in visions and dreams. Here, evidently, being spoken to ‘in

---

v. 6, namely that present fellowship with Christ is illusory and that embodiment is a hindrance to spirituality.’ Cf. at 397–398: ‘The separation, Paul answers, is relative, not absolute, though absent from sight, the Lord is present to faith, yet it is not until he is present also to sight that Christian existence will reach its true goal of consummated fellowship with him.’

280 In my opinion, the prevailing apologetic or rhetorical reading of a large portion of what has become this letter (2.14–7.1) need not overrule Paul’s pastoral and educational concerns.

281 Strangely, Harris (2005, 398) seems confident that his interpretation of 2 *Corinthians* 5.7, with which I agree, is ‘closely related in meaning’ to 2 *Corinthians* 4.18, since to ‘walk in faith’ means ‘not to have the gaze fixed on things already present to sight’. I would agree that faith is like ‘seeing the invisible’ but would also argue that the things visible according to 2 *Corinthians* 4.18 are earthly objects we ought not to look at without looking beyond. Thus, two very different types of sight are in play in both statements. Accordingly, 2 *Corinthians* 5.7 is not the ‘corollary of εἶναι ἐν πνεύματι (Rom 8.9) or περιπατεῖν κατὰ πνεῦμα (Rom 8.9; cf. Gal 5.16)’ (2005, 399), for the dynamic of spirit versus flesh is not *im Frage* in 2 *Corinthians* 3–5.

appearance' refers to being in the presence of God. And, as we saw in Philo, Moses was known in particular for his longing and ability to see God (see §4.2.3 *supra*). I would not go so far as to suggest that an allusion is being made in 2 *Corinthians* 5.7 when Paul claims not to walk by *eidōs*, for in fact his aim in the beginning of the section seems to be to compare himself favourably to Moses as a minister of a new and lively covenant (2 Cor 3.6), able to speak more freely than the veiled Moses (2 Cor 3.12–13). Notably, Moses was considered trustworthy (πιστός) in God's whole house (Num 12.7: ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ μου πιστός ἐστίν, cf. Heb 3.5), whereas Paul still lives in his earthly tent (2 Cor 5.1: σκηνή). At the very least, the notion of God himself speaking to Moses 'in his visible form' and hence the connection of *eidōs* to being in the presence of the divine, cannot have been completely alien to Paul, as he was familiar with the Torah.

Considering these three factors, then, a translation like 'for we live according to faith, not in the direct visible appearance of God' seems preferable, if only slightly, to a rendering like 'for we live according to faith, not according to what is perceived by our eyes'.<sup>282</sup> Thus, *pistis* is delineated from direct vision of the divine and used to denote precisely that situation in which one can see the beyond without being veiled, but only indirectly, as in a mirror, through Christ as *imago Dei*. Hence, for Paul, it is only a mode of vision necessary in the present, while 'we' are 'in the body', but superseded by full knowledge and vision in the future, when 'we' are 'at home with the Lord'. We already saw, however, how the other instances of *pistis* vocabulary in this section delineate *pistis* from the other extreme of 'plain sight'. Thus, *pistis* is not like heavenly vision because of its indirect access to God, but also not like earthly vision because of its ability to see beyond what is perceived by the senses.

*Pistis* is the route towards distinguishing divine knowledge, and therefore it belongs to the epistemological domain here. In its provisional character, however, it differs from Philo's usage of *pistis*. For in Philo, *pistis* is a product of precisely this Mosaic view of God, 'a view free from all falsehood', whereas in Paul, it is contrasted with this ultimate vision.<sup>283</sup> As an intermediate power of cognition, it is much more in line with its place on the Platonic epistemological ladder I discussed extensively in §4.2.2. *Pistis* is directed at visible images as its primary object, yet it reaches beyond these towards intellectual truth, giving assent to what is real. To put it in terms that remain closer to Paul's own,

282 Cf. Margaret Thrall (1994, 357), who translates, 'for we live our lives in the sphere of faith, not in the presence of his visible form.'

283 Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain* 12–13. See §4.3.4 *supra*.

*pistis* is earthly knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Or, in the vocabulary of this chapter's title, it is a 'firm, human conviction anticipating divine knowledge'. In its provisional character, *pistis* is similar to hope, for 'we hope for what we do not see' (Rom 8.25). Yet, in its ultimate aim, it shares the divine object of love. Indeed, love is the only one of the remaining virtues that lasts eternally (1 Cor 13.13). This, at least, is what my discussion of this famous chapter in *1 Corinthians* intends to point out in the next subsection.

#### 4.4.4 *Pistis, Hope, and Love Abide (1 Cor 13.13): Faith as Provisional (Yet Not Irrational) Knowledge of God*

The final question I want to address in this chapter is how we can understand the meaning of *pistis* in the so-called 'hymn to love', now known as the thirteenth chapter of *1 Corinthians*.<sup>284</sup> The conclusion of Paul's treatment of the topos of love was the main locus for the dogma that there are three theological virtues, supplementing the four cardinal virtues of the Greeks: 'And now faith, hope, and love abide (ὡνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη), these three; and the greatest of these is love' (1 Cor 13.13).<sup>285</sup> The prominence of faith here, combined with the lack of a cognitive virtue like 'truth' which occurs in similar enumerations with a Platonic orientation, has been understood as indicative of the fideistic or irrational nature of Christian thought. I will address this reading at the end of this subsection. First, however, I want look into the meaning of faith in this section as a whole, which, I argue, belongs to the epistemological semantic domain and is best understood against the background of the Platonic discourse I presented in this chapter.

More specifically, I want to consider the meaning of the verb 'to abide' (μένω) in Paul's concluding sentence. Are hope and faith there to stay, 'when the complete comes' (13.10)? Roughly, there are two options: *pistis* is either said to abide only for now (with a temporal ὡνὶ), or it is said to abide forever (with

<sup>284</sup> This digression on love has long been understood as a 'hymn to love', yet this is not a very accurate description of its style. Cf. Fitzmyer 2008, 487: 'It is rather a descriptive, didactic, and hortatory passage composed with no little rhetoric, and differs considerably from the style of the rest of the letter, as well from other NT passages that are usually considered hymnic.' The genre of *progymnasmata*, exercises on discussing a general topic as building block for speeches, offers a useful lens. See Anderson 2013.

<sup>285</sup> The singular number of the verb is perhaps chosen *ad sensum*, due to the neuter plural apposition τὰ τρία ταῦτα. This apposition is also found up front as the subject of the verb in some early witnesses (among which papyrus 46, ca. 200), yet this may be explained as an (early) attempt to improve the grammar, wherefore the *lectio difficilior* is to be preferred. Cf. Fitzmyer 2008, 502.

a logical  $\nu\nu\nu\iota$ , used as a marker of conclusion).<sup>286</sup> Both readings are linguistically valid, and both were already represented among the church fathers.<sup>287</sup> As the contents of the previous subsection and this section's title may indicate, I would opt for the first option, according to which *pistis* is provisional in nature. More strongly put, I maintain that the type of faith Paul speaks of here aims at its own abrogation. Viewed from the Platonic epistemology set forth in this chapter, such provisionality makes perfect sense.

In many respects, the passage at hand is similar to the one we discussed in the previous subsection. The image of the mirror recurs, as does the idea of seeing the divine. This suggests that *pistis* vocabulary in these sections is also part of the same semantic domain, a domain characterized by different gradations or manifestations of knowledge: from human to divine. *Pistis* language recurs several times, so we will have a look at these different instances.

What is interesting about the relations between the words of this domain in this particular passage is that *pistis* is placed on a par with knowledge yet is contrasted with love: 'if I have prophetic powers, and understand (εἰδῶ) all mysteries and all knowledge (πάσαν τὴν γνῶσιν), and if I have all faith (πάσαν τὴν πίστιν), so as to remove mountains, but do not have love (ἀγάπην), I am nothing' (1 Cor 13.2). As the Reformers were hasty to emphasize, this faith is not the same as the justifying type.<sup>288</sup> Paul obviously refers here to the pneumatic gifts he was discussing (1 Cor 12.1–31) before digressing onto the topic of love, which also included 'word/reason of wisdom (λόγος σοφίας)', 'word/reason of knowledge' (λόγος γνώσεως), and faith (πίστις) (1 Cor 12.8–9).<sup>289</sup> These gifts were given to different people 'for the common good' (12.7: πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον), yet Paul is concerned that if they are not used in this fashion, they are of no

286 Advocates of the limited usefulness of hope and faith include DeWitt 1954b (p. 131: 'faith and hope are virtues of the interim of time between the two resurrections'); Hay 2006 (p. 55: 'Faith (...) is somehow restricted and will one day, along with hope, become an outmoded mode of relating to God.');

Fitzmyer 2008, 502 ('in this earthly life "faith remains," as that by which we conduct ourselves'); Hays 2011, 231; Gaine 2015, 116. The endurance of faith is favoured in e.g. Söding 1992 (p. 138, italics his: 'Das "Bleiben" von Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe meint ihre von Gott gegebene Bestätigung und von Gott konstituierte Beständigkeit in der eschatologischen Gegenwart und in der eschatologischen Zukunft'); Wright 2008, 482.

287 Most opted for a temporary hope and faith; Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 2.28.3) opted for their eternal nature: cf. Gaine 2015, 116.

288 Cf. Chester 2017, 157, and for some references n. 67.

289 Cf. Hays 2011, 212 and Fee 2014, 701 (revised version of 1987) who both connect 'faith by the same Spirit' (πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι) in 1 Cor 12.9 with 'all faith, so as to remove mountains' (πάσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι) in 1 Cor 13.2.

use at all. This prompts both the simile of the body (1 Cor 12.12–31a) and the digression on love (1 Cor 12.31b–13.13).

Paul's phrase 'all faith so as to remove mountains' is most probably a reference to the (synoptic) Jesus-tradition (Mk 11.22–23; Mt 17.20; Mt 21.21, Lk 17.6). Maureen Yeung has listed several more candidates in her study into the relationship between Paul's 'faith' and Jesus's 'faith'.<sup>290</sup> The pagan candidates, however, lack *pistis* vocabulary altogether. Lucian's character Timolaus wishes for Hermes to give him a ring with the special power 'to move whole mountains with his finger-tip' (ὄρη ὅλα κινεῖν ἄκρω τῷ δακτύλῳ δυνάμενον).<sup>291</sup> Livy has his characters, Roman soldiers trapped in a pass by barricades on both sides, say, 'let us scale the mountains' (*per adversa montium*), while another, more desperate person asks, 'do we think to remove the mountains from their seat?' (*num montes moliri sede sua paramus*).<sup>292</sup> As regards these 'Greek' parallels, which only take up half a page in Yeung's monograph, Yeung concludes that, because they lack the notion of faith, they 'can hardly be considered as true parallels of 1 Cor 13.2'.<sup>293</sup> She is more positive about several Jewish parallels, where 'faith' seems to be implicitly or explicitly part of the context: these may have been important as background to (the narration of) Jesus's teaching and, together with Jesus's teachings, may have influenced Paul too.<sup>294</sup>

As I suggested in the introductory chapter, however, it is hard to determine the precise value of any individual 'true parallel' (see §1.3.2): instead of thinking in terms of individual parallels and direct dependence, I would emphasize the need to think in terms of participation in a shared discourse. These Graeco-Roman similarities in wording illustrate a shared idiom rather than a shared discourse. What they do offer is evidence that the idea of removing mountains was a more widely used image to illustrate a (nearly) impossible endeavour (cf. also Mt 17.20: 'nothing will be impossible for you'). Consequently, 'all faith so as to remove mountains' speaks in superlatives of an enormous trust (in God) rather than of any specific spiritual power related to moving mountains.

The usage of *pistis* here in conjunction with words that denote knowledge already indicates that the relevant discourse for understanding *pistis* is an

290 Cf. Yeung 2002, 31.

291 Lucian, *Navigium* 45.

292 Livy, *History of Rome* 9.3.1–3.

293 Yeung 2002, 23.

294 Yeung 2002, 23–30, concluding that it is not likely that Paul was 'merely using the Jewish Biblical tradition in 1 Cor 13.2 without being influenced by Jesus' (at p. 33).

epistemological one. Paul seems to make use of the vocabulary of a coherent semantic domain, with terms indicating knowledge, faith, and seeing the divine, as is evident from the parallels between this passage and 2 *Corinthians* 3–5, to which the previous subsection was dedicated. In both 1 *Corinthians* 13, and 2 *Corinthians* 3–5, the idea of ‘seeing’ the divine is present as is the image of a mirror (1 Cor 13.12; 2 Cor 3.18).

Even though ‘love’, which is the main topic of Paul’s digression, seems, perhaps, to belong to a more social semantic domain, from the Platonic discourse presented in this chapter, it perfectly fits this epistemological sphere as well. As we have seen (§4.3.2), in Plato’s *Symposium* the *Erōs* that true philosophers pursue makes them aware of a deficit in perfect, divine knowledge, while at the same time offering the means to reach divine knowledge by loving instances of it on this earth. Centuries later, this remains a central tenet of Platonic ontology and epistemology: we have also seen (§4.4.3) how Plutarch called *Erōs* the ‘divine conductor to the truth’ (ἀφικόμενος ἄγωγός ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν) through ‘the medium of bodily forms’ (διὰ σωμαίων ἀφικόμενος).<sup>295</sup> Love is the acknowledgement of human deficiency and the longing for and route to divine knowledge.

While some might pause here to point out that *agapē* and *erōs* (and other near-synonyms like *philia*) represent radically different types of love, in actual usage these variations seem to be subtler than any systematic differentiation would allow.<sup>296</sup> Moreover, the same applies to Paul’s knowledge terminology of (*epi*)*ginōskō* and categories of knowledge which may seem more ‘philosophical’ such as *epistēmē* yet which already served interchangeable roles in Plato.<sup>297</sup>

295 Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 765A.

296 Cf. on *erōs* and *agapē* as a misunderstood dichotomy in Plato and also in portrayals of (early) Christian thought: Osborne 1996, esp. p. 70: ‘Thus both *eros* and *agape* can be used to designate love characterized by either generous or self-interested concerns; neither the direction of affection from superior to inferior or vice versa, nor the direction of benefits from lover to beloved or the reverse, can be sufficient to define the difference between *eros* and *agape*.’ On the interchangeable nature of *agapē* and *philia*, cf. e.g. *John* 3:35 (ὁ πατήρ ἀγαπᾷ τὸν υἱόν) and *John* 5:20 (ὁ γὰρ πατήρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱόν). But cf. Harrison 2008, 169: ‘Paul’s overwhelming preference for ἀγάπη (“love”), ἀγαπητός (“beloved”) and ἀγαπᾶν (“to love”) is probably explained by the fact that the apostle wishes to differentiate God’s love and its outworking from the operations of the Graeco-Roman reciprocity system.’

297 For γινώσκω and ἐπιγινώσκω, cf. e.g. Plato, *Euthydemus* 301e (‘Would you recognize it (Ἐπιγνοίης ἂν αὐτήν), Socrates, he asked, if it came to be your own? Yes, if only you are agreeable, I replied, without a doubt. Why, he went on, do you imagine you perceive (γινώσκεις) what is yours?’). For γινώσκω and ἐπιστήμη, cf. e.g. Plato, *Charmides* 170d (‘he will merely know (γνώσεται), it would seem, that he has a certain knowledge

Now, the difference with Paul's argument in *1 Corinthians* 13 is that here, love (indicated by the noun *agapē*) seems to belong to the ultimate reality; 'love never ends' (1 Cor 13.8: ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε (ἐκ)πίπτει), whereas in the Platonic tradition, love (*erōs*) is a means to reach the ultimate reality. In fact, if we follow the same logic as in the previous subsection, *pistis* functions in Paul's reasoning not unlike *erōs* in Platonist philosophy: it reaches beyond sensible reality to the ultimate reality, God. Unlike *erōs*, however, the actual recollection of the divine realities does not seem to be part of Paul's usage of *pistis* here.<sup>298</sup> Yet like *erōs*, it is of an earthly, indirect, and temporary character. Unlike 'sight' (in 2 Cor 5.7) it cannot behold the divine directly (see §4.4.3). And unlike 'love' (in 1 Cor 13), it is not there to stay when the 'ultimate' comes (1 Cor 13.10: ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον). The usage of *pistis* for this preliminary knowledge is not a big step. Philosophical *erōs* is an acknowledgement of not knowing and hence a longing for ultimate knowledge. Pauline *pistis* functions here as a similar acknowledgement of deficiency: placing one's trust outside oneself into 'the one who knows completely' (cf. 1 Cor 13.12).

This tentative likeness to Platonist epistemology becomes more convincing if we proceed to read the rest of Paul's digression in this light. The first part (13.1–3) demonstrates the futility of human endeavours to approach the divine (including *pistis*) without love. The second part (13.4–7) offers a positive description of love, culminating in the saying that love 'bears all things (πάντα στέγει), believes all things (πάντα πιστεύει), hopes all things (πάντα ἐλπίζει), endures all things (πάντα ὑπομένει)'. This translation (here NRSV) is common yet has its downsides, in particular when it comes to the translation of the verb *pisteuō*. As Teresa Morgan observed, the usage of an accusative as the object of *pisteuō* is uncommon and its meaning requires explanation (should we not be more restrictive in whom we put our trust?); a more elegant solution is that 'all' (πάντα) is used adverbially, rendering the meaning that love 'trusts absolutely'.<sup>299</sup>

---

(ἐπιστήμην)'; *Theaetetus* 146e ('to get to know (γινῶναι) what knowledge (ἐπιστήμην) itself really is). Maximus of Tyre acknowledges Plato's lack of concern for terminological consistency, yet in order to avoid confusion, he provides some advice: 'Let "love" be what is felt for beauty, and "desire" what is felt for pleasure' (ἔστω τοίνυν ἔρωσ μὲν κάλλους, ἐπιθυμία δὲ ἡδονῆς) (Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 21.4). Citations of Maximus of Tyre's orations in this chapter are based on the edition of the Greek text (1994) and translation (1997) by Michael Trapp.

298 See e.g. Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 764E ('our forgetfulness of the realities of which Love is a recollection (ὧν ὁ ἔρωσ ἀνάμνησις ἐστίν)'). Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 249c–e.

299 See Morgan 2015, 253: 'Absolute trust and hope, here, bear the natural meaning which they bear everywhere in Paul's letters, of trust and hope in God and Christ.'

This interpretation aligns with a passage from another treatise on love (ἔρωϛ) which is seldom taken into account in discussions of Paul's variant, namely the 20th oration by Maximus of Tyre, a second-century philosophical orator of whom forty-one orations have been recorded and preserved. Part of this oration reads:

No beast can frighten it, no fire, no cliff, no sea, no sword, no noose; impossible feats become child's play, fearsome adversaries prove easy to defeat, terrors dissolve into trivialities, heavy tasks become as light as air; all rivers can be crossed, all storms weathered, all mountains scaled with ease (ὄρη εὐδρομώτατα). Love is courageous in all places, dismisses all, and conquers all (πανταχοῦ θαρσεῖ, πάντων ὑπερορᾷ, πάντων κρατεῖ). (Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 20.2)<sup>300</sup>

While the purpose of Paul's elaboration on the topic of love is different, this passage shows how an orator could approach the topic of love, using enumerations and superlatives to make a point. Interestingly, here the idea of mountains representing difficulty returns (though the mountains remain where they are, they become easily scalable), and the passage also contains an enumeration with each time a variant of 'all' (πάντα) and a verb. Here as in 1 *Corinthians* 13, the idea is that love offers a connection that keeps its strength in face of all kinds of earthly challenges. The similarity in style has led some to conclude that the middle part of the digression on love (13.4–7) may have been written by one of Paul's students as 'a highly crafted paraenetic set-piece', which would also explain the oddity that faith and hope serve as actions of love.<sup>301</sup>

While this may be the case, the idea that love is made up of *pisteuein* is not as odd as we might think at first. Plutarch, for instance, states that love has *pistis* so that even a profligate becomes deaf to all other appeals, implying that love makes someone else *pistos*, loyal, and thereby creates reciprocity in love.<sup>302</sup> Moreover, the idea that love includes the strongest type of faith is not unlike what Paul himself states elsewhere, that love is the actualization

300 Translation Trapp 1997, adapted for stylistic reasons in the final sentence.

301 Patterson 2009, 92.

302 On *pistis* as an attribute of love, cf. Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 767E: 'Love, however, has in himself enough self-control, decorum, and mutual trust ("ἔρωτι δ' ἐγκρατείας τοσοῦτον καὶ κόσμου καὶ πίστεως μέτεστιν), so that if he ever but touches the heart even of a profligate, he turns him from his other lovers, drives out insolence, humbles pride and intractability, and brings in modesty, silence, calm. He clothes him with the robes of decorum and makes him deaf to all appeals but one.'



(ἐνέργεια) of faith (Gal 5.6, on which see §5.4.3 below). Furthermore, if we interpret the conclusion of 1 Cor 13 as an expression of the temporary nature of *pistis*, it may well be ‘taken up’ into love as one of its building blocks.

The third and final part of Paul’s digression on love (1 Cor 13.8–13) consists of a contrast between the things which last only for a short while and those which last indefinitely. While love is said to ‘never fail’, prophecies, tongues and knowledge are said to have limited use (13.8). *Pistis* is missing in this list. Based on what we have read so far in the first part, however, we know that together with knowledge and prophecy it belongs to the things which amount to ‘nothing’ without love.

Paul continues his description of the contrast as one between ‘what is in part’ (τὸ ἐκ μέρους) and ‘what is ultimately’ (τὸ τέλειον) (13.10). Knowledge appears to function in both categories: ‘now I know in part (γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους), then I will know fully (ἐπιγνώσομαι)’ (13.12). In using these terms, he is playing with the knowledge claimed by the Corinthians, which Paul regards as ‘puffed-up’ and as an obstacle in their community and their love for God (cf. 1 Cor 8.1b–3). In the introductory section of 2 *Corinthians*, Paul again addresses their imperfect knowledge while also expressing the hope that by means of his letters their knowledge will be perfected (cf. 2 Cor 1.13–14: ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι ἔως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε καθὼς καὶ ἐπέγνωτε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ μέρους). In 1 *Corinthians* 13, he makes a more general point that ‘we’, now including himself, cannot know perfectly from the present perspective (13.9: ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν).<sup>303</sup> Thus, Paul evidently assumes (at least two) different planes of knowing.

Metaphors from different frames are offered as illustrations: knowing like a child versus knowing with a grown-up’s perspective (13.11) and looking in a mirror versus seeing eye-to-eye (13.12). Looking in a mirror appears to be similar to ‘knowing in part’, while ‘seeing face-to-face’ appears to be similar to knowing and being known to a greater extent:

303 Emanuel Miguens (1975) argues for a this-worldly reading of the perfected stage in 1 *Corinthians* 13, yet it is this verse (in addition to the general Platonic epistemological frame which I deem an important contextual clue) which makes this reading less plausible. Cf. at 89: ‘It becomes apparent to what an extent and in what sense the pairs partial-total, child-man are correlative—and also relative. They mark two different stages of one and the same process which takes place during this life in Christians as individuals rather than as a community.’ Fitzmyer (2008, 501) inaccurately mentions Hays (2011, 230–231) and Fee (Fee 1987, 650) as sharing this position. Hays speaks of love as ‘the foretaste of our ultimate union with God’ (231), which he envisions after the *Parousia* and Fee explicitly rejects Miguens’s interpretation at 2014 (the revised edition, yet not revised at this point), 714, n. 381.

When I was a child (νήπιος), I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, in a riddle (βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἑσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι), but then we will see face to face (τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον). Now I know only in part (ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους); then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known (τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσσομαι καθῶς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθη). (1 *Corinthians* 13.11–12)

These contrasts seem pretty straightforward, although there is some debate concerning the referent of the ages of childhood and manhood and the question of when Paul expects temporary types of knowing, such as tongues and prophecy, to cease (roughly, when Scripture is complete or when Christ returns).<sup>304</sup> The image of the mirror serves to underline a similar point as in 2 *Corinthians*, where the image we see 'as in a mirror' is Christ (2 Cor 3.18: κατοπτριζόμενοι): we behold the divine indirectly, wherefore our knowledge is indirect and imperfect.<sup>305</sup> Only here, the indirectness of the mirror is foregrounded, whereas in 2 Cor 3.18, we saw that the transformative aspect of the mirror is important as well.

We saw in the previous subsection that this indirect form of knowing is also indicated as 'walking through faith' (2 Cor 5.7: διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν). This would confirm that faith is a this-worldly, human type of knowing. It is not knowing in the divine manner, which is knowing 'as we are also known' (1 Cor 13.12: καθῶς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθη; cf. 1 Cor 8.3: ἔγνωστα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ; cf. Gal 4.9: γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ). While some scholars are reluctant to 'strain interpretation' by reading the metaphor of the mirror in a Platonic context, the same basic epistemological distinctions are evident in this passage: the divine can now only be seen through the sensible world, in an imperfect way.<sup>306</sup> And this

304 Norman DeWitt (1954b, 154) takes the metaphor of the child as indicating 'that in the interim of adolescence we were captivated by the philosophy of Epicurus' in analogy with Gal 4.3–9. The 'cessationist' position has some present-day advocates: cf. McDougall 2003 and Compton 2004.

305 That both passages partake in a similar frame is confirmed by a parallel from Scripture in which a similar expression as Paul uses here, only now 'not in a riddle', is used to designate the direct manner in which God communicates to Moses, as opposed to visions and images. See LXX *Numeri* 12.8: στόμα κατὰ στόμα λαλήσω αὐτῷ, ἐν εἶδει καὶ οὐ δι' αἰνιγμάτων, καὶ τὴν δόξαν Κυρίου εἶδε. On this parallel, cf. Hollander 2010, 398.

306 Cf. Gooch 1987a, 150 and Fitzmyer 2008, 499. Gooch nonetheless offers an 'ontological' interpretation (p. 150): 'Mirror images are ontologically intriguing in that they are completely dependent upon the realities that they reflect; unlike photographs, paintings or descriptions, they can have no existence apart from those realities.' Gooch is short on

is precisely the place of *pistis*, both in Paul's reasoning and in Platonic epistemology. It is the highest possible category of knowledge 'while we are at home in the body' and 'away from the Lord' (2 Cor 5.6). Within this epistemological semantic domain, *pistis* serves to indicate knowledge of the earthly, human position, reaching through images towards the divine, through the temporary towards what is everlasting.

In this light, the conclusion of this part of the digression can only be understood as offering the ultimate, lasting status only to 'love'. Love is the 'higher ranking' virtue (with a comparative rather than a superlative interpretation of *μείζων*, even though in *Koinē* Greek both are used interchangeably): such a *status aparte* is probably the most fitting end for a topical digression on love.<sup>307</sup> As faith and hope are set on equal footing here, the difficulty of imagining an 'eternal' type of hope (cf. Rom 8.24: *ἐλπίς δὲ βλεπομένη οὐκ ἔστιν ἐλπίς*) serves to confirm the this-wordly status of both.<sup>308</sup> Moreover, our interpretation saves us from having to distinguish three different uses of *pistis* language in one coherent passage: *pistis* as a spiritual gift of moving mountains which will cease together with the other gifts (13.2, cf. 13.8), *pisteuō* as an action or attribute of enduring love (13.7), and *pistis* as a virtue parallel to love, both belonging to what is everlasting (13.13).<sup>309</sup> Instead, by understanding *pistis* as

---

*pistis*, though, which he describes as 'trust no matter what the present circumstances' (p. 142). Fitzmyer appears to miss any connection to Platonic thought and is unaware of the usage of the mirror in Middle Platonism: 'That, however, is somewhat far-fetched, because there is not a hint of Platonism in the text, and Plato speaks of shadows and images, but not of a mirror.'

307 This is in accordance with Gooch's conclusion (Gooch 1987a, 156): 'As already pointed out, faith and hope differ from love in being virtues of the interim, which terminates at the second coming, while love is eternal, being of the nature of God himself. A precise version will then read: "But as things now are, faith, hope, love remain valid, these three, but love ranks higher than these two." Faith and hope are appointed to lose validity but not love.' Gooch's emphasis on *ἐπιγνώσκω* as referring to the philosophical technical term 'recognition' (p. 163) could be relevant, but stands in need of a further analysis of the relevant sources. Söding (1992, 140), who argues for a lasting type of *pistis*, ignores the occurrence of *pistis* in v. 2 and finds it difficult to explain the primacy of love, yet reasons that this is due to the necessity of love in the Corinthian situation and the specific 'Song of Songs'-character of the passage.

308 See Miguens 1975, 76 ('Admittedly, some distinctions could be acceptable in the case of faith, but it is very difficult to see in what sense hope is still hope after one has reached what he had been hoping for') and Hays 2011, 230 ('that faith, hope, and love will all abide eternally (...) would be nearly nonsensical in relation to hope').

309 A congruent usage of *pistis/pisteuō* in this passage is easily abandoned by some. Cf. Fitzmyer 2008, 501: 'One thing is clear, however; *pistis* is not the same as that in v. 2, "faith to move mountains"; rather it now denotes the full sense of saving and justifying "faith", the response to the Christian gospel, as in other Pauline passages.'

an epistemological human category, it is found to be temporary as a spiritual gift (13.2), temporary as an earthly action of love (13.7), and temporary as a virtue in contrast to love (13.13). This is not to say that *pistis* as a whole is absent from Paul's vision of the eschaton (with God being 'all in all', cf. 1 Cor 15.28), but that *pistis*-as-knowledge, *pistis* within the epistemological semantic domain, is absent. As in the Platonic scheme, *pistis* is a type of knowledge which is preliminary and this-worldly.

In this concluding subsection, we now return to the verdict of early Christian faith brought into question at the start, the verdict which portrays it as having a low-level epistemological status. For even in the text at hand—which celebrates the virtues of hope, faith, and love—scholars find an affirmation of this assessment. This is due to a very similar enumeration of virtues given by Porphyry, who lists 'faith, truth, love, and hope'. The addition of truth here is, according to some interpreters, highly significant: it is regarded as a conscious response of Porphyry to the Christian triad, or even to this particular Pauline passage (1 Cor 13.13). Porphyry is not part of our selection of comparative sources due to its later date and Porphyry's evident contact with the Christian movement. Yet the question whether Paul's list of faith, hope, and love was seen as a rather fideistic list of virtues already in the fourth century offers a valuable addition and conclusion to this chapter on the intellectual and cognitive aspects of Pauline *pistis*.

Porphyry's enumeration is part of a paragraph dealing with our attitude towards God:

There are four first principles that must be upheld concerning God—faith, truth, love, hope (Τέσσαρα στοιχεῖα μάλιστα κεκρατύνθω περὶ θεοῦ· πίστις, ἀλήθεια, ἔρως, ἐλπίς). We must have faith that our only salvation is in turning to God (πιστεῦσαι γὰρ δεῖ ὅτι μόνη σωτηρία ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐπιστροφή). And having faith, we must strive with all our might to know the truth about God (καὶ πιστεύσαντα ὡς ἔνι μάλιστα σπουδάσαι τὰ λήθη γνῶναι περὶ αὐτοῦ). And when we know this, we must love Him we do know (καὶ γνόντα ἐρασθῆναι τοῦ γνωσθέντος). And when we love Him we must nourish our souls on good hopes for our life (ἐρασθέντα δὲ ἐλπίσιν ἀγαθαῖς τρέφειν τὴν ψυχὴν διὰ τοῦ βίου), for it is by their good hopes good men are superior to bad ones (ἐλπίσι γὰρ ἀγαθαῖς οἱ ἀγαθοὶ τῶν φαύλων ὑπερέχουσι). Let then these four principles be firmly held (στοιχεῖα μὲν οὖν ταῦτα καὶ τοσαῦτα κεκρατύνθω). (Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella* 24)<sup>310</sup>

310 Translations of Porphyry's work in this chapter are by Alice Zimmern (1986).

In this text, Porphyry speaks of *pistis* as the first ‘principle’ in a person’s relationship with the divine. It is described as a conviction concerning the route to salvation which prompts a turn toward God. This seems to be the type of conviction that the author described in the same treatise as the ‘knowledge and firm faith’ (διὰ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς βεβαίας πίστεως) that God exists and rules everything, which allows people to ultimately attain ‘a wise mode of life, and know the gods and are known by them (θεοὺς γινώσκονταί τε γινωσκομένοις θεοῖς).’<sup>311</sup> *Pistis* is seen in a markedly positive light in these cases, especially compared to another instance of *pistis* vocabulary in this very context. For Porphyry also speaks of an irrational type of *pistis*: ‘Mere unreasoning faith (ἄλογος πίστις) without right living does not attain to God.’<sup>312</sup> The difference between both seems to lie in the absence or presence of a connection between this ‘faith’ and the fulfilment of this faith in ‘knowledge’ and in living a virtuous life.<sup>313</sup>

The similarities between Porphyry’s text and Paul’s have not gone unnoticed. One explanation for these similarities put forward by Richard Reitzenstein, which has gained some popularity, is the existence of an early, shared gnostic source that was thought to have been taken over more or less as such by Porphyry (perhaps with ‘truth’ instead of a gnostic ‘knowledge’) but adapted by Paul, who changed the word used to express ‘love’ (changed ἔρωσ into ἀγάπη) and omitted ‘truth’ (ἀλήθεια) or ‘knowledge’ (γνώσις).<sup>314</sup> Evidence for the existence of such a shared source is found in a passage from the *Chaldean Oracles*, a poetic collection of sayings, popular among Neoplatonists and attributed to a second-century AD mystic, which was probably influenced by earlier gnostic teachings.<sup>315</sup> The passage which is commonly referred to by number 46 includes the enumeration ‘faith, truth, and love’ (πίστιν ἀλήθειαν καὶ ἔρωτα), with ‘hope’ being spoken of in a related fragment

311 Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella* 21.

312 Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella* 23.

313 Cf. Hoffmann 2010, 269: ‘Le thème de la πίστις crée une liaison entre les deux ensembles d’arguments qui se succèdent dans les chapitres xxii–xxiv: à la foi irrationnelle (ἄλογος πίστις) qui ne permet pas le contact avec la divinité, Porphyre oppose la foi qui s’accomplit en connaissance (puis en amour et en espérance) et qui crée à la fois les conditions de la moralité et celles de la bonne prière.’

314 The first publication in which he argues his case is Reitzenstein 1916a.

315 Cf. on the origins of the *Chaldean Oracles*: Majercik 1989, 3–5, esp. p. 3: ‘from the fragments we do have, we can securely locate the Oracles in a Middle-Platonic milieu, especially that type of Middle Platonism which had affinities with both Gnosticism and Hermeticism as well as links with Numenius.’

(*Oracula Chaldaea* 47).<sup>316</sup> In the original Chaldean context, these terms appear to be not only virtues but also cosmic entities, connected with the so-called ‘teletarchs’, the rulers of different spheres of the cosmos who aid the soul in its ascent.<sup>317</sup> According to Reitzenstein, both Paul and his Corinthian audience knew of these teachings and Paul consciously omitted ‘truth’ from this well-known saying and supplanted the word used for ‘love’ (that is he changed ἔρωσ into ἀγάπη).

An initial response to Reitzenstein’s position was already given by his contemporary Arnold von Harnack, who ridiculed the omnipresent preconception of Reitzenstein and others that Pauline notions have their roots in the mystery religions, whose existence and teachings can only be deduced from later sources.<sup>318</sup> In more recent commentaries such as Fitzmyer’s, the suggestion is also rejected as improbable speculation.<sup>319</sup> Other critics argue with similar ease for a different type of intertextuality, often between Paul’s enumeration and Jewish texts such as *Wisdom* 3.9, where it is said that ‘the faithful will remain with Him in love’ (οἱ πιστοὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ προσμενοῦσιν αὐτῷ).<sup>320</sup> I have

316 Fragment 46 in Des Places 1971 (P 26 in the edition by Kroll (1894)). The reduction of four virtues to three may be influenced by the importance of triads in later strands of Platonism in view of Plato’s triad in *Phaedrus* 246d–e: see Hoffmann 2010, 306–323, conclusion on 323: ‘La triade platonicienne du Phèdre (le Bien, le Savant, le Beau) imposait que les termes chaldaïques correspondants, exprimant les puissances anagogiques de l’âme, fussent eux aussi au nombre de trois.’

317 Majercik 1989, 161. Cf. Lewy 1956, 137–157. Majercik (p. 161) also warns that ‘in this light, these Chaldean virtues should not be confused (...) with the Pauline triad of spiritual virtues (Faith, Hope, Charity).’

318 Von Harnack 2013 (first published in *Preußischen Jahrbüchern* 164 (1916)), 714: ‘Wie immer bei geschichtlichen Kombinationen, so hat auch hier die “Vorvermutung” eine verhängnisvolle Rolle gespielt. Die “Vorvermutung” mancher heutiger Forscher, nicht nur philologischer, geht bei urchristlichen Begriffen, die sie untersuchen, dahin, daß sie nicht original sind, auch nicht aus dem Judentum stammen, auch nicht aus der griechischen Philosophie, sondern aus einer alten Mysterienreligion. Diese Vermutungen haben sich bisher nicht beweisen lassen, da man die vorausgesetzte Mysterienreligion in der Regel selbst erst konstruieren und bis in den Anfang unserer Zeitrechnung hinaufführen muß.’ Reitzenstein’s response is perhaps even more acute, as he ridicules the consternation that such a Christian core phrase may not be Christian after all (1916b, 189): ‘Schildert doch v. Harnacks Einleitung die Formel “Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung”, die dabei in Frage kommt, als ähnlich feierlichen und kurzen Ausdruck der christlichen Religion (...). Niemand hat sie jemals für nicht-christlich erklärt; jetzt ist es durch mich geschehen.’

319 Fitzmyer 2008, 491.

320 See Söding 1992, 53: ‘Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe haben im frühjüdischen Traditionsraum ein weit größeres Gewicht und eine weit profiliertere Bedeutung als in der paganen Gräzität. Paulus knüpft (wie das gesamte Neue Testament) am frühjüdischen, nicht am paganen Sprachgebrauch an.’ Cf., however, Söding’s overall conclusion: ‘Die Trias Glaube–Liebe–Hoffnung ist eine Bildung des Apostels’ (p. 63).

already noted my own objections to the utility of attempting to prove intertextual relationships between specific texts (be they gnostic or Jewish), and I have explained my preference for the approach of mapping wider discourses and explaining a specific author's relation to this discourse (see §1.3 above).

More recently, classicists have argued for an intertextual relationship between Porphyry and Paul. Helene Whittaker argues that Porphyry's enumeration is a direct response to Paul's variant:

From what is known of Porphyry's anti-Christian writings, it is evident that he was very familiar with Paul's writings. As Paul in the passage in question refers to the imperfectness of human knowledge, it seems probable that in stressing the importance of knowledge of truth for salvation, Porphyry is deliberately pointing to the superiority of philosophical reason over Christian reliance on faith. (Whittaker 2001, 160–161)

Whittaker is not alone in viewing the addition of 'truth' by Porphyry as anti-Christian polemic.<sup>321</sup> Phillippe Hoffmann takes a more balanced approach to the relationship between Paul's triad and Porphyry's tetrad, as he argues for a mediated type of intertextuality: he places *Oracula Chaldaea* 46 in-between Paul and Porphyry as a gnostic (Valentinian) adaptation of Paul's text.<sup>322</sup> Just like Whittaker, however, Hoffmann also attributes to Porphyry a conscious polemic against Christian faith, indicated by the inclusion of the fourth term, 'truth'.<sup>323</sup> He argues that the *pistis* in Porphyry's tetrad is an altogether different type: 'It is no longer the "irrational faith" (ἄλογος πίστις) denounced before, it is a conviction related to the route to Salvation and it blossoms into knowledge (knowledge of God).'<sup>324</sup>

<sup>321</sup> For some references see Whittaker 2001, 160, n. 42.

<sup>322</sup> In the terms and order of the terms, Porphyry probably remains close to the Chaldean source: see Hoffmann 2010, 270: 'Porphyre mentionne bien l'OC 46 et que l'ordre justifié par lui (1°Pistis, 2°Vérité, 3°Amour, 4°Espérance) reste fidèle, *formellement*, à l'ordre chaldaïque originel, même si par ailleurs la signification spirituelle donnée à la tétrade est tout autre.' Hoffmann follows Lewy in suggesting that in the Chaldean original, *pistis* may have had a connection to the oath of silence of an initiate in a mystery religion (see Hoffmann 2010, p. 261, n. 15).

<sup>323</sup> Hoffmann 2010, 276: 'Dans l'argumentation que nous avons restituée, l'utilisation de l'Oracle Chaldaïque OC 46 par Porphyre revêt donc clairement une signification polémique anti-chrétienne.'

<sup>324</sup> Hoffmann 2010, 276: 'la Pistis mentionnée ensuite au début de la tétrade (...) n'est plus la "foi irrationnelle" (ἄλογος πίστις) préalablement dénoncée, elle est une conviction relative à la voie du Salut, et elle s'épanouit en connaissance (la connaissance de Dieu).'

The observation by both Whittaker and Hoffman that there is a connection between Porphyry and Paul is an important one. As with Reitzenstein, however, the problem is that establishing the precise 'route' of influence cannot be done without a good deal of conjecture. Instead, I would argue, thinking about this relationship as participation in the same discourse offers a more fruitful approach. While the suggestion that Porphyry is responding to Paul either directly or indirectly may not be as speculative as Reitzenstein's thesis that both referred to the same gnostic source, a direct intertextual connection between Porphyry's tetrad and Paul's triad in *1 Corinthians* is not as probable here as Whittaker or Hoffmann suggest.

Moreover, the anti-Christian thrust that they both perceive in Porphyry's tetrad needs a further qualification. Of course, we should take Porphyry's criticism of the Christian movement into account, as Porphyry wrote an entire treatise against Christians (which only survives fragmentarily). Moreover, the terminology of 'unreasonable faith' was used before Porphyry by others like Celsus (see §4.2.3) to denounce the *pistis* of the Christians. Yet, is it likely that Porphyry's tetrad responded to what Paul is saying in *1 Corinthians* 13 by consciously adding 'truth'? I think the answer must be 'no'.

We have just seen how Paul distinguishes between two types of 'knowledge' and describes the 'hereafter' in terms of 'knowing fully as we are also known'. Downplaying 'knowledge', or 'truth' for that matter, is not part of Paul's account. If anything, Paul is downplaying faith. In a very Platonic fashion, he assigns *pistis* to the human, worldly level of knowing, yet without separating this level completely from the eternal and divine plane. Just as we saw in Plutarch's treatment of the term, *pistis* is what points and guides towards this divine realm. This is perfectly in line with Porphyry's hierarchy according to which *pistis* is a first step towards salvation.

In both accounts, *pistis* is foregrounded as that which first establishes a connection with God.<sup>325</sup> *Pistis* is, however, only the beginning of a process of 'knowing' and 'loving' the divine of which both Paul and Porphyry speak, and it cannot stay 'when the complete comes' (1 Cor 13.10). Then, all partial knowledge, including faith-knowledge, 'will come to an end' (13.8 and 13.10: *καταργηθήσεται*): it will be taken up into reciprocal knowledge (1 Cor 13.12, cf. Porphyry). Paul and Porphyry seem to agree on this point. Thus, even if Porphyry responded polemically to the adage of faith, hope, and love, it is more

325 Cf. Ulrichs 2007, 79: 'In alle Belegen der Trias selbst (1 Thess 1.3; 5.8; 1 Kor 13.13) und in Allusionen an diese (1 Thes 3.6; Plmn 5; vgl. noch 1 Kor 16.13 f.; Gal 5.5 f.) ist πίστις stets erstplaziert. Dies weist nun doch auf eine gewisse sachliche Präponderanz hin; Glaube ist damit wohl als Grundlage für Liebe und Hoffnung anzusprechen.'



probable that it was a loose response to its usage within (and perhaps beyond) the Christian community in Porphyry's days, rather than a specific response to Paul's epistemological usage of the adage in *1 Corinthians*.<sup>326</sup> Or, if Porphyry was indeed 'very familiar' with Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians, as Whittaker holds, he appears to have been a poor reader.

If Porphyry's usage of *pistis* demonstrates anything in relation to Paul, it may be that *pistis* gains a more respectable position from Middle Platonism onwards. As part of their anti-Christian polemic, Hoffmann reasons that Neoplatonists after Porphyry self-consciously promoted the virtue of *pistis* to a higher, philosophical level.<sup>327</sup> Proclus turned the Chaldean order around, speaking of 'love', 'truth', and 'faith' (with 'hope' as a mere addendum). Simplicius omits 'hope' altogether, as it has become synonymous to 'faith' as the highest level on the path to salvation.<sup>328</sup> This Neoplatonic, philosophical-religious 'faith' is pitted against an irrationally conceived Christian 'faith' and in effect becomes more and more detached from Plato's usage as an intermediate level of knowledge. Where the preliminary and intermediate position of *pistis* is concerned, Paul appears to be more in line with Plato and earlier Platonists than with these Neoplatonic interpretations. Yet rather than 'objectively' confirming the irrationality of Christian faith in these later centuries, it shows how *pistis* itself becomes more and more contested and differentiated in late antiquity. In these later centuries, there is no general antithesis of faith and reason, but *pistis* could take the shape of sheer credulity (used to defame one's opponents) or the utmost enlightenment (in one's own philosophical system).

326 Cf. Von Harnack 2013, 705: 'Endlich ist nicht einmal notwendig, daß ihm ausschließlich oder überhaupt die Stelle 1 Kor 13,13 vorschwebte, als er jene merkwürdige Ausführung in dem Trostbrief an seine Gattin niederschrieb (...) Am Ende des 3. Jahrhunderts muß (...) "Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung" eine der verbreitetsten Formeln in der mächtigen Christenheit gewesen sein. (...) sie mag bei der engen Berührung christlicher und griechischer idealistischer Religionsphilosophen am Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts schon in das überreiche Arsenal der eklektischen Moralisten übergegangen sein, so daß man an die Herkunft des Spruches kaum mehr dachte.'

327 On these Neoplatonic developments, see Hoffmann 2000.

328 See Hoffmann 2010, 323–324: 'Le fait saillant, et sans doute le plus instructif du point de vue de l'histoire du sentiment religieux païen à la fin de l'Antiquité (...) est l'inversion de l'ordre hiérarchique originel, qui fait de la *Pistis* le point d'aboutissement d'un mouvement anagogique et lui permet de se trouver conjointe, chez Simplicius, à l'Espérance. La raison de cette inversion doit être trouvée dans l'intention polémique anti-chrétienne qui inspire la "promotion" de la *Pistis* néoplatonicienne face à la Foi chrétienne, appréhendée à travers les catégories dépréciatives de Platon (République, Timée) comme une simple croyance irrationnelle.'

All in all, rather than setting the stage for a fideistic understanding of Christian faith, these later polemics show that *pistis* functions in epistemological-religious discourse, understood as a discourse about the connection between limited human knowledge and eternal divine knowledge. In this discourse, terms related to knowledge, faith and love function together to indicate the relationship between a this-worldly existence and the divine. Both Paul and Porphyry participated in this discourse, whose foundation was and continued to be sought in Plato's outline of cognitive stages. Read in this light, the list of virtues in 1 *Corinthians* 13.13 consists of such epistemological-religious virtues. Faith, hope, and love represent the cognitive steps available to mortal human beings in their journey towards 'knowing as we are also known'. In this enumeration, *pistis* is limited and this-worldly, yet far from irrational or fideistic.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed *pistis*'s reputation for being irrational. We saw that throughout the Platonic tradition, from Parmenides to Plutarch, *pistis* functions to differentiate or substantiate knowledge claims—not to fideistically oppose them. Instead of *pistis* being used as the opposite of knowledge, Parmenides already used it in opposition to 'opinion of mortals', which allowed it to become connected to ultimate, transcendent knowledge as its human correlate. While there are higher types of cognition in the Platonic scheme, there is reason to believe that Plato believed that these were beyond a mortal human's grasp, leaving *pistis* (or more precisely the subtype of 'correct *pistis*' which appears to be an indirect type of knowledge) as the best type humanly attainable.

For those following in Plato's footsteps, *pistis* terminology appears to lose some of its technical limitations as a specific type of knowledge. Aristotle, perhaps due to his more positive view of sense-perception, does not hesitate to speak of *logos*-based *pistis* and even of *pistis* brought about by the first principles which, if reasoned and substantiated, amounts to full knowledge. In Philo's works, *pistis* first emerges as the proper cognitive attitude towards God, which may partly be attributed to the crucial role it fulfils in some passages in the Septuagint, yet which is also in line with developments in the philosophy and theology of his days, with its increasing focus on the inaccessibility of the transcendent: *pistis* offered the perfect, reasonable cognitive mode to engage with ultimate reality (to a certain extent that is, since the gap between humans and God remains). For Plutarch, the ontological connection between the sensible and the ultimate realm (the idea that what can be seen

is a copy of what truly ‘is’ in the proper sense) provides a route through which one may gain access to the divine. More than Plato or Aristotle, Plutarch uses *pistis* regularly in religious contexts, not to offer a fideistic shortcut, but to denote the mean between superstitious belief in anything and sceptical rejection of divine providence and divine knowability. In this manner, it becomes the ultimate category to bridge Platonic dualism between the sensible and the intelligible, the earthly and the divine existence.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the increasing usage of *pistis* with the divine as its object, *pistis* always remained a very ‘earthly’ (or perhaps ‘grounded’) category of knowledge and kept a sense of uncertainty, of human error. Within these Graeco-Roman epistemological discourses, *pistis* identifies a penultimate, provisional, and human grasp of divine knowledge. From this perspective, we can imagine that second-century pagan intellectuals frowned when they saw Christians from all layers of society boasting about possessing a type of *pistis* that reached the divine yet which was, at least by their criteria, not properly substantiated and was brought about by the bypass of divine grace.<sup>329</sup> The argument made by Origen that there is unsubstantiated faith for ‘commoners’ and substantiated faith for the learned members of the Christian community fits the semantics of *pistis* in the second and third centuries, as both Galen and Lucian testify to the need for a further explication of its level of substantiation.

In Paul’s letters, however, there is yet to be a precise stratification in *pistis*, presumably because it was not quite as contested as an epistemological category in Paul’s intellectual world. In fact, there is no trace of *pistis*, particularly *pistis Christou*, implying anything less than the reasonable human gateway to knowledge of God. It is not contrasted with reason or knowledge (on the contrast with wisdom, see the next chapter: §5.4.2). It is, however, contrasted with sight (in 2 Cor 5.7) and to love (in 1 Cor 13.13): these contrasts point to an epistemological dualism in Paul similar to what we encounter in the Platonic discourses. Sight and love act as more-than-earthly means of engaging with the divine, in Platonic and Pauline thought alike, even if Paul’s idea of the ultimate is temporally (or, eschatologically) rather than spatially configured. In the present, as a human epistemological category, Paul’s *pistis* remains indirect (as in a mirror), provisional, and vulnerable, yet at the same time capable of growth and ultimately secured by the guarantee of Christ’s ‘amen’, his enduring commitment to both God and his followers. As in Plato’s *Republic*

---

329 Cf. Boys-Stones 2019, 276: ‘According to Clement, then, knowledge of the divine realm cannot come from the unaided exercise of human capacities: there must be assistance from above—what he calls here the operation of “grace” acting on “faith.”’

and in Philo's *Who Is the Heir*, *pistis* is only as firm as the object it is placed in and whose stability it mirrors or appropriates. The indirectness of *pistis*-knowledge, its dependence on external, certain knowledge, thus explains why Paul often uses *pistis* in active connection with the divine (Christ, the gospel, the promise, the power of God), even in passages that foreground the semantic domain of human mentality and conviction.

All in all, if we take both the subtleties and the overall thrust of these epistemological discourses into account, we are able to overcome the modern dichotomy that is often postulated between faith and knowledge. In the ancient world, this antithesis proves to be out of place. In the next chapter, we take a closer look at some other, related antitheses between cognitive and relational faith and between faith and human persuasion, whereby some other philosophical schools, in particular the Epicurean and Stoic branches, offer important insights for understanding Pauline *pistis* in this related semantic domain. In these schools, *pistis* is more often used to describe a fundamental mental attitude than a category of knowledge and knowing, but even more obviously than in Platonic thought, it is connected to higher cognitive spheres as it is a quality of 'the wise'.

# Pistis, Peithō, and Sophia: Faith as Transformative Persuasion of the Wise

## 5.1 Is Faith a Religious ‘Acceptance as True’?

If we were to attempt to characterize the meaning of ‘faith’ in contemporary discourse, the notion of a ‘religious conviction’ quickly comes to mind. Modern faith is concerned with what deeper truths, values, or gods you *believe* in. According to one of the more influential biblical scholars, Rudolf Bultmann, this usage of faith (including the meaning of *pistis*) started with early Christianity or even with Paul. ‘Now for the first time’, he observes, ‘faith is religion and believers are Christians.’<sup>1</sup> With the Pauline movement, religion had become an individual choice, and faith had become the relevant cognitive religious attitude: a ‘conviction’.<sup>2</sup>

Even though we established in the previous chapter that Paul’s faith language participates in a cognitive or epistemological semantic domain in several passages, I want to argue in this chapter that there are two important qualifications to be added to Bultmann’s analysis. The first pertains to the *novelty* of ‘religious faith as conviction’, for if we take the entire religious-philosophical sphere of the early empire in consideration, there are good parallels to be found in rhetorical and dialectical environments, particularly in sources stemming from philosophical movements.<sup>3</sup> The second pertains to the *cognitive configuration* of this faith, for even in these philosophical movements, cognitive conviction goes hand in hand with relational trust and trustworthy actions. The same applies, I will argue in this chapter, to the usage of *pistis* by Paul. The term ‘persuasion’ will function in this chapter to denote this hybrid cognitive-yet-relational state and process, as it speaks to the transferral and relationality

---

1 Bultmann 1968, at 216. Before Bultmann, a similar judgement, with additional emphasis on the mystical element, can be discerned in the work of Hatch (1917, 82–83): ‘the Apostle, who was reared in the Hellenistic city of Tarsus and spent most of his life in the Graeco-Roman world, imparted to it a mystical character which trust in God had never had on Palestinian soil, and made it fundamental in religion and ethics.’

2 Bultmann’s approach is discussed in more detail in §§5.2.1–2 below.

3 In this chapter, the sphere of rhetoric and dialectic, sophism and philosophy is treated as a single ‘discourse of persuasion’, even though these terms were often used within this discourse in a contrasting manner. See also §5.3.2 below and cf. Brookins 2010.

of convictions within this semantic domain and the embodiedness of convictions in character and behaviour.

An important reason why I have selected ‘persuasion’ as a separate semantic domain is the co-occurrence of the word stems *pist-* and *peith-*. From the latter stem the verb *peithō* (πείθω), ‘to persuade’, and the much rarer noun *peithō* (πειθῶ) are derived. This connection, however, is not merely etymological: in actual language use, *pistis* and *peithō* were still conceived of as closely related. For example, as we saw in the chapter 4 (§4.2.2), *pistis* and persuasion are used as synonyms in Parmenides’s famous poem. A well-known line from Herodotus’s story of Candaules and Gyges also links unbelief to being unconvinced:

I think, Gyges, that you do not believe (οὐ γάρ σε δοκέω πείθεσθαί μοι) what I tell you of the beauty of my wife; men trust their ears less than their eyes (ὧτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν). (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.8)

This sentiment, that sight is more trustworthy than hearing, is also repeated in later literature.<sup>4</sup> We have already noted Aristotle’s argument that opinion (δόξα) implies conviction (πίστις), which requires being persuaded (τὸ πεπεισθαι), which in turn supposes reason (λόγος).<sup>5</sup> Even if Aristotle is not consciously playing with the epistemological and phonetic connection, he makes it clear that *pistis* follows from being persuaded. Consequently, in a substantivized form in the perfect tense, ‘those having been persuaded’ can take the place of ‘the faithful’, as is shown by this example of parallelism from *Wisdom of Solomon*:

Those who trust in him (οἱ πεποιθότες) will understand truth: and the faithful (οἱ πιστοὶ) will remain with him in love. (*Wisdom* 3.9)

The translation shows how, indeed, the passive perfect tense of *peithō* can even be rendered to refer to trust.<sup>6</sup>

In the New Testament, a similar parallel usage between *pistis* and *peithō* can be discerned. In *Acts* 28.24 we read, ‘some were convinced by what he had said (καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπειθοντο τοῖς λεγομένοις), while others refused to believe

4 See e.g. Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.46; Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 1.90.

5 Aristotle, *On the Soul* 428a23, cf. on this passage §4.2.3 above.

6 Cf. also 2 *Corinthians* 1.9: ‘Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God (ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ὦμεν ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ) who raises the dead.’

(οἱ δὲ ἠπίστων): Similar examples of the use of *peithō* that have an equivalent meaning to the use of *pisteuō* can also be found in the Pauline letters. Paul explains his confrontation with death in the following terms: ‘so that we would rely not on ourselves (ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ὦμεν ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς) but on God who raises the dead’ (2 Cor 1.9). Yet elsewhere he expressed a similar reliance on the resurrection with a ‘trust that’ (πιστεύω ὅτι) construction, indicating the semantic equivalence of the passive use of *peithō* and the active use of *pisteuō*.<sup>7</sup> It follows that, from a purely semantic point of view, the overlap in meaning between ‘faith’ and ‘persuasion’, *pistis* and *peithō* is evident (I elaborate on this connection in §5.3.1 and §5.4.1 below).

So, how is ‘*pistis*-as-persuasion’ used in rhetorical and philosophical discourses in the days of the early principate? On the level of basic senses, *pistis* and cognates within the semantic domain of persuasion may refer to (1) the means of convincing, (2) the resulting conviction itself, or (3) the process of convincing. Firstly, a *pistis* may indicate something that persuades: in day-to-day language, the noun *pistis* could denote, in addition to faith and trust and many more nuances, something akin to ‘proof’ or ‘evidence’. This ‘reified’ sense is particularly frequent in rhetorical and juridical expositions, but also, and this is of special interest to us in this chapter, in the context of philosophical persuasion. When the second-century Stoic Epictetus has his imaginary interlocutor ask ‘what is your *pistis*?’ he is not questioning Epictetus’s religious affiliation; the question expresses the wish to be given a proof (*pistis*) for his assertion.<sup>8</sup> In reply, Epictetus offers several *pisteis*, ‘means of persuasion’, to convince and hence induce *pistis* in the sceptical listener.

Secondly, the same noun can be used to express the state of being convinced, ‘a persuasion/conviction’. On a basic level, to engender such a ‘persuasion’ is the aim of all communication, as Plutarch remarked in his treatise on curing the vice of talkativeness:

[Chatterers] do not, therefore, meet with belief (οὐδὲ πίστιν ἔχουσιν), which is the object of all speech (πᾶς λόγος). For this is the proper end

7 1 *Thessalonians* 4.14; *Romans* 6.8. We will elaborate on Paul’s use of *peithō* and cognates in §5.4.1.

8 Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.28.3. The assertion here is that we only assent to what appears to be true. In response, Epictetus asks his interlocutor to assent to something that appears false, namely to feel that it is night while it is obviously daytime. Furthermore, he refers to the authority of Plato, who had stated that ‘every soul is unwillingly deprived of the truth’, which also underlines his thesis that we do not assent to what we know to be falsehoods. Cf. for a similar usage of *pistis* Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.2.7.

and aim of speech, to engender belief in the hearer (πίστιν ἐνεργάσασθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσιν). (Plutarch, *On Talkativeness* 503D)

*Pistis* in the sense of a state of being convinced is thus seen as the general aim of speech and reason, yet it may also indicate a more specialized, philosophical conviction. According to Epicurean teachings, having a firm *pistis* is, together with ‘tranquillity’ (ἄταραξία), the goal of knowledge of natural phenomena (see §5.3.4 below).<sup>9</sup> A very similar conception of *pistis* is found in the academic and Stoic traditions, as is evidenced both by early Stoic usage of the term and by Latin equivalents in the works of Cicero and Seneca (see §5.3.5 below).

Thirdly, particularly the verb *pisteuō* is used in the context of adherence to philosophical and cultic truths, indicating the process of persuading. For instance, the philosopher Plutarch writes to his wife: ‘I know that you are kept from believing (κωλύει σε πιστεῦειν) the statements of that other set’ (i.e. the Epicurean teachings).<sup>10</sup> Adherence to philosophy was a matter of being persuaded and hence of *pistis*. Based on this diverse usage of *pistis* in relation to persuasion, we can understand that *pistis* was ‘at home’ in the semantic domain of rhetoric, yet also in the closely related domain of philosophical dialectic and teaching.

Yet, in what extent or manner does this semantic connection between *pistis* and persuasion affect Paul’s usage? In these letters, we do not seem to find particular instances of a technical meaning of *pistis* as ‘rhetorical evidence’ or ‘proof.’<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, as my argument in this chapter will point out (see esp. §5.4), the meaning of *pistis* as a personal yet still relationally configured ‘persuasion’ is present in several important sections of the Pauline letters. Moreover, on a broader level this connection helps to uncover a pattern of trustworthy, transformative persuasion that is specific to both philosophical movements and the Pauline tradition. This type of persuasion is delineated from both extreme epistemological scepticism and rhetorically savvy yet ideologically shallow sophism and is fully developed in the idea and ideal of the wise person, a person who is ultimately trustworthy, never misplaces trust, and elicits such trust and trustworthiness in others.

9 Epicurus, *Letter to Pythocles*, apud Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.85 (Epicurus’s authorship is debated).

10 Plutarch, *Consolation to His Wife* 611D. See §5.3.3 *infra*.

11 Hay (1989, 470) only refers to *Acts* 17.31; see on Hay’s general thesis §5.2.3. Cf. also Winter (1997, 160; 2003, 339) on *1 Corinthians* 2.5, on which see §5.4.3 below. And see Morgan (2015, 291) on *pistis* as a ‘pledge’ or ‘assurance’ in *Romans* 3.25–26.



Such an interpretation of *pistis* offers a way out of the false opposition between cognitive-propositional and personal-relational faith. This dichotomy, often expressed in terms of ‘faith that’ versus ‘faith in’, is still dominant in scholarly evaluations of Pauline *pistis*. Therefore, this chapter opens with an analysis of several contributions to this debate in biblical scholarship which place Paul somewhere on the cognitive-relational and, often correspondingly, the Greek-Jewish spectrum (§5.2). In the previous chapter, I devoted considerable space to the epistemic potential of *pistis* in Plato and his later successors of the Academy. In this chapter, I will broaden the scope to include diverse Hellenistic thinkers and philosophical schools in order to establish the outline of a discourse. I will demonstrate how *pistis* was used across Aristotelean, Epicurean, Academic, and Stoic traditions (§5.3). These interphilosophical discourses on the value of persuasion and on the relational embeddedness of cognitive convictions provide us with a helpful background against which another aspect of Paul’s *pistis* language can be understood (§5.4). I argue that this domain is particularly relevant to understanding those instances in which Paul speaks of *pistis* in relation to his own convictions, to types of wisdom, and to communal love: persuasion is an essential notion in Paul’s thought concerning the delicate balance between accommodating those who are weaker and those who are more advanced.

## 5.2 The Dichotomy of Greek Cognitive Conviction and Jewish Relational Faith

As we saw in the first chapter (§1.2.1), one of the interesting observations that can be made when evaluating the treatment of Pauline *pistis* in New Testament scholarship is how it is often described by means of a contrast, either to Jewish equivalents or to the Greek usage of the term. In chapter 2, moreover, we saw how authors tend to set early Christian usage in opposition to Greek usage by stressing the ‘religious’ character of early Christian faith. It is relevant to review a related tendency in the context of this chapter. Scholars commonly argue that Pauline faith is either more cognitive than the Jewish variant or, alternatively, more relational than its Hellenistic counterpart. My argument in this chapter is meant to show how the Hellenistic-Roman discourses on *pistis* as persuasion offer an important contemporary context to the Pauline usage. As the discourses in section 5.3 demonstrate, in the context of persuasion this Greek usage turns out to be more ‘relational’ than most authors I discuss in the present section assume. The dichotomy of ‘cognitive’ and ‘relational’ faith

is therefore unhelpful to the same degree as the Jewish-Greek dichotomy it serves to uphold.

### 5.2.1 *'More Cognitive than Jewish Faith' Yet 'More Relational than Greek Faith'?*

Many early analyses of Paul's usage of *pistis* language argue that the early Christian concept of faith is of a different, more cognitive character than the Jewish, personal trust in God. More than a century ago, in his thesis on Pauline *pistis*, W.H.P. Hatch expressed this as follows:

When we pass from Jesus to the community of believers which was formed in Jerusalem after his death and resurrection, we are at once conscious that πίστις is no longer simple trust in God; for the idea of conviction or belief now predominates over that of trust in both the substantive πίστις and the verb πιστεύειν. (Hatch 1917, 26–27)

Hatch further defines this faith of the first Christians in Palestine as 'primarily intellectual in character', even though 'it also carried with it important ethical consequences.'<sup>12</sup> Although Hatch concedes that Paul's faith language is not purely intellectual but 'involves the feelings and the will', still, with Paul, 'πίστις is very different from trust' as it 'absorbed (...) from its Graeco-Roman environment' a more mystical meaning; it is 'the mystical state in which Christians live.'<sup>13</sup> The development in the meaning of *pistis* is thus connected to the alleged fissure between Judaism and Hellenism or, alternatively, between Jesus and Paul in their usage of *pistis* language. 'Simple trust' is contrasted with 'belief', the latter of which seems to imply a more cognitive mindset.

This type of argument is also reminiscent of what perhaps has been the most popular contribution to this debate in the past century: Jewish philosopher Martin Buber's *Zwei Glaubensweisen* (1951), 'Two Types of Faith'. Buber sharply distinguished between Hebraic *emunah* and the Greek and Pauline *pistis*.<sup>14</sup> The latter variant involves 'acknowledgment and acceptance in the sense of a holding henceforth that so-and-so', and, as Buber remarkably states, that it is 'of Greek origin requires no discussion.'<sup>15</sup> It is 'a mere condition of the soul' and not 'an acted relationship which essentially transcends the world

<sup>12</sup> Hatch 1917, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Hatch 1917, at 35, 65, 66, and 45, respectively.

<sup>14</sup> Buber 1951.

<sup>15</sup> Buber 1951, 11.

of the person.<sup>16</sup> According to Buber, Jesus himself belonged to the tradition of central Pharaseism, whereas early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism represent the opposite tradition.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, Jesus's own teaching about faith concerned a relationship with God that involved doing his will, and this was fundamentally different from the intellectual acknowledgement of Christ's death and resurrection, as his later followers came to understand *pistis*.

Buber's provocative thesis rests on the assumption that something important went wrong in the Septuagint translation and in the later rendering of Hebrew and Aramaic sayings in Greek, when the word group of *emunah* was most often rendered by the word group *pistis*:

*Teshuvah*, turning of the whole person, in the sphere of the world, which has been reduced unavoidably to a 'change of mind', to *metanoia*, by the Greek translator and *emunah*, trust, resulting from an original relationship to the Godhead, which has been likewise modified in the translation to 'belief', as the recognition that something is true, i.e. rendered by *pistis*.<sup>18</sup>

Not only does this statement express an all-too-sceptical distrust in translatability,<sup>19</sup> Buber neglects the more cognitive descriptions of Israel's relationship with God, which is also expressed in terms of 'knowing that'.<sup>20</sup> In fact, in a more recent discussion of *pistis* and *emunah* word groups in the Septuagint, it is argued that the Hebrew verbs and adjectives coincide with the semantic breadth of the Greek, whereas there is a slight difference in meaning between the nouns, as the Greek supposes a relationship whereas the Hebrew, remarkably, does not.<sup>21</sup> As for the 'Greek side' of the argument, Buber's assumption

16 Buber 1951, 21.

17 Buber 1951, 11.

18 Buber 1951, 26.

19 For a review of the debate of translatability of Hebrew concepts, see Joosten 2013, 150–155. He concludes (at 155): 'The rendering of Hebrew meanings into Greek is not always elegant, but it is largely effective. The most obvious divergences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew source text do not have their origin in any fundamental incommensurability between languages, but rather in various types of human error.'

20 See Moberly 2012.

21 Ueberschaer 2017, 103. Ueberschaer notes, however, that in the following centuries, *emunah* grows semantically closer to *pistis*, and turns into a relational notion as well, as the Qumran writings evidence.

about the meaning of *pistis* is, as I hope this study has shown and will continue to show, extremely narrow.<sup>22</sup>

Another landmark in this discussion is Rudolf Bultmann's contribution on *pistis* in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. His analysis confirms some of Buber's findings: an important shift in meaning took place in early Christian usage. The sense of 'trust', central to the Hebrew root *'mn* and common in classical Greek, is, Bultmann maintains, seldom found in the New Testament. Instead, he argues, based on comparison of the New Testament writings with Jewish and Greek texts, that 'the primary sense of πιστεύειν in specifically Christian usage is acceptance of the kerygma about Christ'.<sup>23</sup> This acceptance is not merely a cognitive assent, as it implies a volitional act, an acknowledgement of Christ as one's lord. Still, *pistis* goes beyond a volitional act; it is also a 'denial of the human will itself' ('Verneinung des Willens selber'), because it is primarily an act of obedience to the will of God.<sup>24</sup>

This early Christian development in the meaning of *pistis* is explained by Bultmann as a result of the context of mission.<sup>25</sup> Parallel to the Christian development, he argues following Reitzenstein, similar usage can be found in 'religious propaganda' of mystery cults and hermetic movements (on this comparison, see also §8.3.1 below).<sup>26</sup> In accordance with the general convictions of the 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule', Bultmann relates this 'specifically Christian usage' to the broader cultural phenomena: the separation between nation/citizenship and religion and the late Hellenistic rise of 'religion-as-a-choice'.<sup>27</sup> Faith can thus be characterized as 'a radical reorientation to God'; unlike in the Old Testament, people are asked to believe not on the basis of God's known acts in the history of Israel, but *in* a specific act of God in

22 Cf. Jurg Frey (2017, xv) who calls the opposition between *emunah* and *pistis* 'unzutreffend oder zumindest (...) viel zu einseitig'.

23 Bultmann 1968, 208.

24 Bultmann 1968, 221. Here, Bultmann seems to oppose the earlier characterization of Pauline faith by Adolf Schlatter as 'eine feste Entschließung' and 'mit der innersten Bewegung des Willens verknüpft' (1963 [1882], at 336, n. 1, and at 346, respectively). Both positions, however, are quite similar, as Schlatter also acknowledges the centrality of obedience. Cf. for a comparison between their views Schliesser 2011, 71–74.

25 Bultmann 1968, 208.

26 Bultmann 1968, 181–182; cf. Reitzenstein 1920, 95–96, and cf. Wißmann (1926, 115), who distinguishes between *pistis* and Christian piety, whereby the first is understood in line with contemporary Judaism as denoting one's status before God ('Heilsgewißheit') and the latter in line with mystery religions. The problem with an appeal to texts from hermetic or mystical circles, however, is that Jewish or Christian influence cannot be ruled out.

27 See also Strecker 2005, 225–226.

Christ.<sup>28</sup> It has become a decision to submit the will to this historical datum. When it comes to the Pauline meaning, Bultmann draws a contrast between faith in the Pauline (and Johannine) traditions and faith in the synoptic gospels. In the latter, faith is only directed towards ‘the miraculous power of Jesus’ rather than towards his message or person.<sup>29</sup> In Paul, by contrast, ‘πίστις is always “faith in”.’<sup>30</sup> It is limited to the decision of accepting the salvific message: ‘In Paul, of course, it is only seldom that *pistis* has the direct sense of trust, since *pistis* is primarily *homologia* [assent] and *hypakoē* [obedience].’<sup>31</sup>

In addition to his general Graeco-Roman contextualization in terms of parallel cultural-religious developments, however, Bultmann’s characterization of Paul’s faith terminology as ‘faith that’ is also combined with a denial of explicit Hellenistic influence on Paul’s *pistis* vocabulary. We already saw how Bultmann contrasts Paul’s use of *pistis* with Philo’s: Pauline faith is not the secure disposition or the self-centred cognitive achievement it is in Philo.<sup>32</sup> Paul does not ‘describe the growth of faith in terms of its psychological development’; it is, rather, ‘a historical rather than a psychological possibility.’<sup>33</sup> Bultmann, notwithstanding his cognitive interpretation of Pauline *pistis*, inclines towards a Jewish origin of Christian faith.<sup>34</sup>

Herman Binder offers a less nuanced judgement on Pauline *pistis*. He follows Bultmann’s lead regarding the influence of Hellenistic religions on the gradually changing meaning of *pistis* and adds ‘that it is most often used in the sense of “persuasion” and “trust”, i.e. was naturally understood psychologically.’<sup>35</sup> When it comes to Paul’s usage, however, he boldly states that ‘from Greek language use, no connections can be made to Paul’s statements on *pistis*.’<sup>36</sup> The ‘psychological’, Hellenistic understanding of *pistis*, Binder argues,

28 Bultmann 1968, 215; cf. p. 211: ‘OT faith—as obedience and faithfulness—is directed to the God whose existence is always presupposed. In its original and true sense, however, faith in Jesus Christ is not obedience to a Lord who is known already.’

29 Bultmann 1968, 206.

30 Bultmann 1968, 217.

31 Bultmann 1968, 218; cf. p. 206: only when Paul speaks of Abraham, it has this ‘direct sense of trust’.

32 Bultmann 1968, 221, 202. See §4.3.4 *supra*.

33 Bultmann 1968, 217.

34 Bultmann 1968, 205: ‘In common Christian usage, then, the OT and Jewish heritage may be discerned in what is signified by *pistis*.’ Cf. p. 179: ‘The words in *pist-* did not become religious terms in classical Greek.’

35 Binder 1968, 30: ‘daß er meist im Sinne von “Überzeugung” und “Vertrauen” verwendet, d. h. selbstverständlich psychologisch verstanden wurde.’

36 Binder 1968, 30: ‘Zu den Aussagen des Paulus über die *pistis* können vom griechischen Sprachbereich aus keine Verbindungslinien gezogen werden.’

only caught on after Paul, with John and James, leading to the more cognitive meaning of 'having a conviction' and 'believing to exist'.

Yet, while Bultmann and Binder still allow for some precursors of a Christian usage in Hellenistic sources, others doubt the existence of any connection between pagan and Christian *pistis* at all, arguing instead for exclusively Jewish roots. Thus, when the continuity between Old and New Testament or between Jesus and Paul is emphasized, another contrast often takes root: that between 'relational' or 'other-regarding' biblical faith (faith as trust) and 'psychological' or 'cognitive' pagan faith (faith as conviction). The dichotomy is hence upheld, only now Christian and Pauline faith is taken to belong to the Jewish side of the divide.

In the introductory chapter (§1.3.1), I already discussed the approach of Dieter Lührmann, who dismisses all Hellenistic parallels in order to show 'that "faith" is not simply a common phenomenological religious category, but that it belongs exclusively to the Christian language tradition that shaped us'.<sup>37</sup> He rejects the relevance of any of the sources quoted by Reitzenstein and Bultmann, which were meant to show that the context of pagan mission and religious persuasion were determinative for the popularity and peculiar meaning of *pistis* in Christian circles. However, as we saw, his thesis that a religious usage of *pistis* is lacking in Greek sources up until Lucian and Porphyry has been challenged by Gerhard Barth, Axel von Dobbeler, and Dennis Lindsay (see §1.3.1).

Other contributors directly oppose Buber's thesis and opt for a continuum of a Jewish and early Christian usage of *emunah* and *pistis*. According to Lohse, early Christian *pistis* is not determined by a Greek but rather by an Old Testament and Jewish understanding:

Contrary to Buber's thesis that the Christian understanding of *pistis* was influenced by a Greek intellectual usage, we may assume that it was the inclusion of the Old Testament-Jewish terminology of faith that shaped the early Christian understanding of *pistis*. (Lohse 1977, 151)<sup>38</sup>

37 Lührmann 1973, 19: 'daß "Glaube" nicht einfach eine allgemein-religionsphänomenologische Kategorie ist, sondern exklusiv der uns prägenden christlichen Sprachtradition angehört.'

38 My translation of: 'Im Gegensatz zu Bubers These, das christliche Verständnis der *Pistis* sei von griechischen Voraussetzungen bestimmt, ist daher davon auszugehen, daß nicht eine intellektualistische Fragestellung, sondern vielmehr die Aufnahme der alttestamentlich-jüdischen Redeweise vom Glauben das urchristliche Verständnis der *Pistis* geprägt hat.' Lohse's rejection of Hellenistic influence is even more evident here:

Lohse aims to close the gap between Jesus and Paul which Buber's approach created. Rather than speaking of a Jewish *fides qua creditur* directed towards God and a Christian *fides quae creditur* concerning Christ's resurrection, he sees both as a unity 'wherefore the content and act of faith are inseparable'.<sup>39</sup> Rather than two 'Glaubensweisen', he distinguishes between two 'Glaubenszeiten' (two times of faith): after Christ, the same concept of faith gained a new dimension.<sup>40</sup> Yet whereas his plea for a unity of Old Testament faith and New Testament faith takes up most of the article, the idea that pagan usage of *pistis* did not influence early Christian usage is hardly substantiated, while the intellectual nature of pagan faith is simply taken for granted. The only pagan source referred to in the article, Lucian's *Alexander* 38, is meant to show that the influence went in the reverse direction, from Christian usage to pagan usage (for a discussion of the text in question, see §4.2.2 above and §8.3.1 below). This is questionable, as early Christian movement did not yet have the numbers or status to have any linguistic impact on the wider culture in Lucian's days and because similar usage is found in authors like Plutarch (see also §8.3.1 below).

Lührmann and Lohse are not alone in their rejection of Greek influence on early Christian *pistis*. In his book on *pistis* in Josephus, Dennis Lindsay frames his entire conclusion as a response to Buber's 'two types of faith'.<sup>41</sup> 'The proper distinction between two types of faith', Lindsay concludes, 'is not Jewish faith versus Christian faith, but much rather Biblical faith versus Greek faith.'<sup>42</sup> Lindsay identifies the former as the inseparable combination of personal trust and intellectual assent, whereas Hellenistic Greek develops a second meaning of merely intellectual assent.<sup>43</sup> As we might expect, according to this scheme Paul belongs to the biblical, non-Greek side of the divide. Buber's error, Lind-

---

'Das frühe Christentum hat in seinem Verständnis des Glaubens nicht an hellenistische Vorstellungen und Begrifflichkeit angeknüpft' (151).

39 Lohse 1977, 152.

40 Lohse 1977, 162–163: 'so daß Glaubensinhalt und Glaubensvollzug unlöslich zusammengehören'.

41 Lindsay 1993, 165–189.

42 Lindsay 1993, 182. Cf. also, more recently, Lindsay 2017, 205, where he approvingly cites Lührmann 1973, 38 at the conclusion of his chapter: 'Der Verstehenshorizont für das frühchristliche Reden von "Glaube" liegt also in der internen Sprache der jüdischen Tradition, nicht in der Auseinandersetzung mit der heidnischen Umwelt.'

43 Cf. Lindsay 1993, 62: 'This sense [viz. 'faith' as the content of what is believed] is more typically Greek than Hebrew for it indicates an intellectual (philosophical!) and *unverbindliche* relationship to God rather than a combination of intellectual belief and personal commitment'; and at 63: 'this is typically Hellenistic faith, where personal commitment is practically divorced from the more important intellectual belief in a fact.'

say reasons, was that his understanding of early Christian faith was drenched in modern assumptions about the nature of ‘belief’ as the cognitive acceptance of a proposition. While this may very well be true, here I would add that Lindsay’s understanding of Greek faith as ‘merely intellectual assent’ is anachronistic as well. I will point out that even the more cognitive usages of *pistis* as a mental state imply a level of trust and a need to be seen as trustworthy by others.<sup>44</sup>

Another example of how Buber’s sharp distinction between Jesus’s type of faith and Paul’s type of faith is criticized is the thorough examination undertaken more recently by Maureen Yeung (2002) on the alleged differences on the meaning of ‘faith’ in the synoptics and in Paul. Like Lohse, she argues against Hatch’s and Buber’s dichotomy and proposes an integration of the miraculous forms of faith connected to Jesus and the salvific forms of faith connected to Paul.<sup>45</sup> Jesus demands not only faith in miracles, but also faith in him as God’s representative. Similarly, according to Yeung, in Paul’s letters ‘πίστις Χριστοῦ expresses πίστις θεοῦ.’<sup>46</sup> Both types of faith are therefore theocentric in nature: they are directed towards God via Christ.

Yeung discusses Hellenistic parallels to her main texts on faith—‘Your faith has healed/saved you’ and ‘Faith that can remove mountains’ (on which, see my §4.4.4 above)—but refrains from a further comparison between biblical faith to pagan faith. Her results are therefore congruent with and complementary to my own approach. Particularly her exegesis of *pistis Christou* is in line with what I argue in chapter 6, namely that Paul’s idea of faith in Christ implies faith in God.<sup>47</sup> As I will argue, Paul’s call for faith in Christ is at the same time a call to imitate Christ’s faithfulness towards the faithful God (whose faithfulness he also represents towards humanity). God can thus be considered the ultimate level in a mimetic chain (see §6.4.4 below). Indeed, there is no clear break between Jesus’s teaching and Paul’s teaching here, for both teach to have faith in the one they imitate.

All in all, although I tend to agree with the critical observations that address an unnecessary break between Old and New Testament or between Jesus and

44 Cf. Louw & Nida (1988, 377): ‘real trust, confidence and reliance can only be placed in someone who is believed to have the qualities attributed to such a person.’

45 Yeung 2002, 294.

46 Yeung 2002, 294.

47 See her conclusion: Yeung 2002, 297: Paul ‘follows the context of Hab 2.4 (cf. Rom 1.16–17) and takes the concept of *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* there to support both the need of placing trust in God’s promise of salvation through Jesus’s sacrifice (cf. Rom 1.1–4; 4.22–25) and of obeying God in daily living (Rom 1.5, 6.16, 12.1ff). His antithesis between faith and works should not be taken as an attempt to pitch faith against faithfulness.’



Paul, I would question the extent of the gap most of these studies presuppose between Hellenism and Paul when it comes to the usage of *pistis*. Perhaps we need not assume that a ‘more Jewish’ type of faith is necessarily a ‘less Greek’ type of faith. After all, unlike what the predicates ‘Jewish’ and ‘Greek’ and some of the rhetoric of the period suggest, the two cultures or identities were in reality much more intertwined.<sup>48</sup> If we wish to progress in this scholarly debate on Paul’s usage of faith language, it may be helpful to recontextualize Paul’s own words: in *pistis*, ‘there is no longer Jew or Greek’ (Gal 3.28). Rather than postulating a contrast between what is essentially Jewish and specifically pagan, we ought to take into account all contemporary source material available to see how Paul’s usage is likely to have been understood by either Jewish or pagan contemporaries.

The starting point of the present study is a selection of texts written in Greek and Latin in the Hellenistic-Roman period. As such, it concentrates on non-Jewish sources, although Hellenistic-Jewish material is taken into account when it partakes in the discourse at hand. The different semantic domains in which *pistis* vocabulary functions may partly overlap and partly diverge in different authors and different corpora, yet this cognitive semantic approach indicates that the existence of an essential difference in meaning between Greek and Jewish faith is unlikely. Thus, Buber’s ‘two types of faith’, is not a ‘helpful category’ (as Lindsay states) for understanding the usage of *pistis* at all.<sup>49</sup>

### 5.2.2 *Beyond the Mind-Body Dichotomy: Pistis as Persuasion in Rhetoric and Philosophy*

To recapitulate the brief survey of scholarly interpretations in the previous subsection, the Pauline concept of faith is either (a) strongly distinguished from the Jewish concept in its propositional, intellectual, or cognitive character, or (b) strongly opposed to the Graeco-Roman concept in its personal, relational, or religious character.<sup>50</sup> Both schemes involve a dichotomy between what I will here designate as ‘cognitive versus relational *pistis*’. In this chapter, this dichotomy is overcome by exploring the semantic domain of ‘*pistis* as persuasion’ and discourses related to such ‘persuasion’. However, before we return to my approach, there are some other publications worth mentioning that helpfully address this issue from a different angle.

48 See, for instance, Gruen 1998, 3–12 and see §1.3.1 above.

49 See Lindsay 1993, 173: ‘[H]is “two types of faith” may indeed be a helpful category for the understanding of πίστις and πιστεύειν in the writings of Josephus and in the NT.’

50 Some important exceptions to this trend have been discussed or will be discussed below.

Firstly, I should mention a more general observation regarding paradigms in the academic study of Paul. In *Paul in Ecstasy* (2009), Colleen Shantz addressed Western discomfort with religious experience as the result of the phenomenon of ‘cognicentrism’, a term coined by anthropologist Michael Harner ‘The bias of cognicentrism is rooted in the constructs of scientific enlightenment, especially the idea of objective truth as the product of critical thinking stripped of personal investment.’<sup>51</sup> This idea of objective truth stripped of incidental experience has, she argues, deeply penetrated New Testament and particularly protestant Pauline scholarship, leaving it vulnerable to the idea that theology is propositional, disembodied, and cognitive in nature. Similar concerns are voiced in other monographs, such as Engberg-Pedersen’s *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (2010, 1), in which he argues for a ‘physical’ and ‘cosmological’ understanding of many of Paul’s ideas, and Tappenden’s *Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation* (2016). By extension, we could add that Pauline *pistis* is also easily mistaken for a purely cognitive mode, conceptually closer to what we would call ‘belief’ as compared to ‘faith’.

Secondly, when it comes to *pistis* specifically there is an increasing amount of criticism against purely cognitive translations such as ‘belief’ or even ‘faith’. Caroline Johnson Hodge states that ‘*pistis* refers to specific character traits and resulting behavior’.<sup>52</sup> She favours ‘faithfulness’, ‘trustworthiness’, ‘to trust’, and ‘to be loyal to’ over these translations, since they ‘reflect a modern way of thinking in which “belief” or “faith” is relegated to the realm of the mind, separate from the realm of the material world, the body, or practices’.<sup>53</sup> In her monograph (2015) and ensuing publications (2017a; 2017b; 2018a; 2018b), Teresa Morgan emphasizes the relational embeddedness of *pistis*. One of the main aims of Morgan’s work is to deconstruct the Augustinian perspective with which *pistis* in the New Testament is approached by theologians. She argues that both the propositional ‘belief that’ (*fides quae*) and the interior mental attitude of ‘belief in’ (*fides qua*) are frequently implied in early (pre-Augustinian) Christian *pistis* usage yet are never separated from their relational or social embeddedness.<sup>54</sup> This emphasis on relationality is important, given the history of scholarship just described (in §5.2.1).

51 Shantz 2009, 26.

52 Hodge 2007, 82, in a section titled ‘Rethinking *Pistis*’ (82–84).

53 Hodge 2007, 82.

54 Morgan 2015, 11–12. On propositional usage, see i.a. at 4, 23, 30; on interiority, see in particular chapter 11: ‘Relationality and Interiority in *Pistis* and *Fides*’, 444–472.

A third apparent exception to the differentiation trend of cognitive and relational faith is the chapter on ‘Faith(fulness)’ in Daniel Lynwood Smith’s *Into the World of the New Testament* (2015).<sup>55</sup> The social element is taken even further by Smith, as he explains each instance of *pistis* language along the lines of not merely relational trust, but rather loyalty and allegiance:

Too often, these phrases [i.e. “faith in God”; “faith in Christ”] take on the meaning of “belief”, somewhat like a “belief in fairies.” Such a belief assents to the existence of the thing believed. (...) But when Philo, Paul, and other ancient authors express their admiration for faithful humans and faithful deities, they praise not cognitive assent, but loyalty, allegiance, or fidelity in the face of adversity. (Smith 2015, 178)

The political semantic domain to which a rendering like ‘allegiance’ belongs is certainly important for understanding certain Pauline trains of thought (see my chapter 7). Yet in this work, despite the author’s acknowledgement of the interplay between cognitive and relational aspects, the relational seems overemphasized at the expense of the cognitive. Admittedly, an overstated argument may have been intended to balance the scales.

The present work stresses the significance of including philosophical discourses, which underline the cognitive dimension of *pistis* as already prominently present in the period under scrutiny. Especially the preceding chapter (on epistemological usage) and the present chapter (on persuasive usage) highlight such ‘cognitive’ usages of the *pistis* lexicon. Even if, as I argue, in these semantic domains the cognitive dimension is foregrounded, relationality is still never out of sight, as the connections to ‘loving others’ (in chapter 4) and ‘persuading others’ (in the current chapter) confirm. At a more fundamental level, however, I would suggest two things that can help overcome the dichotomy of relational versus cognitive faith.

The first is embedded in the overall method of the present study: by taking polysemy as our starting point, the different meanings of *pistis* need not be pitted against each other: any of the semantic dimensions may be foregrounded at a given instance, yet any usage may also portray considerable overlap (see §1.2.2 above). Consequently, the present chapter deals with the semantic domain of persuasion, whereas chapter 7 deals with the domain of politics and patronage. There, the meaning of ‘allegiance’, favoured by Smith, is predominant, yet ‘allegiance’ also plays a part in the *pistis* relationship between students and schools discussed in the present chapter (§5.3.3).

---

55 Smith 2015, 167–180.

As for the second ‘cure’ for this dichotomy, even within the semantic domain of persuasion, especially philosophical persuasion, we can find a seemingly cognitive usage of *pistis* that is more relational than most of the studies mentioned here recognize. ‘Persuasion’ as a term helps to bridge this divide, as it functions both as a certain personal, cognitive state of mind and as a relational, situational process of persuading others.<sup>56</sup> However, I argue that in both usages it is impossible to isolate the cognitive from the relational aspects. Usage that I would regard as relational and render as ‘trust’, ‘assurance’, or ‘trustworthiness’ often occurs in highly rational and dialectical contexts. Usage I would regard as cognitive and render as ‘conviction’ or ‘proof’ will be shown to be other-regarding, embodied, and relational. For instance, in Stoic philosophy the dispositional quality of ‘conviction’ is embedded in the ideal makeup of a sage. Even though this conception might convey an individual or psychological impression, the *pistis* of a sage is closely connected to actions of love and educating others and thus negotiates both the cognitive and the relational aspects (see §5.3.6). Hence, as I argue in this chapter, both in Graeco-Roman philosophy and in the *corpus Paulinum* we find an alternative to the alleged two types of faith in the conception of *pistis* as ‘transformative persuasion’.

Before we get to these philosophical sources, however, there is one more debate in scholarly literature that demands our attention, namely the debate on the extent to which Paul was involved in Graeco-Roman persuasion and rhetoric.

### 5.2.3 *Pauline Faith and Graeco-Roman Persuasion: Friends or Foes?*

The debate on the correct interpretation of *pistis* in this spectrum of the cognitive versus the relational is often bound up with discussions of Paul’s stance on the value of Graeco-Roman rhetoric. As I noted in the introduction, there is much ado about Paul’s own education and the extent to which he was familiar with Graeco-Roman rhetoric (see §1.4 above). Particularly (in)famous is Paul’s emphasis on his own type of communication: ‘My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom (ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων) but on the power of God’ (1 Cor 2.5, on which see §5.4.2 below). The question is what this ‘human wisdom’ entails: what was the phenomenon Paul was so desperate to avoid?

56 Cf. publications on argumentative theory that stress the importance of ‘trust’, e.g. Dutilh Novaes 2020.

Bruce Winter's *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* (1997) has been important for puncturing the assumption that Paul, by contrasting faith and human wisdom, endorses a faith-reason dichotomy. Instead, Winter argues, he sharply opposes a particular type of persuasion, that of the sophists, who used their trade in the service of external display, petty rivalries, and self-aggrandizement and whose movement appears to have been around particularly in Corinth, long before what Philostratus coined 'the second sophistic'. The essential difference between philosophers and sophists, according to the polemical consensus, is the latter's disdain for truth proper. This was the deeper cause of the sophists' style and behaviour, of their thirst for influence and money.

Winter's thesis has been met with endorsements and was developed further by Edgar Krentz and George van Kooten.<sup>57</sup> Yet his thesis has also had its share of criticism, recently and extensively by Duane Litfin (2015), who argues for a Paul who condemns 'ingenious rhetorical strategies' in general, not merely sophism.<sup>58</sup> As in his 1994 monograph, Litfin distils a 'fundamental contrast' in Paul's letters to the Corinthians, a duality between this cosmos and heaven, between this age and the age to come and between humanity and God.<sup>59</sup> These contrasts correspond, he argues, to the contrast between the persuader, who is results-driven, and the herald, who proclaims the message of another and who is obedience-driven.<sup>60</sup> A similar contrast had earlier been made in Von Dobbeler's *Glaube als Teilhabe* (1987): not the speaker's integrity but his legitimacy as a messenger, attested to by charismatic signs, was deemed important.<sup>61</sup> The question is whether such a distinction was the one likely to have been intended by Paul and understood by his pagan addressees. In any case, according to Litfin Paul's problem is with all human persuasion aimed at convincing the other of their own point of view, not just with a specific yet unspecified niche of exhibitionist sophists.

His main objection to Winter's analysis stems from the latter's 'failure to justify and maintain a workable definition of *sophistic*, in contrast to the merely *rhetorical*.' He thereby exposes a weakness in Winter's account, though this is not a weakness that invalidates Winter's entire thesis. In my opinion, there

---

57 Krentz 2003; Van Kooten 2008, chapter 4: 'Paul versus the Sophists: Outward Performance and Rhetorical Competition within the Christian Community at Corinth'.

58 See Litfin 2015, 269: 'human strategies, with predictably human results'. Cf. p. 153: 'what Paul rejected was the results-driven dynamic of Greco-Roman persuasion itself; that is, the use of human psychological techniques, sophistic or otherwise, to generate πίστις in his listeners.'

59 Litfin 2015, 161; cf. Litfin 1994, 174–178.

60 Litfin 2015, 271.

61 Von Dobbeler 1987, 26, 40.

need not have been a neatly delineated group of people who were recognized as sophists or saw themselves as such (as *sophistēs* was a honorific title as well). As often with polemic, adversaries are easily vilified and turned into straw men. This has also been argued by Mark Douglas Given, who agrees with Winter that ‘Paul was fully aware of Hellenistic standards of philosophical and rhetorical respectability, and (...) he was at pains to show where he stands in relation to them.’<sup>62</sup> There were, however, no clear-cut distinctions between sophists and philosophers, as Winter’s thesis suggests:

In the eyes of ‘the mob’, hard and fast Platonic distinctions between philosophers and sophists were ambiguous at best. In fact, it is the widely recognized resemblance between, and popular confusion of, philosophers and sophists, rather than any actual accusations, which probably necessitated both Dio’s and Paul’s apologetic tone in these particular examples. (Given 2001, 15)

Remarkably, this is precisely what Litfin points out as well, in as much as he rightly cautions that ‘first-century rhetorical practice (and practitioners) cannot be reduced to such easy moral categories.’<sup>63</sup>

What Litfin does not seem to grasp, however, is that the non-existence of the straw men as such, of ‘real sophists’, does not necessarily entail the non-existence of the polemical discourse. Who precisely belongs to the ‘other’ category, or what criteria are decisive to determine this, is open to continuous debate and can easily shift over the decades.<sup>64</sup> The delineation of ‘bad’ rhetoric need not even coincide with the designation of ‘sophist’. At times, ‘sophist’ may have been a happily appropriated self-definition, at different times, a complete

---

62 Given 2001, 14.

63 Litfin 2015, 261; cf. p. 152: ‘First, it sets up “sophistic” rhetoric as something of an apostolic straw man, easily bowled over and dispatched. (...) Reducing Paul’s penetrating argument in 1 *Corinthians* 1–4 to such a simplistic knock-down conclusion borders on the banal.’

64 See, for instance, Lauwers 2015, 30–31: ‘Unfortunately for the analyst, such clear-cut criteria are largely absent, since the individual appropriations of the conflict between rhetoric, sophistry, and philosophy prevent any stable image of these fields from emerging.’ Cf. Gordon 1996, 17: ‘The distinctions between the titles *philosophos*, *rhētōr*, and *sophistēs* were often blurred (...) Most of our literary sources offer no definitions but simply make clear which occupation the writer respected or despised the most.’ And cf. Eshleman 2012, 259: ‘sophist, philosopher, (“orthodox”) Christian (...) These categories represent coherent groups only in a fairly loose sense. Yet members of each frequently define their identity with reference to an imagined collective, which they in turn define ostensively, in terms of individuals whom they recognize as comprising it.’

disqualification. Paul's 'sophists' need not have been the same groups or traditions that were criticized by Epictetus and Plutarch, yet he may very well have partaken in a similar anti-sophistic discourse. This is in fact very probable, as this would have resonated with his Corinthian public, unlike the contrast Litfin draws between divinely inspired heraldry and human persuasion, which does not seem to be grounded in contemporary polemical discourse. The categories Paul draws upon may very well have been familiar and even 'easy moral categories' as Litfin states: their application to the ones whose influence on the Corinthians Paul criticizes was likely to be more difficult for his audience to accept.

The other arguments Litfin brings to the fore can be considered somewhat 'sophistic' or suggestive themselves. He seems to consider it undesirable that 'the πίστις engendered by these human psychological techniques was unproblematic for the Apostle', but he does not explain why Paul must be vehemently against 'psychological techniques'.<sup>65</sup> All in all, the conclusion Litfin draws, namely that Paul is arguing against Graeco-Roman persuasion and rhetoric in general, is not supported by his analysis. As my own analysis of the discourse on sophists versus philosophers will point out (§5.3.2), defending oneself against the charge of sophism and vilifying others was a daily practice among many of Paul's contemporary pagan teachers, and hence it ought not surprise us that the 'apostle' employed similar arguments (see §5.4.2).

A related criticism of Winter is offered by Timothy Brookins, who characterizes the scholarly debate on *1 Corinthians* 1–4 as one in which the separation of rhetoric and philosophy, of form and content, plays a pivotal role.<sup>66</sup> Winter upholds too strong of a distinction, Brookins argues, and fails to prove that 'wisdom' (*sophia*) was in fact associated only with rhetoric.<sup>67</sup> Hence, he asks, 'How separate were they really?'<sup>68</sup> This is a valid question, and in accordance with what I just outlined I concur with his answer that 'sophist/rhetorician' and 'philosopher' were 'relatively flexible labels, understood in different ways by different individuals, and sometimes in different ways even within single sources'.<sup>69</sup> Brookins is therefore right to argue that it would do more justice to

65 Litfin 2015, 152. Cf. his rhetorical question (at 152), 'Are we to conclude that Paul found these human strategies entirely "suitable" for securing belief in the gospel?'

66 Brookins bases this idea on Stephen Pogoloff's *Logos and Sophia* (1992), in which rhetoric and philosophy are described as 'distinct and competitive cultures' (at 62): 'we must be especially cautious about any close linkage between rhetoric and philosophy in Paul's Corinth' (64).

67 Brookins 2010, 237: he mentions Philo as evidence of the contrary.

68 Brookins 2010, 238–239.

69 Brookins 2010, 239.

the data if we would allow for more interpretative space in analysing different issues in *1 Corinthians* as sometimes directed against rhetorical form and sometimes against philosophical content, or even at times as a mixture.

That said, when it comes to method, Brookins seems to endorse Winter's approach of ascertaining whether certain terms like *sophia* were associated with either one of the two 'poles' of rhetoric and philosophy. Alternatively, my own discourse-analytical approach establishes that Paul's language participates in a rhetorical-philosophical discourse without trying to pinpoint whether he was either anti-rhetoric or anti-philosophy based on certain terms (see on this method §1.3.2). Such terms can be appropriated by any participant in the discourse. Paul's participation in itself demonstrates that he practised the same polemic as other rhetors and philosophers, which indicates that he is not an outsider when it comes to either rhetoric or philosophy. The question whether there was such a clear-cut distinction between philosophers and sophistic rhetors *in reality* is thus less relevant than the question whether these terms functioned in a well-known discourse that existed in the form of cultural ideas in people's minds. And that much, I would argue, is established by Winter's work.

A specific case for interaction with rhetorical theory in the New Testament based on precisely the usage of *pistis* is made by James Kinneavy in *Greek Rhetorical Origins of Christian Faith* (1987). I already briefly discussed Kinneavy's low estimation of the epistemological status of *pistis* and his suggestion that aspects of the process of persuasion were transferred to or mapped onto the mental state of *pistis* in early Christianity (see §4.1). Kinneavy first explores the possibility of a semantics of *pistis* based on the three Aristotelean *pisteis* or means of persuasion: *ēthos*, *pathos*, and *logos* (for my discussion, see §5.3.1). He bases this presumed overlap in meaning between early Christian and Aristotelean *pistis* on an analysis of what faith is according to descriptions by a variety of modern theologians, a variety he believes comes down to a corresponding 'trust' (like *ēthos*), 'assent' (like *pathos*), and 'knowledge' (like *logos*). Kinneavy's next chapter is meant to increase the likelihood by a historical argument for the probable presence of knowledge of Hellenistic rhetoric in Palestine. The final chapter—'A Verification'—offers a classification of all instances of the verb *pisteuō* and noun *pistis* in the New Testament according to the Aristotelean system of three internal and several external means of persuasion.

Kinneavy's streamlined argument exhibits great structural beauty, and it has received some endorsement. As for the historical probability of knowledge of some main tenets of Hellenistic rhetoric among New Testament authors, I concur with most of his findings, at least when it comes to Paul.



However, both his semantic hypothesis and his verification strategy remain highly abstract. The idea that a single, albeit influential, rhetorical structure accounts for a wide array of New Testament usages does not do justice to the more flexible linguistic conception used in the present study, which accounts for polysemy and genuinely different semantic domains. Moreover, the fact that New Testament instances of *pistis* vocabulary can be mapped onto a given structure does not prove the structure's relevance, particularly when those instances have not been carefully interpreted and compared with actual usage in external, pagan sources. On the one hand, my own semantic approach to *pistis* is comparable to Kinneavy's in its willingness to compare it to Greek thought and Hellenistic persuasion in particular. Yet, on the other, the semantic domain and discourse of persuasion explored in this book is wider than the three Aristotelean means of persuasion and, as the other chapters show, concerns only one discourse among a variety of others that might help us shed light on Paul's concept of faith.

The works of Winter and Kinneavy help to show that there is no essential obstacle preventing us from understanding Paul from within the rhetorical milieu that was so important in contemporary society. Technical rhetorical usage is the first one of the relevant discourses discussed in this chapter (§5.3.1). In the following section (§5.3), several other (sub-)discourses within the semantic domain of *pistis* and persuasion come to the fore. Within these discourses, terms related to the word stem *soph-* are also frequently used, from which words such as 'wisdom' (σοφία) and 'wise' (σοφός) are derived. The *topos* of the philosopher versus the sophist is one of these, and the question here relates to what type of persuasion trust may be based on and what persuasion brings forth virtue (§5.3.2). Within Hellenistic philosophical schools, *pistis* language is furthermore used to express the loyalty to and trust in their wise founding figures, symptomatic of an increased dogmatism in these philosophical environments (§5.3.3). Several Epicurean and Stoic thinkers use *pistis* and *fides* terminology to describe a certain stable conviction which protects against mental disturbances (§5.3.4 and §5.3.5). Yet, the most elaborated *topos* in which there is such a 'persuasion of *pistis*' is that of the ideal Stoic sage whose cognitive capacity to trust only what is trustworthy allows for loving relationships that stir a similar attitude in others (§5.3.6).

### 5.3 Rhetoric and Dialectic, Scepticism and Dogmatism, Sophism and Sagehood: Persuasive Usage of Pistis in Graeco-Roman Discourses

#### 5.3.1 *Pistis in Rhetorical Theory: Aristotle, the Ad Herennium, and Quintilian on Character and Credibility*

Given the connection between *peithō* and *pisteuō*, it is easy to see that *pistis* played a role in classical rhetoric, the art of persuasion. The work of Aristotle is of fundamental importance and influence in this discipline, so it is only reasonable to first return to this early source before discussing rhetorical handbooks that were published in my 'Hellenistic-Roman' temporal scope. Considering the influence of the *Rhetoric* on Greek education throughout the Roman Empire and up until Palestine, it is even probable that Aristotle's rhetorical use of *pistis* pervaded Paul's Jewish context as well.<sup>70</sup>

In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines rhetoric as the ability to figure out the possible means of persuasion (τὸ πιθανόν) best suited to any subject whatsoever.<sup>71</sup> Aristotle distinguishes between three ways in which the audience can be persuaded, three *pisteis* or modes of persuasion, namely *ēthos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.<sup>72</sup> Of these three, *ēthos*, 'disposition', is related to the speaker: if he convinces due to *ēthos*, that is because he is deemed credible, that is, worthy of *pistis* (ἀξιόπιστος).<sup>73</sup> *Ēthos* as a technical 'mode/means of persuasion' (πίστις) is further defined as encompassing three essential elements: 'good sense' (φρόνησις), 'goodness' (ἀρετή), and 'goodwill' (εὐνοία). Put differently, the audience must consider a speaker to be knowledgeable of his subject matter, to be a good person, and to be willing to share this good sense and goodness with his audience. Hence, *ēthos* appertains to the trusting relationship between speaker and audience, and it comprises ethical, intellectual, and relational qualities.<sup>74</sup> According to Aristotle, this means of persuasion conveys 'the most effective *pistis* of them all' (κυριωτάτην ἔχει πίστιν τὸ ἦθος).<sup>75</sup>

70 See Kinneavy 1987, 56–100, and the conclusion on p. 146 and cf. Kennedy 1963, 264–266.

71 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.2 (1355b).

72 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.3 (1356a).

73 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.4 (1356a): διὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦ ἦθους, ὅταν οὕτω λεχθῆ ὁ λόγος ὥστε ἀξιόπιστον ποιῆσαι τὸν λέγοντα. A classical translation of *ēthos* is 'character'. This translation, however, has a more static, inalterable, inborn connotation than Greek usage implies, wherefore I opt for '(fundamental) attitude' (in German 'Grundhaltung', in Dutch 'levenshouding') or 'disposition'.

74 Jakob Wisse (1989, 31) points out that, in contrast to the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Poetics*, *ēthos* is restricted to moral qualities.

75 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.4 (1356a).

Hence, while Aristotle is very consistent in using *pistis* to describe the technical modes of persuasion ('proofs'), the usage of *pistis* vocabulary in this classical rhetorical handbook is broader and includes the importance of trust and credibility.<sup>76</sup> The function of *pistis* vocabulary in this double role of technical 'proof' and relational 'credibility', especially in connection with *ēthos*, explains the frequent co-occurrence of *pistis* and *ēthos* lexemes. This semantic domain is not limited to rhetorical treatises. In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle states that Eudorus's arguments for pleasure being the ultimate good 'were believed (...) more to the excellence of his character than to their own merit' (ἐπιστεύοντο (...) διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἥθους ἀρετὴν μᾶλλον ἢ δι' αὐτούς).<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, the rhetorical usage of *pistis* is not restricted to Greece in the classical or early Hellenistic period but extends into the age of republican and imperial Rome. Even though the exact availability of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the first century BC is debated,<sup>78</sup> we find a similar interconnectedness of faith and persuasion in the tractate *Ad Herrenium*, which was long mistakenly accredited to Cicero, and, even more explicitly, in the well-known rhetorical handbook by Quintilian.

In the *Ad Herrenium*, the first Latin rhetorical handbook fully preserved from the second decade of the first century BC, *fides* occurs mostly as a general indication of the state of being persuaded, not as a technical category of 'proof'. The following passage presents us with a typical usage, where *fides* represents the audience's acceptance of the speaker's message, the intended effect of persuasion:

If the hearers have been convinced (*Si persuasus auditor*), if our opponent's speech has gained their credence (*si oratio adversariorum fecerit fidem auditoribus*)—and this will not be hard for us to know, since we are well aware of the means by which belief is ordinarily effected (*quibus rebus fides fieri soleat*)—if, then, we think belief has been effected (*ergo si fidem factam putabimus*), we shall make our Subtle Approach to the cause by the following means. ([Cicero], *Ad Herrenium* 1.10)

76 Cf. Lienhard 1966, 454: 'Under Aristotle's hand, the word shifts its meaning as the topic under discussion changes; the meaning varies enough to allow separate definitions, but not enough to lose the note of "proof" in any of the occurrences.'

77 Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 10.2.1 (1172b15–16).

78 Hatzimichali (2013, 24), following Barnes, argues that the references to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in Cicero's *On the Orator* and *De oratore* show at least the latter's familiarity with a two-volume edition of the *Rhetoric*.

*Fides* here indicates the result of the process of *persuadere*: the result of a public being convinced by an orator. *Fides* is used as well in the sense of the speaker's credibility. In this regard, a sober, not too embellished style is advocated, since 'the speaker's credibility, impressiveness, and seriousness (*fides et gravitas et severitas oratoria*) are lessened by crowding these figures together'.<sup>79</sup> The close connection to *ēthos* we encountered in Aristotle is less evident in this Latin treatise.

Cicero's undisputed works display a similar usage of *fides*. In *De partitione oratoria*, a work set up as a dialogue between Cicero senior and Cicero junior on how Greek rhetorical theory is to be understood in Latin, *fides* is introduced even more explicitly as the aim of rhetoric, as 'conviction'. A speaker's aim is 'to discover how to convince (*quemadmodum fidem faciat*) the persons whom he wishes to persuade and how to arouse their emotions'.<sup>80</sup> This *fides* is defined as 'a firmly established opinion' (*fides est firma opinio*).<sup>81</sup> As we will see, in less technical semantic domains Cicero prefers *fidētia* for a similar type of strong conviction (see §5.3.5). Cicero's Latin translation for *pistis* as a means of persuasion is *argumentum*, which he describes as 'a plausible device to obtain belief' (*probabile inventum ad faciendam fidem*).<sup>82</sup> *Fides* vocabulary in Cicero's version of rhetorical theory therefore refers mainly to the end product of persuasion, to the ensuing conviction.

By the time of Quintilian's *The Orator's Education* (*Institutio oratoria*, ca. 95 AD), *pistis* recurs as the technical term for modes of persuasion. The author offers some interesting considerations on the translation of *pisteis* into Latin:

All these things are in general called 'pisteis'; strictly speaking, we can translate this as 'fides', but it will be clearer if we interpret it as 'proof' (*Haec omnia generaliter pistis appellant, quod etiam si propria interpretatione dicere fidem possumus, apertius tamen probationem interpretabimur*). (Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 5.10.8)

Here, we can once again note how *pistis* and *fides* were seen as equivalents in most cases.<sup>83</sup> Quintilian, however, chooses to stick to *probatio* as a translation of this technical use of *pistis*.

79 [Cicero], *Ad Herrenium* 4.32.

80 Cicero, *De partitione oratoria* 5.

81 Cicero, *De partitione oratoria* 9.

82 Cicero, *De partitione oratoria* 5.

83 See on the overlap in meaning §1.2.1 above.

Still, *fides* plays an important role in the *Institutio*, for it is the main term for the speaker's credibility. The importance of this type of *fides* is described in terms of the exchange of this credibility between orator and client in juridical contexts:

Since the orator needs to demonstrate these qualities, if he can, in his client too, he must at any rate possess, or be thought to possess, them himself. He will thus do the best service to his Causes, as his own good character will lend them credibility (*quibus ex sua bonitate faciet fidem*). (Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 6.2.18)

The character of the orator will thus reflect on the client: trust (*fides*) functions in a representational setting. We will come back to this mirroring effect or chain-effect of *pistis/fides* in a more philosophical context (between gods and men, philosophers and students) in the next chapter.

Quintilian offers multiple insights into how rhetorical *fides* can be achieved and how it is broken down. *Fides* is built up when the hearers are enjoying themselves (4.2.119, 5.14.35), when the exordium shows the appearance of simple everyday language (4.1.54), when the orator hesitates (9.2.19) or gives way on one point where defeat is inevitable (6.4.16), when proofs are presented either confirming one's own propositions or demolishing those of opponents (4.1.6), when the works of the early poets are cited (1.8.10–11), when the scene of the crime is described (5.10.37), when the judge is already prepared to believe the witnesses (5.7.8), and when the pleader is believed to be a good man (4.1.6–7, 6.2.18–19) and proves this by his life (4.2.125). Conversely, *fides* is diminished when gesture and facial expression are out of tune with speech (11.3.67), when charges on a defendant's past life are manifestly false (7.2.34), when the gravity of the crime is exaggerated (9.2.53) or exaggerations are beyond reason (8.6.73, cf. 5.7.32), when an incredible series of events is spelled out (5.13.28) or the order of events presented inconsistently (7.3.57), when a simple tone is embellished by complicated rhythms (9.4.17) or ingenuity of style (4.2.125) or emotions are phrased in complicated tropes (9.4.1, cf. 8.1.23), when a nervous speaker takes too much time to make his point (5.13.51) or bores the judge with his staggering amount of arguments (5.12.8), and when the speaker is a bad man (12.1.13) or the accused has a bad lifestyle (5.10.27). In both positive and negative respects, then, Quintilian's rhetorical *fides* can be connected to both actual and apparent trustworthiness, and it involves checks of reason, emotional sincerity, literary knowledge, character, and speaking skills.

In Quintilian's handbook, the gap between rhetoric and philosophy is bridged by the inclusion of philosophical character formation in the person of the orator. Quintilian refers explicitly to Cicero to bolster his point that 'the orator must above all else develop his moral character by study, and undergo a thorough training in the honourable and the just, because without this no one can be either a good man or a skilled speaker'.<sup>84</sup> He laments, however, that philosophical training has been taken away from the art of rhetoric, for it 'is no longer active in its proper field and in the broad light of the forum, but has withdrawn, first to porticoes and gymnasia, and then to school lecture rooms'.<sup>85</sup>

The importance of the speaker's apparent or actual character or lifestyle on the credibility of his claims—in rhetorical terms, the effect of *ēthos*—is thus well documented in Aristotle, Cicero, the *Ad Herennium*, and Quintilian alike. This usage of *pistis/fides* and *ēthos* in this widely known rhetorical context already points ahead to the interconnectedness of mostly cognitive notions such as 'knowledge' and more relational notions such as 'trust' within the more specific body of Greek philosophical thought. In order to persuade their public, the rhetorician and the philosopher alike needed to at least appear trustworthy.

### 5.3.2 *Pistis and the Fine Line between Philosophical Persuasion and Sophistic Rhetoric*

In the fifth century BC Athens, persuasion received different evaluations, yet was customarily perceived of as a tricky but essential element of polis-life and democracy. It was commonly contrasted with 'barbaric violence' (βία), although it could also be contrasted with 'cunning' or 'trickery' (δόλος).<sup>86</sup> It is this latter aspect that receives full attention in Plato's *Gorgias*, where, as we already saw in the previous chapter, Plato distinguished sharply between *pistis* in the sense of 'persuasion' and 'learning' (μάθησις) or 'knowledge' (ἐπιστήμη). The different arts of rhetoric and teaching thus have a different aim: 'rhetoric (ἡ ῥητορικὴ), it seems, is a producer of persuasion for belief (πειθοῦς δημιουργός ἐστι πιστευτικῆς), not for instruction in the matter of right and wrong (οὐ διδασκαλικῆς περὶ τὸ δίκαιόν τε καὶ ἄδικον).'<sup>87</sup> Plato's position was in its turn, as the book's title reflects, a response to Gorgias, whose views on rhetoric and

84 Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 12.2.1–2. At 12.2.5–6, he refers to Cicero's *On the Orator* 3.52–81.

85 Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 12.2.8.

86 See Buxton 1982, 58–66.

87 Plato, *Gorgias* 455a.

philosophy have been preserved in his *Encomium of Helen*.<sup>88</sup> Gorgias accuses the philosophers of ‘contending arguments’ (φιλοσόφων λόγων ἀμίλλας) which are capable of radically unsettling the trustworthiness of (settled) opinion (ὡς εὐμετάβολον ποιοῦν τὴν τῆς δόξης πίστιν).<sup>89</sup>

The sharp distinctions of Plato’s *Gorgias* were intended to preserve the good application of persuasion to philosophy whilst rejecting sophism. These distinctions, however, turned into stereotypes that determined much of the polemics between teachers, wandering rhetoricians, and philosophers in the centuries to come. As these early contributions shaped the discourse on the value of persuasion for the subsequent centuries, they are also relevant for our discussion of Paul. Therefore, I will briefly discuss some relevant passages from Plato onwards, with a particular focus on how *pistis* language is used.<sup>90</sup>

Plato’s works offer a more nuanced image than the *Gorgias* alone provides. In the previous chapter, I referred to Angelica Taglia’s thesis that Plato’s evaluation of *pistis* seems to undergo a positive shift (§4.3.2). In this work, she argues, *pistis* is welcomed as the ideal make-up of the ordinary citizens: ‘The *pistis* of the inferiors could make the *polis* agree and thus give stability to the rule of the philosophers.’<sup>91</sup> Moreover, Taglia points out that in the *Laws*, the leaders of the polis actually need *pistis* themselves, *pistis* concerning the gods.<sup>92</sup>

We could add that *peithō* vocabulary is not necessarily avoided by Plato either, as is evidenced by its frequent usage in the *Symposium*, a dialogue in a lively setting of dining that would lead to a whole new literary genre. In the central speech of Socrates, in which he cites what he learned from one Diotima, a somewhat mysterious wise woman, several layers of persuasion are built in. As Socrates himself concludes:

This, Phaedrus and you others, is what Diotima told me, and I am persuaded of it (πέπεισμαι δ’ ἐγώ); in which persuasion I pursue my neighbours, to persuade them in turn (πεπεισμένος δὲ πειρώμαι καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους πείθειν) that towards this acquisition the best helper that our human nature can hope to find is Love. (Plato, *Symposium* 212b)

88 See Irani 2017, 35.

89 Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen* 13.

90 For an overview of the wider early-imperial Roman discourse on the nature of philosophy, sophistry, and rhetoric, see Lauwers 2015, 15–37.

91 Taglia 1998, 38: ‘Proprio la *pistis* dei sottoposti potrebbe rendere la *polis* concorde e dare quindi stabilità all’*arche* dei filosofi’ (translation above is my own).

92 Taglia 1998, 44, see §4.3.2 above.

Diotima has persuaded Socrates, Socrates hopes to persuade ‘the others’ including the other symposium guests, and on a different level, Plato presents the reader with the question whether they are persuaded.

There is even ambiguity in Plato’s later depiction of sophists, as the appearance of a ‘noble sophist’ in the dialogue *Sophist* makes clear. An ordinary sophist mistakes opinion for knowledge and only pretends (ἐσχημάτισται) to know, whereas the true art of sophistry includes a purification of the souls of others from the ‘empty conceit of wisdom.’<sup>93</sup> The distinction is interesting, as it shows the crucial element within this discourse of actually changing one’s audience on a deeper level.<sup>94</sup> Such a noble sophist is more in line with the philosopher. Plato deems such a one ‘a true likeness of the philosopher’, in line with the topos of image and likeness that runs across this dialogue.<sup>95</sup>

Persuasion in Plato is thus an ongoing process that lies at the very heart of Graeco-Roman philosophy and eventually reaches everyone who is willing to listen. In the words of David Sedley, ‘for the Hellenistic philosophers, as for Plato, philosophy was a supremely dialectical activity whose life blood was debate and confrontation.’ Plato had presented the dialogue and the dialectical method as the means to reach the ultimate good (see e.g. *Republic* 533b: ‘would you not call this journey dialectic?’). Ever since Plato, the dialectical approach to knowledge ensured persuasion’s place in the heart of philosophy.<sup>96</sup>

On the other hand, the precise boundary between persuasion in dialectic and persuasion in rhetoric, and hence between philosophy and sophism, remained a matter of debate for centuries (on the Stoic approach, see §5.3.6

93 Plato, *Sophist* 268a and 231b: ‘let us agree that the cross-questioning of empty conceit of wisdom (τὴν μάταιον δοξοσοφίαν), which has come to light in our present discussion, is nothing else than the true-born art of sophistry (ἢ γένοι γενναία σοφιστική).’

94 Cf. Dominick 2018, 207: ‘In other words, only the craft of the noble sophist involves a change on the part of the interlocutor.’

95 Cf. on this theme, Dominick 2018, 208–209.

96 While dialectic is the ultimate means to reach philosophical knowledge in Plato, in Aristotle it seems to become a somewhat more delineated syllogistic method (*technē*). In the *Topics*, he distinguishes dialectic from demonstration (*apodeixis*), which relies purely on certain premises which are trustworthy by themselves (1.1.100b19: δι’ αὐτῶν ἔχοντα τὴν πίστιν), whereas dialectic is dependent on ‘accepted opinions’ (1.1.100b18: ἐξ ἐνδόξων) of all people, most people, the wise, most wise people or the most renowned (1.1.100b21). Moreover, instead of the integrated function of dialectic in finding and teaching philosophical truths in Plato, according to Aristotle, the philosopher investigates and formulates doctrines on his own and only uses dialectic as a method of teaching. On this and other developments as regards dialectic between Plato and Aristotle, see Fink 2012, esp. ‘Chapter 12: Aristotle’s Gradual Turn from Dialectic’ (296–315) by Wolfgang Kullmann.



below).<sup>97</sup> The stereotypes of the philosopher and the sophist regarding persuasion and *pistis* lingered on from the classical to the Hellenistic and Roman age. The difference between true and false philosophy is famously articulated in one of the epistles ascribed to Plato, in which he addresses a friend's friend:

Plato to Aristodorus wishes well-doing. I hear that you now are and always have been one of Dion's most intimate companions, since of all who pursue philosophy you exhibit the most philosophic disposition (τὸ σοφώτατον ἦθος τῶν εἰς φιλοσοφίαν παρεχόμενον); for the steadfast and trustworthy and sound, that is what I say is true philosophy (τὸ γὰρ βέβαιον καὶ πιστὸν καὶ ὑγιές, τοῦτο ἐγὼ φημι εἶναι τὴν ἀληθινὴν φιλοσοφίαν), but as to all other forms of wisdom and cleverness which tend in other directions (τὰς δὲ ἄλλας τε καὶ εἰς ἄλλα τεινούσας σοφίας τε καὶ δεινότητος κομψότητας), I shall, I believe, be giving them their right names if I dub them 'parlor-tricks.' So farewell, and continue in the same disposition in which you are continuing now. ((Pseudo-)Plato, *Epistles* 10 (358c))

Whether or not this letter was actually written by Plato,<sup>98</sup> it remains a valuable source for the relevance of its contents—it is its readership in Hellenistic-imperial times that interests us here.<sup>99</sup> The remarkable exclusion of intellectual capabilities or love of learning from the short definition of true philosophy constitutes one of the reasons why its authenticity is disputed.<sup>100</sup> Yet, this absence perfectly illustrates that a mere mentioning of knowledge and reasoning did not suffice in the divided philosophical landscape of the Hellenistic era.<sup>101</sup> The abundant use of adjectives in this letter (βέβαιον καὶ πιστὸν καὶ ὑγιές) is telling for precisely this reason: it is the need for additional modifiers in philosophical treatises that shows that knowledge or *sophia* was not a

97 See for instance Plutarch's mentioning of Stoics who accuse the older Academics of sophistry: *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions* 1059A.

98 Cf. Irwin 1992, 78 for a highly sceptical position.

99 In the mid-second century AD, Albinus states that some persons begin their reading of Plato with the Epistles, which enhances the probability of its familiarity and availability in that period. See Albinus, *Prologos* 6, translation in Burges 1894, 318.

100 See e.g. Bury 1929, 597: 'What is here said of the nature of "true philosophy" has fairly close parallel in the Dialogues (e.d. cf. *Rep[ublic]* 409d, 499a ff.; *Theaet[etus]* 176c); but the blunt way in which "philosophy" is identified with purely moral qualities, with no reference to intellectual endowments, is foreign to Plato's manner. There need be no hesitation, therefore, in rejecting this letter also as a spurious composition.'

101 James Starr (2013, 540), who offers comparison of Paul and Plato as regards letter openings, argues for the letter's authenticity and imputes the focus on ethics to the occasional character of the letter.

self-evident notion in itself. It needs to be embedded in a certain, trustworthy, and sound disposition in order to qualify as such. ‘Faith that’ was not available distinct from ‘faith in’ a particular tradition, represented by its trustworthy founders, authorities, and teachers. This dogmatic development changed the early Platonic epistemological discourse in which *pistis* plays the lesser part into one in which a more relational type of *pistis* including sense of trust and persuasion gains ground (more on this development in the next subsection (§5.3.3)).

The object of this *pistis* is of particular importance in this discourse. In fourth-century Athens, Demosthenes held his oration against the sophist Lacritus. Although he claims to reproach no one for ‘wanting to be a sophist and paying silver to Isocrates’ (*Contra Lacritum* 40), he connects the bad trait of withholding money from people to the haughty attitude of sophism. Lacritus belongs to the kind of people ‘who trust in words’ (τῶ λόγῳ πιστεύοντας), and he came to the court of justice ‘not trusting in what is just’ (οὐ τῶ δικαίῳ πιστεύων).<sup>102</sup> The object of one’s trust should thus be ‘what is just’ and not (mere) ‘words’. It is the exterior, rhetorical cleverness and complacency of the sophist in contrast to actual, internal virtue, which characterizes the philosopher. The philosopher aims at a moral transformation, whereas the sophist only offers a shallow, cognitive, verbal variant.

This same characterization stills holds in the centuries which are the focus of this study.<sup>103</sup> The first-century orator Dio Chrysostom, for instance, ironically distances himself from sophists such as the famous Hippias and Polus and Gorgias, whom, he states, his public would greatly appreciate.<sup>104</sup> Instead, he described himself as

one who has no disciple (μαθητὴν δὲ οὐδένα ἔχοντος), who professes, I may almost say, no art or special knowledge (τέχνην δὲ ἢ ἐπιστήμην οὐδεμίαν) either of the nobler or of the meaner sort, no ability either as a prophet or a sophist (οὔτε μαντικὴν οὔτε σοφιστικὴν), nay, not even as an orator or as a flatterer, one who is not even a clever writer, who does not even have a craft deserving of praise or of interest (ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ῥητορικὴν τινα ἢ κολακευτικὴν δύναμιν), but who simply—wears his hair long! (Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.15)

<sup>102</sup> Demosthenes, *Against Lacritus* 40.

<sup>103</sup> Anderson (1996, 55–56, relying on Wisse 1994, 17) argues that the debate between rhetors and philosophers had died out around 40 AD. For a reply, cf. Krentz 2003, 285–286.

<sup>104</sup> For Dio’s usage of the discourse of sophistic rhetoric versus philosophical persuasion, cf. Krentz 2003, esp. 288–289.

Again, it is the sophist's reputation as show-off and flatterer that comes to the fore, along with their supposed learnedness and 'craft' or 'power' (*dynamis*). The presence of disciples is also noteworthy sophistic behaviour and usually connected to acquiring an income.<sup>105</sup> By contrast, Dio jokingly asks his audience to believe (*pisteuō*) his inexperience and ignorance, just as they would believe Socrates:

Now I am almost sure that you believe me (ἐπίσταμαι ὅτι πιστεύετε μοι) when I speak of my own inexperience and lack of knowledge (ὕπερ τῆς ἀπειρίας τε κἀνεπιστημοσύνης)—evidently on account of your knowledge and sagacity (διὰ τὴν αὐτῶν ἐπιστήμην καὶ φρόνησιν)—and it seems to me that you not only believe me on this point, but would have believed (πιστεύειν) Socrates also, when he continually and to all men advanced on his own behalf the same defence—that he knew nothing. (...) you must grant me your indulgence, bearing in mind that you are listening to a man who is a layman and who is fond of talking (ἀνδρὸς ἰδιώτου καὶ ἀδολέσχου). (Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.14, 16)

Socrates functions in this discourse as the ultimate non-sophist, since he did not pretend or claim to have knowledge. This is what made him credible or worthy of faith. Another word Dio uses here and elsewhere—and Paul as well (in 2 Cor 11.6)—to describe his own lack of learnedness is 'layman' or 'unskilled person' (ιδιώτης), in contrast to a professional rhetorician.<sup>106</sup> In another oration, Dio positively describes the antonym of a sophist as one who 'is speaking frankly, pure and without guile' (καθαρῶς καὶ ἀδόλως παρρησιαζόμενον), who 'does not pose for the sake of reputation or money' (μῆτε δόξης χάριν μῆτ' ἐπ' ἀργυρίῳ προσποιούμενον), and one who 'out of good will and concern for his fellow-men stands ready, if need be, to submit to ridicule and to the disorder and the uproar of the mob.'<sup>107</sup>

The indifference to public opinion for the sake of public virtue and well-being is a recurring theme in distinguishing sophists from true philosophers and teachers. Epictetus pictures an orator who is smugly bragging about the

105 Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 54.1: 'they made many speeches, their speeches were devoid of sense, even the slightest—the kind of speech from which, no doubt, it is possible to make money and to please simpletons (χρήματα πορίζειν καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἡλιθίους ἀρέσκειν)!' And cf. Justin's disdain for the peripatetic teacher who charged a fee wherefore Justin left him 'not reckoning him a philosopher at all' (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.3).

106 See also Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 42.3: ἰδιώτης ὢν διανοοῦμαι.

107 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 32.11.

amount of people that come to listen to him, eager to be praised, and asks sarcastically: 'If praise is some one of those things which the philosophers put in the category of the good (ἐν τῇ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ κατηγορίᾳ), what praise can I give you (τί σε ἔχω ἐπαινέσαι)?'<sup>108</sup> Thus, sophistic vain glory is set against a philosophical 'good'. Instead, a proper philosopher should act like a physician and tell people what is wrong with them, that they are 'ignorant of the good and the evil, and are wretched and miserable.'<sup>109</sup> Plutarch also maintains that sophists are concerned with their own well-being, as they are 'led on by repute and ambition' (ὕπὸ δόξης καὶ φιλοτιμίας) or 'on account of emoluments or political rivalries, to competition (ἀγωνίζεσθαι) in excess of what is best for them.'<sup>110</sup> According to the second-century Platonist Alcinous, the sophist 'prefers to seem than to be noble', and he adds that when it comes to subject-matter sophists are concerned with non-being, whereas philosophers direct their attention to what is always in the same state.<sup>111</sup>

The lack of virtue of sophists is mocked by Maximus of Tyre, who is anxious to avoid a particular conviction (*pistis*), namely that

men become convinced that (εἴ τις ἔσται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πίστις ὅτι) mere qualities of theoretical knowledge and a handful of doctrines can bring Virtue in with them when they enter the soul. If that were true, then sophists would be a truly valuable class of person, those garrulous polymaths stuffed with learning, trading in it, and selling to anyone who asks. (Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 27.8)

Even if he thus mocks sophists for their inability to achieve a moral transformation in their listeners, the antidote to sophistry is sought by Maximus not merely in the speakers themselves. The setting and the receiving end of persuasion is of equal importance. A philosopher may have an excellent and just case in a court of law; still the people may laugh at him. Instead of this sophistry, or even instead of genuine rhetoric in a juridical setting, we ought to have someone

108 Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.23.24. Henry Nguyen (2008, 100) states, commenting on this passage and others, that Epictetus identifies the contrast between outward appearance and inward transformation as an 'ubiquitous problem in his social world': 'This was also the case with philosophy, where the popular orators of the day were obsessed primarily with outward displays of oratory, rather than orations aimed at transforming their audience.'

109 Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.23.28.

110 Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well* 131A.

111 Alcinous, *Epitome doctrinae platonicae* 35.1, 189.13–18; translation Dillon 1993, 47.

speaking as if to his equals and attempting to persuade them by philosophical dialectic (οὐτωςὶ πείθων καὶ διαλεγόμενος), speaking words of insight to the insightful, words worthy of trust to the trustworthy (πιστὰ πιστοῖς), words of inspiration to the inspired. (Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 16.4)

Attempting to persuade a large audience in one's own defence had become something suspicious in itself. In the words of Sextus Empiricus, 'For even if the orator maintains what is just, they imagine that unjust things seem to them just, not because of the real nature of the things but because of the trickery of the orator.'<sup>112</sup> Rhetorical persuasion had become suspect by reputation alone. Hence, anyone in the business of persuasion had to participate in this discourse of legitimate versus sophistic rhetoric.

In the next section (§5.4), when we turn to Paul's language of *pistis* and persuasion, we will encounter similar concerns with the right type of persuasion. Faith should not depend on shallow sophistic cleverness (see esp. §5.4.2), should not be lightly imposed upon followers (see esp. §5.4.4), and should always be governed by love, that is, concern for the other's well-being (§5.4.3 and §5.4.5). Paul clearly goes great lengths to distance himself and his type of persuasion from sophistic vices and admonishes his communities to do the same. At the same time, he is very much in the business of persuading and spreading *pistis* in the sense of a strong and stable conviction. To better understand this aspect of *pistis*, it is helpful to look at those philosophical schools that advocated a similar strong and stable conviction. I will discuss consecutively the Epicureans on *pistis* (§5.3.4), Cicero and Seneca on *fidentia* (§5.3.5), and Stoic thought on the *pistis* of the sage (§5.3.6).

However, before I can discuss these specific usages of *pistis*, I first want to focus on the changing nature of philosophical discourses in the Hellenistic and early Roman period as discourses of particular schools, schools that had become learning communities to which people committed themselves: a dogmatic trend had set in. Within this context, *pistis* vocabulary gains even more relational overtones, since it was used to express both one's trust in philosophers and teachers and one's loyalty to a particular tradition.

---

112 Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 2.76–78.

### 5.3.3 *The 'Dogmatic Turn': Regaining and Reconfiguring Pistis in Hellenistic-Roman Schools*

The first critical reflections upon the nature, criteria, and limits of trustworthy knowledge date back to the dawn of Western ancient philosophy itself.<sup>113</sup> In questioning the worldview and presuppositions underlying the traditional narratives of Homer and Hesiod, Presocratics such as Heraclitus and Xenophanes laid the foundation of epistemology, a field that would prove to be one of the main apples of discord between the diverse philosophical traditions in the centuries to come. The stakes were high, for if knowledge turned out to be unattainable, then the endeavour of philosophy itself might prove impossible. In a sense, however, philosophy was also understood as an everlasting quest or thirst for knowledge, which would never be completed or quenched in a mortal existence.<sup>114</sup> In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the plurality of schools and the contradictions between teachers only increased the awareness of philosophy's epistemological predicament, leading on the one hand to a disavowal of the possibility of perceiving truth altogether, and to an emphasis on the accuracy, unity, and ancient roots of one's particular tradition, set against the others. While the sceptical Academy is the usual suspect when it comes to the first tendency, and some Stoics and Middle Platonists for the second, these two tendencies cannot be so easily disentangled.<sup>115</sup>

Illustrative of the influence of scepticism is the fact that philosophy's quest for true knowledge becomes an object of satire by the second century AD. Hermotimus, a fictive character in the eponymous dialogue by Lucian of Samosata, is the prototype of the soul searching for virtue and happiness, and he thinks his Stoic teacher may help him to eventually attain this. His interlocutor Lycinus argues that, in order to judge which school offers the best way to reach his goals, Hermotimus should familiarize himself with all of their teachings: an impossible endeavour, for that would take more than a lifetime.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, the choice for the best teacher requires the skill of judging—the 'one

113 On the origins of epistemology, see Hussey 1990; Gerson 2009, esp. 14–26.

114 Cf. Wright 2009, 133 (in chapter 6: 'Believing, Doubting and Knowing'): 'From the beginnings of philosophy, however, there was a tendency towards scepticism. In its non-technical sense this tendency leads to the conclusion that, despite the yearning to know, for human beings to achieve knowledge, and with it the understanding of the truths of things, is an impossible ideal.'

115 The sharp contrast between sceptics and dogmatists is an anachronistic representation introduced by Sextus Empiricus: cf. Opsomer 1998, 12.

116 Lucian, *Hermotimus* 64.

and only trustworthy and steady hope' (πιστή και βέβαιος ἐλπὶς)<sup>117</sup>—and this skill, in its turn, can only be taught by a good teacher. Yet, how is one to find this teacher? The references of another teacher would need confirmation by a third, leading to an infinite regress:

You see how far this must go; the thing is unending; its nature does not allow us to draw the line and put a stop to it; for you will observe that all the demonstrations that can possibly be thought of are themselves unfounded and open to dispute (ἀμφισβητούμενας ὄψει καὶ μηδὲν ἔχούσας βεβαιου); most of them struggle to establish their certainty by appealing to facts as questionable as themselves; and the rest produce certain truisms with which they compare, quite illegitimately, the most speculative theories, and then say they have demonstrated the latter: our eyes tell us there are altars to the Gods; therefore there must be Gods; that is the sort of thing. (Lucian, *Hermotimus* 70)

The utter impossibility of practising true philosophy is thus demonstrated by Lucian, by wittingly hoisting philosophy by its own petard: critical reflection.<sup>118</sup> Now, we are of course dealing with satire here, which cannot be taken to give a sufficient account of the popular status of philosophy in general. Nevertheless, in Arcesilaus's Second Academy and Carneades's Third, a shift in focus had taken place from the search for certain truth to the search for probable truth.<sup>119</sup> At the same time, the truth claim of philosophy is defended by means of an increasing dogmatism, accompanied by the discourse we just discussed of sharply distinguishing philosophy from everything that is quasi-philosophy, in other words, sophistry (see §5.3.2).<sup>120</sup>

117 See Lucian, *Hermotimus* 68: 'For the discovery of truth, your one and only sure or well-founded hope (μόνη σοι αὐτή πιστή και βέβαιος ἐλπὶς) is the possession of this power: you must be able to judge and sift truth from falsehood (τὸ κρίνειν δύνασθαι και χωρίζειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀληθῶν τὰ ψευδῆ).' Translations of Lucian's works are from Fowler & Fowler 1905.

118 Cf. his other treatises in which philosophy is mocked: *Vitarum auctio*, *Philopseudes*, and *Symposium*. On the way in which Lucian makes use of typical philosophical refutations, see Edwards 1993.

119 Cf. Kinneavy 1987, 40.

120 Cf. Opsomer 1998, 235: 'The opponents accuse each other of sophistry, insincerity, boasting (ἀλαζονεία), futile and foolish talk (φλυαρία, ληρός, ἀδολεσχία). These imputations can be found in Epictetus's and Galen's text alike, but also in Plutarch's polemical writings and in the texts reflecting the Hellenistic epistemological debate in general. Yet another characteristic is the controversy over philosophical predecessors. The Hellenistic epistemological debate is to a large extent a struggle about claims to philosophical ancestry.'

One important effort to bolster philosophy's defence was an appeal to continuity. Each of the main schools was busy writing and rewriting one's lineage in relation to the others, such that we may now speak of a 'genealogical approach to philosophical history'.<sup>121</sup> The Academy, for instance, claimed one continuous and pure lineage beginning with Plato.<sup>122</sup> It was the challenge of Middle Platonism, as the main Platonist movement in the period under our consideration has come to be named, to 'resolve dissension in the ranks of the Platonist tradition and reconcile the divergent interpretations that had occurred over time.'<sup>123</sup> Plutarch is an excellent example of such a search for unity: we already saw how Plutarch sought to reconcile the main divergent interpretations of Academic scepticism and a somewhat more dogmatizing Platonism (see §4.3.5).

The dogmatizing tendency in the Hellenistic schools, however, is not only evident in its focus on defending their pure lineage, and it was not limited to Middle Platonism. In his seminal study of mechanisms of conversion in classical to late antiquity, Arthur Darby Nock tentatively describes this trend as follows:

Further, this idea was not thought of as a matter of purely intellectual conviction. The philosopher commonly said not 'Follow my arguments one by one: check and control them to the best of your ability: truth should be dearer than Plato to you', but 'Look at this picture which I paint, and can you resist its attractions? Can you refuse a hearing to the legitimate rhetoric which I address to you in the name of virtue?' (...) The philosophy which addressed itself to the world at large was a dogmatic philosophy seeking to save souls. (Nock 1933, 181)

This dogmatic trend is already evident, according to Nock, in the many poorly substantiated 'calls to faith' by philosophers such as Epicurus and Epictetus.<sup>124</sup>

121 Boys-Stones 2019, 262.

122 See Opsomer 1998, 26, n. 65.

123 Ferrari & Reydams-Schils 2014, 41.

124 It is important to note here that Epictetus is aware of this shortcoming at least as far as his opponents are concerned: he ridicules sceptics who are their own worst enemy by calls such as 'Believe me, and it will be to your advantage, when I say: One ought not to believe a man at all (πιστεύσατε ἡμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς πιστεύει οὐδενί)!' (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.4–5). Moreover, Nock's only source for Epicurus's 'call to belief' is Epictetus as well, who portrays Epicurus thus further on in this same discourse (2.20.7). The only non-polemical passage to back this up is Nock's reference to *Discourses* 2.19.34: πιστεύσατέ μοι, καὶ ὄψεσθε.



Indeed, as I will discuss in more detail in the next subsection (§5.3.4), the invention of a strong conviction as an epistemological foundation could be accredited to Epicurus. Nock's judgement, however, is in need of additional qualification: the distinction between a pure intellectual pursuit of truth and a shallow persuasive attraction is not as evident as he would have it. Specifically, there is little evidence that Epicurus combined the emphasis on *pistis* as a firm mental disposition with the type of *pistis* described by Nock as 'an appeal to the heart, not to the head'.

Nevertheless, the main thesis of Nock—that across all philosophical schools a trend of dogmatism set in—remains convincing. An ancient source underpinning Nock's thesis is a dry remark by the second-century physician and philosopher Galen: 'One might sooner convert the followers of Moses and of Christ than the physicians and philosophers who cling fast to their schools (τοὺς ταῖς αἰρέσει προστετηκότας).'<sup>125</sup> Galen himself was in his time highly unusual in his insistence on profiting from philosophical education by Platonists, Stoics, Epicureans, and Peripatetics alike, without committing himself to any particular school.<sup>126</sup> More recent research confirms the dogmatic trend Nock detected. Loveday Alexander discusses three defining aspects of philosophical schools which resonate with early Judaism and Christianity: the founder-teacher, tradition, and the 'tradents' (the preachers/teachers).<sup>127</sup> George Boys-Stones devotes a monograph to the question as to why in the end it was not the sceptics, but the dogmatizing influences within Platonism that prevailed (followed by its success within Christianity): absolutely crucial, according to him, was the persistent idea that the dissention between schools *originated in* the other schools' deviation from Plato's teaching.<sup>128</sup> And Myrto Hatzimichali emphasizes that the study of classical texts gained importance in the first century BC; Plato's dialogues were functioning as authoritative 'scripture'.<sup>129</sup>

The dogmatic turn should, however, not be thought of as a complete abandonment of critical or innovative thought. David Sedley emphasizes the

125 Galen, *De differentiis pulsuum* 3.3. See on this text §4.2.1 *supra*.

126 See Trapp 2013, 51.

127 See Alexander 2001.

128 Boys-Stones 2001, esp. 132, 151. Cf. also Boys-Stones 2019, 262, on the schools' 'genealogical method'. Interestingly, Justin Martyr reverses cause and effect: dogmatizing tendencies (esp. fame of a teacher) lead to philosophical plurality. See Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.1–2.

129 Hatzimichali 2013. Cf. Benitez & Tarrant 2015, 222: 'In time, Plato's dialogues became scriptural texts, likewise admitting various interpretations. Platonism eventually became the backbone of pagan religious philosophy under the Roman Empire.'

importance of loyalty vis-à-vis a school's founder and tradition, not as a repetition of orthodox dogma, but as *raison d'être* and overall framework providing consistency yet ensuring continued debates.<sup>130</sup> Creative contributions were made, but they were 'framed as contributions to traditional beliefs (in line with one's respective *hairesis*) or combinations of the viewpoints of traditional authorities.'<sup>131</sup> And even Epicurean dogmatism, though it gave rise to satire in interphilosophical polemic, did not go without positive endorsement of creative applications and further explorations beyond the founder's ideas.<sup>132</sup> These deliberations demonstrate that in the big picture of philosophical movements there is also interplay between loyalties to one's tradition on the one hand and intellectual persuasion of truth within one's tradition on the other. 'Faith that' could be variously configured, within the limits of 'faith in'.

It is within this particular context of adherence to or being convinced by a particular philosophy that we find some of the most interesting usages of *pistis* vocabulary. Maximus of Tyre 'has faith' in the account of a divine creation given by poetic and philosophical authorities: 'This is the work of Zeus's nod. Up to this point I need no oracle, I believe Homer, I trust Plato (Ὁμήρω πείθομαι καὶ πιστεύω Πλάτωνι), and I pity Epicurus!<sup>133</sup> Here again (see §5.1 and §5.3.1), *peithō* (in the passive) and *pisteuō* vocabulary is used interchangeably to indicate the state of being convinced and, moreover, to express adherence to a particular teaching. Trust in credible and trustworthy authorities is here presented as respectable evidence.

A similar usage is found in Plutarch's works. In a philosophical letter of consolation to his wife after they lost a child, Plutarch warns about 'the statements of that other set who win many to their way of thinking (οἱ πείθουσι πολλούς)', referring to the Epicureans and their teaching that what is no more is neither evil nor painful. In reply to these competitors, he recalls their personal traditions:

I know that (οἶδα ὅτι) the teaching of our fathers and the mystic formulas of the Dionysiac rites (ὁ πάτριος λόγος καὶ τὰ μυστικὰ σύμβολα τῶν

130 Sedley 1989, 101.

131 Lauwers 2015, 27.

132 Epicureanism was famous for its orthodoxy: see Numenius apud Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 14.5: 'the Epicureans (...) were never seen on any point to have opposed the doctrines of Epicurus in any way' (translation Gifford 1903). Nevertheless, there were actual intellectual innovations among Epicureans: see Erler 2011.

133 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 41.2.

περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον ὀργιασμῶν)—the knowledge of which we who are participants share with each other—keep you from believing them (κωλύει σε πιστεύειν). (Plutarch, *Consolation to His Wife* 611D)

This usage of *pisteuō* here to denote the belief in philosophical teaching can be understood from the general interconnectedness of persuasion and philosophy. From the dogmatizing development already discussed, it is also evident that it coincides with an exclusive and competitive, rather than inclusive and supplementary, view of philosophical teachings. It shows that adherence to a philosophy could be challenged, particularly in troubled times, and that such a challenge can be properly described in terms of *pistis*. What is of particular interest, however, is that it is here used in a pagan philosophical context. This exclusive allegiance, expressed as ‘believing in’ or ‘being persuaded by’ philosophical truth, is not limited to Jewish or (early) Christian movements.

This argument is congruent with a passage from the dialogue *The Runaways*, written by Lucian in 165–166 AD, which reads as a satirical anti-Cynic polemic. In this dialogue, Philosophy herself comes to her father Zeus to complain about the Cynics abusing her name and even dressing and behaving as though they are philosophers:<sup>134</sup>

They very plausibly transform themselves in looks and apparel to counterfeit my very self, doing, I vow, the same sort of thing that Aesop says the jackass in Cyme did, who put on a lion skin and began to bray harshly, claiming to be a lion himself; and no doubt there were actually some who believed him (καὶ πού τινες καὶ ἦσαν ἴσως οἱ πιστεύοντες αὐτῷ)! What characterizes us is very easily attainable, as you know, and open to imitation—I mean what meets the eye. (Lucianus, *The Runaways* 13–14)

The cynics are thus compared by Philosophy to the ass that in this fable gave himself away when a fox heard him braying, the implication being that their posturing as philosophers is nothing more than that. Just like the ass-posturing-as-lion, the cynics-posturing-as-philosophers had some success: they had *pisteuontes*. Another translation has ‘adherents’ here, which seems a proper translation as it designates people eager to listen, be persuaded, and follow in the footsteps of these cynics (see on *pisteuontes* here as a designation §8.3.1 below).<sup>135</sup>

134 Lucian, *The Runaways* 3.

135 See Fowler & Fowler 1905, 100: ‘the beast, I doubt not, had his adherents.’

Similarly, what counts as philosophy, or who can be considered a true philosopher, could also be described as a matter of *pistis*. In an entirely different argument, Plutarch aims to show that Alexander the Great was in fact a philosopher. He argues that Pythagoras, Socrates, Arcesilaus, and Carneades are considered notable philosophers, even though they did not write their teachings down, a practice which is here considered a sophistic approach:

Even though they had leisure, they relinquished the writing of philosophy to sophists (τὸ γράφειν παρέσαν τοῖς σοφισταῖς). Whence, then, comes our belief that they were true philosophers (πόθεν οὖν ἐπιστεύθησαν ἐκεῖνοι φιλοσοφεῖν)? Surely from what they said, or from the manner of life which they led, or from the principles which they taught (ἀφ' ὧν εἶπον ἢ ἀφ' ὧν ἐβίωσαν ἢ ἀφ' ὧν ἐδίδαξαν). By these criteria let Alexander also be judged! For from his words, from his deeds, and from the instruction which he imparted, it will be seen that he was indeed a philosopher. (Plutarch, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* 328B)

Apart from the highly practical approach to philosophy offered here, which will be more fully addressed in my next chapter (§6.3.2), we see that the judgement concerning true philosophy is expressed using the passive aorist of *pisteuō*: 'Whence, then, were they believed to practise philosophy?' This judgement, according to Plutarch, was based on what they said and taught and how they lived. The *pistis* involved includes an informed impression of the philosopher's words and deeds, and it occupies a middle ground between cognitive, propositional belief and a more personal or relational loyalty. Philosophers who lived their philosophy were authorities that could indeed be believed in.

In the next subsections, I will trace these developments within separate philosophical traditions. Every school had its own answer to the dominant question whether and how true knowledge is attainable, formulated in technical terms as the search for a criterion of truth (κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας).<sup>136</sup> It is often within these discussions that *pistis* and cognates function to describe the stable mental attitude required for the possession of true knowledge. Since I have already spent some time discussing the Platonic usage of *pistis* (§4.3), in this chapter (§§5.3.4–6), I will now trace connections between more cognitive and more relational aspects of *pistis* in Epicurean and Stoic sources. As I shall

136 On the uses of the term in different periods and schools, see Striker 1996c, chapter 2: 'Κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας', 22–76. On the role of criteria in different schools see Tuominen 2007, 219–254.

argue in the final subsection (§5.3.6), it is in the Stoic school that the usage of *pistis* as high-end quality with both cognitive and more relational overtones is further developed by its integration in the ideal make-up of the sage.

#### 5.3.4 *Epicurean Confidence (Pistis): a Stable Mental Condition Based on Sensible Knowledge*

For the Epicureans, philosophy, knowing the ‘true nature of things’, was not an end in itself but a tool for gaining the right mental state, as is clearly formulated in Epicurus’s letter to Pythocles (whose authorship of this letter is debated):<sup>137</sup>

First of all, do not believe that there is any other goal to be achieved by the knowledge of meteorological and astronomical phenomena (...) than freedom from mental disturbance (*ἀταραξίαν*) and a stable conviction (*πίστιν βέβαιον*), just as with the rest. (Epicurus, *Letter to Pythocles*, apud Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.85)

Natural knowledge is thus concerned with offering the ultimate goal of tranquillity and confidence, which is probably the best rendition of *pistis* here.<sup>138</sup> As such, *pistis* is the opposite of uncertainty: it is an epistemological confidence that directly confronts the scepticism of the Hellenistic period.<sup>139</sup>

This knowledge (*γνώσις*) can only come from ‘the sensations (*τὰς αἰσθήσεις*), and the feelings (*τὰ πάθη*) as the most certain proof (*οὕτω γὰρ ἡ βεβαιοτάτη πίστις ἔσται*)’.<sup>140</sup> In this context, we see how the reified use of *pistis* as ‘proof’ or ‘guarantee’ is strongly related to its use as a conviction or belief, based on these proofs. Epicurus envisioned the acquisition of knowledge as a mental growth in which sensations and feelings offer proofs (*πίστεις*) that strengthen someone’s conviction (*πίστις*) so that it becomes stable (*βεβαία*).<sup>141</sup> More than

137 In Lucretius’s poetic pamphlet of Epicurean doctrine, we find several references to the liberating function of study: e.g. *On the Nature of Things* 3.1071–5, 5.43–54.

138 Cf. also Epicurus, *Fragment* 68, apud Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1089D: ‘for the “stable and settled condition of the flesh” (*τὸ εὐσταθὲς σαρκὸς κατάστημα*) and the “trustworthy expectation” of this condition (*τὸ περὶ ταύτης πιστὸν ἔλπισμα*) contain, they say, the highest and the most assured delight (*τὴν ἀκροτάτην καὶ βεβαιοτάτην χαρὰν*) for men who are able to reflect (*τοῖς ἐπιλογίζεσθαι δυναμένοις*).’

139 See §5.3.3. See also DeWitt 1954a, 304; 1954b, 128.

140 Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*, apud Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.63.

141 Cf. also Epicurus, *Principal Doctrines* 40, apud Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.154: ‘Those who were best able to provide themselves with the means of security against their neighbors, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee (*τὸ βεβαιοτάτον πίστωμα ἔχοντες*), passed

mere epistemological certainty, *pistis* represents a stable state of mind in Epicurean thought.

As Lloyd Gerson states in his introduction to ancient epistemology, ‘the factor that transforms a mere true belief into one that is psychologically effective is the firmness (*bebaiotēs*) and clarity (*enargeia*) with which it is held. When our conviction (*pistis*) is as firm as possible, we shall have knowledge.’<sup>142</sup> In other words, instead of representing two different epistemological categories, *pistis* can be strengthened so as to accommodate knowledge. This knowledge does not remain sterile, but positively affects the condition of the mind by making it both firm and effective.

A few centuries later, the thrust of this Epicurean reasoning is still detectable in Lucretius’s poem *On the Nature of Things*. It is again the faith in or credit of the senses, *fides* in Latin, that forms the foundation of all knowledge: ‘What, moreover, must be held to be of greater credit than the senses? (*quid maiore fide porro quam sensus haberi debet*)?’<sup>143</sup> Or, even more firmly worded: ‘unless our belief in sensation is first firmly established (*cui nisi prima fides fundata valebit*), there will be no principle of appeal in hidden matters, according to which we may establish anything by the reason (*confirmare animi quicquam ratione queamus*).’<sup>144</sup> The mind cannot confirm anything without this *fides*.

Lucretius can also use *fides* in the context of persuasion as ‘proof’,<sup>145</sup> or in the sense of belief in his words. He deems such belief unlikely if it is not confirmed either by the senses or by phenomena, as we learn from his professed difficulty in convincing people of the truth of the destruction of the universe:

Yet I do not forget how novel and strange it strikes the mind that destruction awaits the new idea, heavens and the earth, and how difficult it is for me to prove this by argument; as happens when you invite a hearing for something hitherto unfamiliar, which you cannot bring within the scope of vision nor put into the hands, whereby the highway of belief leads straight to the heart of man and the precincts of his intelligence (*via qua munita fidei proxima fert humanum in pectus templaque mentis*). Nevertheless I will speak out. My words will perhaps win credit by plain

---

the most agreeable life in each other’s society; and their enjoyment of the fullest intimacy was such that, if one of them died before his time, the survivors did not mourn his death as if it called for sympathy.’

142 Gerson 2009, 91–92.

143 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 4.481–482.

144 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 1.423–425; cf. 4.463: ‘the credit of our senses (*fidem* (...) *sensibus*)’.

145 E.g. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 2.479 and 2.523.

facts (*dictis dabit ipsa fidem res forsitan*), and within some short time you will see violent earthquakes arise and all things convulsed with shocks. (Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 5.97–106)

Lucretius here closely follows a saying by Empedocles: ‘It is not possible for us to set God before our eyes, or to lay hold of him with our hands, which is the broadest way of persuasion that leads into the heart of man (ἤϊπέρ τε μεγίστη πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀμαξίτὸς εἰς φρένα πίπτει).’<sup>146</sup> The Epicurean emphasis on gaining faith by sense perception thus forms an obstacle for verbal persuasion. If, as in the case of either God or the future of the universe, this ‘highway of belief’—an interesting and apparently familiar Empedoclean expression—towards man’s heart and mind is not available, a different kind of faith seems warranted.

This is indeed what seems to have happened over the centuries: Epicurus’s epistemological *pistis* quickly became reliance upon Epicurus’s words and teachings and ultimately faith in Epicurus. Epicurus himself claimed to be an original thinker or autodidact, yet saw no contradiction in professing his indebtedness to predecessors.<sup>147</sup> His teachings, however, soon became dogmatized, and his writings canonized.<sup>148</sup> His followers were accused of dogmatism and a lack of independent ideas.<sup>149</sup> In a section on ‘faith’ as a new virtue in Epicureanism, Norman DeWitt concludes that ‘faith is hardly less a novelty in the New Testament than in the philosophy of Epicurus.’<sup>150</sup> This is a perceptive remark, considering the importance of attaining a stable conviction in Epicurean philosophy. DeWitt also rightly stresses the connection in Epicureanism between cognitive confidence and personally trusting their leader and his teachings: ‘The new truth attains the status of a revelation and its author the status of a saviour. Thus faith in doctrine is conjoined with faith in the leader or guide.’<sup>151</sup> However, as far as I know, there is no textual evidence of a specific usage of *pistis/fides* of Epicureans vis-à-vis Epicurus, apart from the words

146 Empedocles, Diels & Kranz 1951, B133, translation Burnet 1892, 225.

147 Erler 2011.

148 Erler 2011, 22: ‘His authority was unchallenged, his teaching dogmatic in character, and his writings recognized as canonical. Consequently, textual exegesis assumed central importance within Epicureanism.’

149 Cf. esp. Seneca, *Epistles* 33.4: ‘With them [i.e. the Epicureans], on the other hand, whatever Hermarchus says, or Metrodorus, is ascribed to one source (*ad unum refertur*). In that brotherhood, everything that any man utters is spoken under the leadership and commanding authority of one alone (*unius ductu et auspiciis dicta sunt*).’

150 DeWitt 1954a, 305.

151 DeWitt 1954a, 304.

‘believe me’ the Stoic Epictetus put into their leader’s mouth.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, by stating that thus ‘Epicurus prepared the way for Christianity’, DeWitt seems to be overplaying his hand.<sup>153</sup> As we saw in the previous subsection, dogmatizing tendencies were widespread and not limited to Epicureanism. And with knowledge based on sense perception as its prime focus, Epicurean *pistis* at its core remains restricted to a particular, materialistic view of reality to which few ancient Jews or Christians would adhere. As we will see, the element of epistemic confidence is also present in the Stoic usage of *pistis*, and in this tradition it gains a more emotive and relational outlook.

To sum up, the Epicurean usage of *pistis* shows how it could bear a relatively high epistemological value and was viewed in a broader sense as a stable mental condition in particular Hellenistic discourses. *Pistis* could be used not only in relation to knowledge, but also possibly to express a relationship of loyalty to its teacher, even if it does not seem to occur as such in the scarce extant Epicurean writings.<sup>154</sup> In both aspects, it presented itself as an eligible term to early Christians with which they could express their own strong conviction and confidence in Christ. In this latter respect of trust and loyalty, however, the verbal usage of *pistis* vocabulary is by no means restricted to Epicureanism.<sup>155</sup>

### 5.3.5 *Cicero, Musonius Rufus, and Seneca on Confidence (Fidentia/Pistis): a Kind of Knowledge Opposing Fear and Superficial Opinion*

The Epicurean mental certainty, expressed in terms of *pistis* and *fides*, was proverbial, or at least well known to their philosophical adversaries. In Cicero’s *On*

152 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.7: ‘For what does he say? “Be not deceived, men, nor led astray, nor mistaken; there is no natural fellowship with one another among rational beings; believe me (πιστεύσατέ μοι). Those who say the contrary are deceiving you and leading you astray with false reasons.”’

153 DeWitt 1954a, 304. On the relationship between Paul and Epicureanism, see also his ‘sequel’ *St. Paul and Epicurus* (1954b), esp. 124–131 on faith: his thesis here is that Christianity appropriated the ‘fresh vitality’ (130) of Epicurean faith, yet joined it with not-at-all-Epicurean faith in miracles and divine providence. DeWitt’s approach is innovative, yet he seems to offer little textual proof to underpin his suggestive rhetoric. In general, there is no need to assume that Paul was addressing Epicureans exclusively and specifically (cf. at 27) or that he had enjoyed an Epicurean education himself (168). A more plausible hypothesis is that he participated in the popular philosophical language, *topoi*, and discourses of his time, occasionally joining anti-Epicurean polemic (in particular in his letters to the Corinthians: see my §8.4.5 *infra*).

154 I have searched Epicurus’s letters as recorded by Diogenes Laertius, the reconstructed works of Philodemus, and Lucretius’s poem for *pistis* and *fides* vocabulary, making use of the TLG and LLT databases.

155 The notion of *pistis/fides* as trust in a philosophical leader will be further addressed in the next chapter (§6.3.3).



*the Nature of the Gods*, the spokesperson for Epicureanism, Velleius, is introduced with caricatural features:

Hereupon Velleius began, in the confident manner (*fidenter sane*)—I need not say—that is customary with Epicureans, afraid of nothing so much as lest he should appear to have doubts about anything (*nihil tam verens quam ne dubitare aliqua de re videretur*). One would have supposed he had just come down from the assembly of the gods in the intermundane spaces of Epicurus! (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.18)

Cicero's satirical introduction demonstrates that this portrayal would resonate with the audience he intended, including the apparently familiar Epicurean claim to a doubtless 'confidence'.

If we turn to Cicero's own views, however, they are not all that dissimilar since he also describes the goal of philosophy in practical terms of confidence. In the third book of the *Tusculan Disputations*, the topic whether the wise man is susceptible to distress (*aegritudo*) is introduced (3.7). Distress is taken to be a form of disturbance of the soul, and in order to be cured, the character designated by 'M' implores, 'let us put ourselves in the hands of philosophy for treatment'.<sup>156</sup> What follows is a series of Stoic arguments that show that the wise man cannot be distressed (3.7–3.21). First, the wise man is said to be brave and therefore 'secure' or 'self-reliant' (*fidens*):

The brave man is also self-reliant (*Qui fortis est, idem est fidens*); for 'confident' is by a mistaken usage of speech used in a bad sense, though the word is derived from 'confidere', 'to have trust' (*ductum verbum a confidendo*), which implies praise. The self-reliant man, however (*qui autem est fidens*), is assuredly not excessively fearful; for there is a difference between confidence and timidity. (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 3.7)

The preference of Cicero to use *fidens* instead of *confidens* is thus, as he explains, due to the bad connotation of the latter, which can also be understood as 'audacious' or 'shameless'.<sup>157</sup>

156 On the meaning of 'M', cf. King 1927, 11, n. 2: 'M. may stand for Marcus, Cicero's own name, or for Magister.' Cf. on the task of philosophy, Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.80: 'Since philosophy depends on the deductions of reason (*cum philosophia ex rationum conlatione constat*), we must seek from her, if we would be good or happy, every help and assistance for living well and happily.'

157 King (1927, 241, n. 2) names the protagonist of Terrentius's *Phormio*, who is called a *homo confidens*.

Yet what is Cicero talking about when he speaks of *fidētia*? Since it is here translated as self-reliance, it seems to be something quite different from *fides*, a term that usually implies relational trust in something different from oneself. In book 4 of the same treatise, Cicero delves a little deeper into what this *fidētia* is—it is some sort of knowledge and an assurance of mind:

Hence it should be realized that disorder too lies entirely in opinion (*in opinione*). And if self-confidence, that is, a firm assurance of mind, is a kind of knowledge and firm opinion where assent is not rashly given (*Et si fidētia, id est firma animi confisio, scientia quaedam est et opinio gravis non temere adsentientis*), want of self-confidence is also fear of an expected and threatening evil; and if hope is expectation of good, fear must be expectation of evil. Just then as it is with fear, so with the remaining disorders; their element is evil. Therefore as consistency is the characteristic of knowledge, disorder is the characteristic of deception (*ut constantia scientiae, sic perturbatio erroris est*). (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.84)<sup>158</sup>

The definition of *fidētia* as ‘firm assurance of mind’, ‘knowledge’, and ‘firm opinion’ is in line with Cicero’s rhetorical definition of *fides* as ‘firmly established opinion’ (*firma opinio*). According to Cicero, the noble task of philosophy is to get rid of a less well-established type of opinion, based on which we take upon ourselves all kinds of mental disturbances. In this scheme, *fidētia* is the ideal mental condition, both on the ‘emotional’ level (in the non-Stoic, colloquial sense), as opposed to fearfulness, and on an epistemological level, as opposed to rashly accepted opinion. But, contrary to what we might expect from a Platonic outlook in which *pistis* is a subspecies of opinion (δόξα) and altogether different from knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), *fidētia* functions here in sharp contrast to *opinio* and on a par with *scientia*, just as *pistis* is in line with *gnōsis* in Epicurean thought.<sup>159</sup>

Whereas this idea of confidence in the face of mental disturbances resembles the Epicurean type of *pistis*, Cicero was no Epicurean: in the *Tusculan Disputations*, but also in the *De finibus* and in the *On the Nature of the Gods*,

158 I have translated *opinio* as ‘opinion’ to avoid confusion with *fides* vocabulary and *firma animi confisio* as ‘a firm assurance of mind’ in accordance with W. H. Main’s translation (1824), instead of ‘steadfast reliance of soul’ as the Loeb translation (King 1927) has it.

159 Philosophically, Cicero seems to be a little off when he calls *fidētia* a kind of knowledge, for according to Stobaeus (*Eclogues* 2.7.5b), *fidētia* is a consistency (*constantia*) and as such a movement and an activity of knowledge: see Graver 2009, 182.

this school does not get off scot-free. Cicero considered himself a Platonist, yet one that could easily shift between different branches of the Platonic tree, including the Stoicizing Platonism of his teacher Antiochus of Ascalon.<sup>160</sup> Yet, it is telling how widespread the close relationship between the vocabulary of *pistis* and cognitive confidence is, stretching across school boundaries.

Closer to the time of Paul is the performance of the Stoic Gaius Musonius Rufus, who taught in Rome under Nero.<sup>161</sup> His teachings have only been preserved fragmentarily, yet one occurrence of *pistis* vocabulary is particularly relevant, as it confirms that *fiducia* is the Latin equivalent of *pistis* in this context and that philosophy is meant to create a firm conviction (*pistis*):<sup>162</sup>

Now, since fearlessness and intrepidity and boldness are the product of courage, how else would a man acquire them than by having a firm conviction that death and hardships are not evils (πῶς δ' ἂν ἄλλως μᾶλλον ἀνθρώπῳ ὑπάρξειεν ἢ εἴ τις περὶ θανάτου καὶ πόνου λάβοι πίστιν ἰσχυράν ὡς οὐ κακοῖν ὄντοι ἀυτοῖν)? For these are the things, death and hardships, I repeat, which unbalance and frighten men when they believe that they are evils (ὅταν ὡς περὶ κακῶν πεπεισμένοι ὦσιν αὐτῶν); that they are not evils philosophy is the only teacher. (Musonius Rufus, *Discourses* 8.6)<sup>163</sup>

Just as we saw in the *Tusculan Disputations*, a firm conviction (πίστις ἰσχυρά) serves to counter the type of opinions that trigger fear and unbalance.

The importance of confidence (*fiducia*) to the Stoic ideal of unperturbability is even more evident from Seneca's works.<sup>164</sup> Seneca consciously plays with the etymological connection between *fiducia*, 'confidence', and *fides* in

160 This openness to different schools is one of the hallmarks of the New Academy: see Sedley 1989, 118–119, esp. n. 48 on Cicero. According to John Glucker (1988), Cicero made a clear shift in his affiliations towards the Old Academy under the influence of Antiochus, only to return to a more sceptical stance later in life.

161 For a more precise characterization of Musonius' philosophy, see Inwood 2017, who concludes (at 276): 'Musonius drew on Cynic, Platonic and Stoic resources, as well as many others; he is not a reliable representative of the Stoic school, though precisely in that guise he does offer a new form of "philosophy" that stands alongside the more clearly aligned representatives of the various schools.'

162 The other instance (Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 34) concerns the verb *pisteuō* in the sense of 'believe, regard as trustworthy': 'One man and one alone shall we consider rich (ἐνα δὲ καὶ μόνον πιστεύσομεν εἶναι πλούσιον), the man who has acquired the ability to want for nothing always and everywhere.'

163 Translation and Greek text: Lutz 1947, 62–63 (see Hense 1905, 35, r. 8–15).

164 On *fiducia* in Seneca and the contrast with the even more confident Cynics, cf. Fitzgerald 1986, 58.

the sense of 'trust'. He connects this confidence to the ability to look Fortune in the eye: the ultimate position is that of one who is 'full of confidence (*fiduciae plenus*)'.<sup>165</sup> This is not a boastful type of self-confidence, for the Stoic sage

knows that he does not belong to himself (*scit se suum non esse*), but he will perform all his duties as diligently and as circumspectly as a devout and holy man is wont to guard the property entrusted to his protection (*quam religiosus homo sanctusque solet tueri fidei commissa*). When, however, he is bidden to give them up, he will not quarrel with Fortune. (Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind* 11.2–3)

In other words, ideally, it is his confidence in the face of what may befall him that makes the sage the most trustworthy steward of his life, status, and possessions.<sup>166</sup> Sages are portrayed as being self-confident, in the sense of being devoid of dependence on specific circumstances, but selfless in their awareness that even one's own person is something that has been entrusted. Having a firm metal disposition is thus equal to exercising faithfulness in what is committed to your trust (*fides*).<sup>167</sup>

If this selfless nature of *fiducia* is not recognized, *fiducia* becomes false belief. And it is a task of a friend to unmask this misplaced act of trust (*credere*), this 'foolish belief' (*stulta fiducia*) in his fortune:<sup>168</sup>

Do you ask what you can bestow on a fortunate man? Teach him not to trust his felicity (*ne felicitati suae credat*), let him know that it must be sustained by hands that are many and faithful (*ut sciat illam multis et fidis manibus continendam*). Will you not have conferred enough upon him if you rob him of the foolish belief (*stultam fiduciam*) that his power will endure for ever? (Seneca, *On Benefits* 6.33.2)

165 Seneca, *Epistles* 71.34–35, citation 71.35. Cf. Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind* 11.1: 'The wise man does not need to walk timidly and cautiously; for so great is his confidence in himself (*tanta enim fiducia sui est*) that he does not hesitate to go against Fortune, and will never retreat before her.'

166 Cf. Seneca, *On Benefits* 4.34–5: 'It is the imprudent man who is confident that Fortune is plighted to himself (*Imprudens ista fiducia est fortunam sibi spondere*); the wise man envisages her in both of her aspects.'

167 On the legal code of *fidei commissum*, see §7.2.1.

168 Cf. *On Benefits* 7.26.5: 'the universal evil of trusting in everything that is most uncertain (*publicum malum incertissimis fidere*)'.

For Seneca, it is important to realize that fortune is passively received and, moreover, that it is sustained by ‘many faithful hands’, the hands of others. This implies that when it comes to *fiducia*, there is a relational type of trust involved (on which, see §7.3.6 below) as well as a stable cognitive state unshaken by the whims of Fortune.

Confidence is not only reserved for the scarcity of sagehood. Seneca also speaks of an earlier class of man making progress (*proficientium genus*). They possess ‘inexperienced confidence’:

These, if you ask me, are men who have already laid aside all passions and vices, who have learned what things are to be embraced; but their assurance is not yet tested (*illis adhuc inexperta fiducia est*). They have not yet put their good into practice, yet from now on they cannot slip back into the faults which they have escaped. They have already arrived at a point from which there is no slipping back, but they are not yet aware of the fact; as I remember writing in another letter, ‘They are ignorant of their knowledge.’ (Seneca, *Epistles* 75.9)

So even if the *fiducia* in question is not yet tested, it is a rather advanced state from which there is no turning back to previous errors. When it comes to his student Lucilius—whether or not he was an actual student is not relevant here—Seneca is as yet a little more careful:

At present I have hopes for you, but not yet confidence (*iam de te spem habeo, nondum fiduciam*). And I wish that you would adopt the same attitude towards yourself; there is no reason why you should put confidence in yourself too quickly and readily (*non est, quod tibi cito et facile credas*). (Seneca, *Epistles* 16.2)

It is good to note that the topic of confidence here is also expressed by means of the verb *credere*: it is a matter of believing in yourself, not in the modern but in the Stoic self-emptying sense, that is. It seems, however, that this confidence is easily misplaced, and, as we just saw, proficientes are often unaware of their own progress, as even sages are usually unknowingly wise.<sup>169</sup> Someone who appears to be busy persuading Lucilius that he is ‘good’ is rebutted by Seneca, saying that ‘if he knew what it meant to be “a good man,” he would not yet believe himself such (*nondum esse se crederet*)’.<sup>170</sup> As for Seneca himself, he

169 For the proficient, see Seneca, *Epistles* 75.9. As for sages, cf. Brouwer 2014, 79–89.

170 Seneca, *Epistles* 42.2.

portrays himself as a patient sharing a remedy with a fellow-patient rather than as a sage curing those still suffering from the disease.<sup>171</sup> To sum up, as important as confidence (*fiducia*) is for Seneca, it is considered ill advised to claim its attainment for others or for oneself: the proper consequence of this confidence is faithfulness rather than self-complacency.

Cicero and Seneca thus present a preliminary outline of what I will discuss in full in the next subsection (§5.3.6): that the quality of *fiducia* (or *pistis*, its Greek equivalent in this context) was a particular quality of the sage. It is on a par with knowledge, and as such it is indeed a personal quality. Yet as we have already seen regarding its inherent faithfulness, from this personal, cognitive element follows its relationality.<sup>172</sup> *Fidentia* or *pistis* in the meaning of the sage's self-confidence is not cut off from, but closely related to relational trustworthiness.

Naturally, there was another important philosophical player, one who was not too happy with this alleged confidence of its opponents: I refer in particular to the Platonic Academy, with Plutarch as an important, albeit already quite moderate, spokesperson, whose criticism of the *pistis* of his philosophical rivals I will return to in chapter 8 (§8.3.3).

### 5.3.6 *Arius Didymus and Epictetus on the Stable Persuasion (Pistis) of the Stoic Sage*

Just like the Epicureans, the Stoics had their own epistemological theory involving many technical concepts, which functioned as a foundation for their theology and ethics. I cannot discuss its details or the developments and differences between individual Stoics here, but it is useful to outline its basic tenets before looking at *pistis* language in particular.

According to the Stoa, 'cognition' (κατάληψις) can be distinguished from the higher category of 'knowledge' (ἐπιστήμη). Cognition occurs when one gives 'assent' (συγκατάθεσις) to a 'cognitive impression' (φαντασία καταληπτική). This model was famously illustrated by Zeno's image of a hand whose fingers are curled (representing assent) and becomes a fist that grabs (representing cognition) yet is also grabbed by the other hand (representing knowledge).<sup>173</sup> This

<sup>171</sup> Seneca, *Epistles* 27.1.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. also Bultmann 1968, 182 on *pistis* in the Stoa: 'Primarily, then, πίστις is an attitude of man to himself, not to others. He who is πιστός = "faithful to himself" can also be πιστός = "faithful" to others; he alone is capable of genuine friendship.'

<sup>173</sup> Cicero, *Academica* 2.145 (SVF 1.66). On cognitive impressions, also known as graspable / comprehensive / apprehensive / cataleptic presentations, see Striker 1996c, 51–57; Tuominen 2007, 233–237; Gerson 2009, 100–111.

way, they combined the domains of rhetoric (aiming at assent) and dialectic (aiming at cognition), domains that were seen as competitive routes to knowledge, at least in one model.<sup>174</sup> Next to the concept of preconceptions which the Stoics took over ‘virtually lock, stock, and barrel’ from the Epicureans,<sup>175</sup> the idea of ‘cognitive impressions’ came to be the Stoics’ famous criterion of truth.<sup>176</sup> These cognitive impressions were described as always arising ‘from what is’ and as ‘stamped and impressed exactly in accordance to what is.’<sup>177</sup> As such, they possess a ‘peculiarity’ or ‘distinctive quality’ that is lacking in other impressions.<sup>178</sup> Even though, according to the Stoics, knowledge proper is only available to the wise person, every rational creature could have cognitive impressions and attain cognition by assent. Without these, so the Stoics argued, action would not even be possible, as action requires certain commitments to what is real.<sup>179</sup>

With this approach, the Stoics occupy a middle ground between the Epicurean stance that all sense-impressions must be true and the other extreme of Academic scepticism. According to these competing schools, the Stoic epistemological theory was naturally not without its complications. As an answer to the problem of obviously erroneous sensory data, Stoics distinguished between true impressions and false impressions (like the oar that seems bent under water), the former of which included non-cognitive impressions and cognitive impressions. Already by the time of Carneades, however, this additional categorization fell prey to the Academic criticism that the ‘peculiarity’ of ‘cognitive impressions’ is of no use as a criterion without a proper means of distinguishing between cognitive and non-cognitive impressions.<sup>180</sup> In reply,

174 Cf. Atherton 1988, 424: ‘The Stoa put a stop to the long-running competition between rhetoric and dialectic—a competition Plato can be fairly said to have started—not by a few cosmetic improvements and not by eliminating rhetoric altogether, but by simply cancelling the fixture: rhetoric and dialectic become two aspects of the same hand, open palm and clenched fist.’

175 Schofield 1980, 293.

176 According to Sextus Empiricus (*Against the Mathematicians* 7.253–254), ‘the later Stoics added the clause “provided that it has no obstacle (ἔνστημα)”. For there are times when a cognitive impression occurs, yet is improbable (ἄπιστος) because of the external circumstances.’

177 *Inter alia* Diogenes Laertius *Lives* 7.50; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.248, 426.

178 Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.252 (ἰδιώμα); Cicero, *Academica* 2.84 (*nota*).

179 Tuominen 2007, 274.

180 Tuominen 2007, 235; cf. Cicero, *Academica* 2.84.

Carneades developed his own criterion known as the *pithanē phantasia*, a cognitive impression that possesses the appearance of truth and may thus serve as a basis for action without sacrificing their position regarding ‘withholding of assent’ or *epochē*.<sup>181</sup>

Yet it is important to realize that the Stoic idea behind this elaborate and technical theory was not so much to ward off Academic scepticism as it was to offer a feasible underpinning to their much more central idea of the sage, who both knows and acts in accordance with nature and the *logos*.<sup>182</sup> Becoming a sage involves not merely recognizing external peculiarities, but also an internal, cognitive process of recognizing ‘whether a given impression represents its object in a way that distinguishes the object from everything else.’<sup>183</sup> It is not so much in their technical epistemological vocabulary per se but in descriptions of this wise person, or of excellence in general, that the vocabulary of *pistis*, *pistos*, and *pisteuō* is given a prominent place.<sup>184</sup>

A predominantly cognitive description of such a sage whereby *pistis* vocabulary plays an important part is given by the Stoic mentor of Emperor Augustus,<sup>185</sup> Arius Didymus (as recorded by Stobaeus):

They say that the wise man (τὸν σοφόν) never assumes what is false (ψεῦδος δ’ ὑπολαμβάνειν) nor does he assent at all to what cannot be apprehended, since he neither forms an opinion nor is ignorant in any matter (ἀγνοεῖν μηδέεν). For ignorance is changeable and feeble assent (συγκατάθεσιν (...) ἀσθενή). But he assumes nothing in feeble fashion (ὑπολαμβάνειν ἀσθενῶς), but instead securely and firmly (ἀσφαλῶς καὶ

181 See Cicero, *Academica* 2.101. On the precise interpretation of this *pithanē phantasia* and an argument in favour of the ‘stronger’ interpretation that assenting to these impressions implies deeming them probably true, see Obdrzalek 2006.

182 Cf. Schofield’s observation (1980, 289): ‘Their principle aim in epistemology was not to justify reliance on apprehensive presentation in the face of sceptic polemic, but to show how from such an assuredly evident starting point the philosophical understanding of the sage could be built up. None the less, the very doctrine of apprehensive presentation was couched in language which seems to acknowledge the force of the sceptic challenge; and increasingly the Stoics found themselves obliged to defend the doctrine and to become immersed in debates about the justification of assent to the presentations of the senses.’

183 This is the argument made in Perin 2005.

184 Unfortunately, this Stoic usage of *pistis* does not seem to be receiving much attention among scholars in classics or ancient philosophy. I am grateful to René Brouwer for reading a first draft of this section and suggesting some more references and directions for further research.

185 Cf. e.g. Fortenbaugh 2002, 6.



βεβαίως). (...) Consistent with this, he does not mistrust (ἀπιστεῖν), since mistrust is an assumption of a falsehood (τὴν γὰρ ἀπιστίαν εἶναι ψεύδους ὑπόληψιν). But trust is civilized, since it is a strong apprehension, confirming what is assumed (τὴν δὲ πίστιν ἀστεῖον ὑπάρχειν, εἶναι γὰρ ὑπόληψιν ἰσχυράν, βεβαιούσαν τὸ ὑπολαμβανόμενον). Likewise knowledge (τὴν ἐπιστήμην) is an apprehension irreversible by reason (ὑπὸ λόγου). Because of this they say that the worthless man neither knows anything nor trusts in anything (μήτε ἐπίστασθαι τι τὸν φαῦλον μήτε πιστεύειν). (Arius Didymus, apud Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.7.11m)<sup>186</sup>

*Pistis* functions prominently in this 'profile' of the sage in both verbal and substantive forms. It plays an important role in securing mere assumptions: it is a strong apprehension (ὑπόληψις ἰσχυρά) and thus goes a step beyond an apprehension per se.<sup>187</sup> If we compare it to the Stoic epistemology as we just described, *pistis* functions in a manner similar to 'assent' (συγκατάθεσις) and, according to Didymus, it is as such even comparable to 'true knowledge' (ἐπιστήμη).

This is all the more remarkable since, as we saw, in Platonic epistemology, *pistis* has a certain clarity and reach but is ultimately a category that is confined to the worldly realm of sensibles (see §4.3). By contrast, 'trusting' (πιστεύω) functions in this Stoic account as part and parcel of 'knowing' (ἐπίσταμαι). Yet both activities can only manifest themselves in this world fully, so it would seem, in the extremely rare occurrence of a sage.<sup>188</sup> This, however,

186 See Wachsmuth & Hense 1884, 2.111:18–112:15. Translations of the work of Arius Didymus are taken over with where necessary small alterations from Pomeroy 1999.

187 Cf. Aristotle, *Topics* 125b35–126a2: 'neither is belief apprehension (οὐδ' ἡ πίστις ὑπόληψις); for it is possible to have the same apprehension even without believing in it (τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόληψιν καὶ μὴ πιστεύοντα ἔχειν), whereas this is impossible if belief is a species of apprehension (εἴπερ εἶδος ἡ πίστις ὑπολήψεως). (...) But if anyone asserts that the man who has an apprehension must necessarily also believe in it (ἐξ ἀνάγκης τὸν ὑπολαμβάνοντα καὶ πιστεύειν), then apprehension and belief will be used to cover the same ground, so that not even so could the one be the genus of the other, since the genus must cover a wider field of predication.' Instead, Aristotle holds, *pistis* is an intensification of apprehension (*Topics* 126b25): 'Similarly also the belief will be present in the apprehension (ἡ πίστις παρέσται τῇ ὑπολήψει), since it is the intensification of the apprehension (σφοδρότης ὑπολήψεώς ἐστιν); and so the apprehension will believe (ὥστε ἡ ὑπόληψις πιστεύσει).'

188 E.g. Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.19.25. Cf., on the sage according to Epictetus, Stephens 2007, 116: 'He does not erect this model of perfection as a ridiculously unrealistic, unrealizable ideal. Rather, he sets it up as a target which the perfectionist can concentrate on aiming at.' On the occurrence of sagehood according to the Stoics, cf. René Brouwer's conclusion (2014, 135) that 'the Stoics, Zeno included, were not self-declared sages.'

need not render them unattainable. The figure of the sage as personification of virtue is, as phrased by Lloyd P. Gerson, ‘not just a notional ideal that we all could theoretically attain to, but he is what we all are in the absence of our (perhaps irremovable) defects.’<sup>189</sup>

The Stoics knew an interrelated concept of ethics and epistemology, which explains why *pistis* functions parallel to other virtues as part of the rational disposition of the sage.<sup>190</sup> This is not a farfetched relationship if we follow the logic of Stoic doctrine. In Stoic terminology, virtues are considered a form of ‘knowledge’ (ἐπιστήμη or φρόνησις) and, alternatively, knowledge is said to be either ‘unerring apprehension’ (κατάληψις ἀσφαλής) or some kind of ‘habit’ (ἔξις), a stable disposition or character.<sup>191</sup> The second, more psychological or ethical definition seems to be the guarantee for the more epistemological first description, and in that sense a trustworthy disposition grounds a trustworthy judgement.<sup>192</sup>

As for the broader philosophical ‘fields’ of epistemology and ethics, the relationship seems to be one of symmetry. Epistemology in a broad sense is referred to as ‘logic’ by the Stoics, which was again divided in dialectic (including epistemology proper, but also more linguistic disciplines) and rhetoric.<sup>193</sup> In one of the Stoic descriptions of the threefold categorization of philosophy in logic, ethics, and physics, ethics is said to come after dialectics ‘for the mind must first be fortified’.<sup>194</sup> However, this seems to be a disputed topic, for other categorizations have a different order.<sup>195</sup> Moreover, in the wise person’s mind, these different ‘parts’ are integrated and boundaries dissolve. While the doctrine of the sage as such is an aspect of Stoic ethics,<sup>196</sup> the sages themselves

189 Gerson 2009, 110.

190 Here, the Stoics built on and further developed the Socratic idea of the unity of virtue and the definition of virtue as a form of knowledge. See, for a more subtle differentiation of Stoic positions (Zeno, Chrysippus, Ariston), Schofield 1984.

191 On virtue as a form of knowledge, cf. the catalogue and hierarchy of virtues alternately called ‘disposition’ (διαθέσις); ‘habit’ (ἔξις); and ‘knowledge’ (ἐπιστήμη) in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.92–93. Knowledge is defined as: ‘unerring apprehension or as a habit or state which in reception of presentations cannot be shaken by argument’ (7.47: ἡ κατάληψις ἀσφαλὴ ἢ ἔξιν ἐν φαντασιῶν προσδέξει ἀμετάπτωτον ὑπὸ λόγου).

192 Cf. Brouwer 2014, 32: ‘The relation between the two types of knowledge must be one of dependence: the secure grasp is possible on the basis of the enduring disposition.’

193 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.41–42. Cf. Atherton 1988, 397–398.

194 Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.23: Πρῶτον γὰρ δεῖν κατηγορηθῆναι τὸν νοῦν.

195 Cf. Annas 2007, 59. Keimpe Algra calls the sequence logic-ethics-physics a ‘didactic sequence’ (2003, 155, n. 6) yet the primacy he ascribes to physics in a more general sense is refuted by Annas.

196 On the traditional topics of Stoic ethics see Annas 2007, 60.

are not limited to the ethical part of philosophy, but ‘the wise man’s mind, to be sure, embraces the whole framework of philosophy’, as Seneca puts it.<sup>197</sup> Hence, from a structural perspective, Stoic epistemology is intertwined with ethics, without either one being prior to the other.

This ethical approach to knowledge (or cognitive approach to ethics) is also evident in Epictetus’s teaching, as is apparent from his citing of Zeno’s dense telos-formula, ‘To follow the gods is man’s end’ (τέλος ἐστὶ τὸ ἔπασθαι θεοῖς), before adding his own teaching that ‘the essence of good is the proper use of external impressions’.<sup>198</sup> In a similar context of imitating the divine and making proper use of sensibles, *pistis* is included as that for which man has come into being. A few good men, so Epictetus argues, remember humanity’s divine offspring, because of which we have reason and intelligence (ὁ λόγος δὲ καὶ ἡ γνώμη) in common with the gods. Therefore, these happy few believe that ‘by their birth they are called to faithfulness (πρὸς πίστιν οἴονται γεγονέναι), to self-respect (καὶ πρὸς αἰδῶ), and to unerring judgement in the use of external impressions (καὶ πρὸς ἀσφάλειαν τῆς χρήσεως τῶν φαντασιῶν)’.<sup>199</sup> Moral qualifications and epistemological inerrancy are set on equal footing as the ultimate divine qualities. *Pistis* seems to be more of an ethical quality here, like ‘self-respect’, yet is as such also connected to epistemological certainty.

The relationship between being trustworthy (*pistos*) and having unerring convictions becomes particularly evident in the following fragment from Epictetus’s teachings:

The ruling principle of the bad man is not to be trusted (οὐκ ἔστι πιστὸν τὸ τοῦ φαύλου ἡγεμονικόν); it is insecure (ἀβέβαιόν ἐστιν), incapable of judgement (ἄκριτον), a prey now to one external impression and now to another (ἄλλοθ’ ὑπ’ ἄλλης φαντασίας νικώμενον). Nay, do not make the same enquiry that most men do, asking whether two men are of the same parents, or were brought up together, or had the same school attendant, but this, and this only: Where do they put their interest—outside themselves, or in their moral choice (ποῦ τὸ συμφέρον αὐτοῖς τίθενται, πότερον ἐκτὸς ἢ ἐν προαιρέσει)? If outside, call them not friends, any more than you would call them trustworthy, secure, courageous, or free (μὴ εἴπης φίλους

197 Seneca, *Epistles* 89.2. Cf. on the interrelatedness of the Stoic parts of philosophy Annas 2007, 62–63. The article as a whole argues against viewing one part of Stoic philosophy as foundation for another (in particular physics as foundational for ethics).

198 Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.20.15; cf. Long 2002, 186, n. 6.

199 Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.3.4.

οὐ μᾶλλον ἢ πιστοὺς ἢ βεβαίους ἢ θαρραλέους ἢ ἐλευθέρους); nay, call them not even human beings, if you are wise. (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.22.25–27)

The ‘ruling faculty of the mind’ (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν) of the non-wise is here described by Epictetus as ‘not reliable’ (οὐκ πιστός) because of its lack of stability in dealing with sense impressions. They allow themselves to be affected and enslaved by externals, instead of withholding assent (an act of free, moral choice: προαίρεσις). Due to this cognitive defect, they are not *pistos*, incapable of true friendship or even true humanity. By contrast, the wise person is able to make secure judgements concerning external impressions and can therefore be trusted and befriended.

The Stoic solution to the epistemological challenge, then, seems to involve a shift in emphasis from external proofs to internal stability of mind, culminating in an attitude of *pistis*.<sup>200</sup> Within this discourse, *pistis* was particularly useful because of its inherent ambiguity, or rather multifariousness: it can be used in the meaning of both cognitive confidence and reliability in interhuman relations. As I shall elucidate below, Paul may have had similar reasons for preferring this term.

With this relational dimension, our discussion touches upon a related topic intertwined with the discourse of Stoic sagehood (and very much part of the semantic domain of *pistis* and persuasion in Paul’s letters): the topic of love. The above passage is interesting in this respect, for it concerns the connection between epistemological trustworthiness and love/friendship (*philia*), which is also the topic of Epictetus’s discourse from which this text was taken.<sup>201</sup> Love (φιλία, ἔρως, ἀγάπη) was a popular theme among the early Stoics, with treatises by Zeno, Ariston, Persaeus, Cleanthes, Sphaerus, and Chrysippus,<sup>202</sup> and it received a distinctly intellectual interpretation.<sup>203</sup> What is especially noteworthy for our concerns, and what will be confirmed by the passages we

200 This Stoic usage seems to have more in common with early Christian usage than Adolf Bonhöffer is willing to grant: in his *Epiktet und das Neue Testament* (1911), he records *pistis* under the heading of ‘Wörter, welche für das Wesen der jüdischen und besonders der christlichen Religion bezeichnend sind, und deren Fehlen bei Ep[iktet] deshalb den tieferen Unterschied der beiderseitigen Anschauungen offenbart’ (274), and explains: ‘πίστις und πιστεύω kommen hier natürlich nur im Sinne des Glaubens in Betracht, eines Begriffes, der dem stoischen Rationalismus gänzlich fremd ist’ (279).

201 Cf. hereafter in the same discourse (2.22.30): ‘For where else is friendship to be found than where there is trust (ὄπου πίστις), respect, a devotion to things honorable and to naught beside?’

202 See Schofield 1991, 28.

203 See Joosse 2011, 149–150.

will discuss in this section, is that the ethical-epistemological use of *pistis* as a firm and trustworthy conviction is closely connected to the Stoics' theory of love. In view of this connection, it is unsurprising that for the Stoics, true friendship is reserved for the wise who indeed possess this stability of the mind.<sup>204</sup>

According to Epictetus, the trust involved in friendship is based on sound epistemological judgement, but it is in turn also determinative for the exchange of intimate knowledge:

Nay, show yourself to me as a faithful, respectful, dependable man (ἀλλὰ δεῖξόν μοι σαυτὸν πιστόν, αἰδήμονα, βέβαιον, δεῖξον); show that your judgements are those of a friend (ὅτι δόγματα ἔχεις φιλικά), show that your vessel has no hole in it, and you shall see how I will not wait for you to entrust the knowledge of your affairs to me (πιστεύσης τὰ σαυτοῦ), but I will go of myself and ask you to hear about mine. For who does not wish to use a good vessel, who despises a friendly and faithful counsellor (σύμβουλον εὖνουν καὶ πιστόν)? (Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.13.15)

Here, to be trustworthy or faithful (πιστός) means that you can be entrusted (πιστεύω) with personal things. If you are faithful, this means that you are 'friendly', not as a superficial attitude, but in the sense of being eligible as a friend. This connection between *pistis* and love seems to have been a widely known Stoic teaching, for Epictetus also refers to the seemingly contradictory Stoic claim 'that the nature of man is gentle, and affectionate, and faithful' (ἤμερον εἶναι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὴν φύσιν καὶ φιλάλληλον καὶ πιστήν).<sup>205</sup> Nevertheless, while it is the nature of human beings to be faithful and loving, it is at the same time only the rare sage who actualizes this natural potential (see §6.3.4 below).

The idea that love is the privilege of the wise person is further developed in a text ascribed to Arius Didymus, as it is recorded by Stobaeus:

They [i.e. the Stoics] accept friendship only among the wise, since among them alone is there concord (ὁμόνοια) regarding the matters of life, as concord is a knowledge of common goods (τὴν δ' ὁμόνοιαν εἶναι κοινῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιστήμην). For true friendship, not that falsely so-named, cannot exist without trust and firmness (Φιλίαν γὰρ ἀληθινήν καὶ μὴ ψευδῶνυμον

204 Cf. on Stoic friendship Konstan 1997, 113–114.

205 Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.1.126.

ἀδύνατον χωρίς πίστεως καὶ βεβαιότητος ὑπάρχειν). In the case of the worthless, as they are unreliable and unstable and in possession of contradictory beliefs (ἀπίστοις καὶ ἀβεβαίοις οὖσι καὶ δόγματα πολεμικὰ κεκτημένοις), it is not friendship, but different ties and attachments held together externally by their needs and opinions. They also say that being affectionate, embracing, and loving (καὶ τὸ ἀγαπᾶν καὶ τὸ ἀσπάζεσθαι καὶ τὸ φιλεῖν) belong to the worthwhile alone. (Arius Didymus, apud Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.7.11M)<sup>206</sup>

In this passage, we read that whereas worthless people find an apparent unity only in external bonds, wise people have an internal concord (ὁμόνοια, literally 'like-mindedness'), explicated as 'knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of common goods'. This agreement on what is good in life cannot exist without harmony in their personal thoughts: it requires a stable conviction (*pistis*) as opposed to contradictory beliefs. Consequently, *pistis* functions here as a condition for friendship (*philia*) and loving (*agapaō*), two word stems whose interchangeable usage is apparent here.<sup>207</sup>

Whereas the prominence of *pistis* as a virtue of reliability and its connection to friendship is evident in Stoic thought, precursors can be found in Thales, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus. The pre-Socratic philosopher Thales seems to have connected friendship to *pistis*, to such an extent that the relationship trumps one's own epistemological judgement:

Thales is responsible also for this sage remark, that one should not believe enemies, even about things believable, and should believe friends even about things unbelievable (δεῖ τοῖς μὲν ἐχθροῖς καὶ περὶ τῶν πιστῶν ἀπιστεῖν, τοῖς δὲ φίλοις καὶ τὰ ἄπιστα πιστεύειν). (Plutarch, *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 160E)

Being trustworthy is just as essential for starting a friendship as it is for maintaining one. Xenophon's Critobulus asks, 'how could the ungrateful, the careless, the selfish, the faithless (ἄπιστοι), the incontinent, form friendships?'<sup>208</sup> Plato states, 'for everyone that is either faithless or foolish is friendless' (ἄφιλος γὰρ δὴ πᾶς ὁ τε ἄπιστος καὶ <ὁ> ἀμαθής).<sup>209</sup> Aristotle claims that 'there is no

206 See Wachsmuth & Hense 1884, 2.108:15–25 (SVF 3.630). Cf. Chrysippus apud Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.7.11b (SVF 3.625): 'And concord is a knowledge of common goods' (τὴν τε ὁμόνοιαν ἐπιστήμην εἶναι κοινῶν ἀγαθῶν).

207 On the alleged structural differences between *erōs*, *philia*, and *agapē*, see §4.4.4 *supra*.

208 Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.6.19.

209 Plato, *Laws* 730c.

stable friendship without confidence, and confidence only comes with time' (οὐκ ἔστι δ' ἄνευ πίστεως φιλία βέβαιος, ἡ δὲ πίστις οὐκ ἄνευ χρόνου).<sup>210</sup> An Epicurean aphorism reads 'we have use not so much for usefulness from our friends as for confidence in their usefulness (τῆς πίστεως τῆς περὶ τῆς χρείας)'.<sup>211</sup> These sayings, however, seem to belong to the more general semantic domain of social interactions, to which chapter 7 is dedicated. The specific interrelatedness of personal reliability and epistemic certainty, both expressed in terms of *pistis* and integrated in the person of the sage, appears to have been professed particularly within Stoic circles, where they emphasized the unity of virtue or 'perfection'.

Up until now, our discussion has concerned love among equals. To become wise, though, a different type of love is involved. As we have already seen, whilst dealing with the epistemological value of *pistis* in Plato (§4.3.2), the *philia* or, more commonly, the *erōs* of philosophers is attracted to the transcendent knowledge they know they do not yet possess. It is an asymmetrical type of love. A similar yet opposite asymmetrical love is expressed by a wise person towards a potentially wise pupil, according to Stoic teaching.<sup>212</sup> The aim of this love, however, is the transformation of the student. The idea is to transform the pupil into a virtuous sage, i.e. an actual friend with actual knowledge, as the following fragments point out:

Their [the early Stoics'] definition of love is an effort toward friendliness (Εἶναι δὲ τὸν ἔρωτα ἐπιβολὴν φιλοποιίας) due to visible beauty appear-

210 Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 7.2.40 (1237b13–14), also recorded in Cicero, *De inventione* 1.47: 'For as a place without a harbour cannot be safe for ships, so a mind without integrity cannot be relied on by friends (*sic animus sine fide stabilis amicis non potest esse*'); cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.3.8–9 (1156b28–29): 'you cannot admit him to friendship or really be friends, before each has shown the other that he is worthy of friendship and has won his confidence (*πιστευθῆ*).' Cf. also Aristotle's emphasis that friendship needs to be stable (*βέβαιος*): *Eudemian Ethics* 7.2.39 (1237b10–11) 'for friendship seems to be something stable'; *Eudemian Ethics* 7.5.3 (1239b16–17) 'an insecure friendship (οὐ βέβαιος φιλία) is not friendship at all'; *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.8.5 (1159b8): 'Bad men on the other hand have no constancy in friendship.'

211 Epicurus, *Vatican Saying* 34.

212 Cf. also Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 750D–E: 'Love (ἔρως), in fact, it is that attaches himself to a young and talented soul and through friendship brings it to a state of virtue (εἰς ἀρετὴν διὰ φιλίας τελευτᾷ) (...) The object of desire is, in fact, pleasure and enjoyment; while Love, if he loses the hope of inspiring friendship, has no wish to remain cultivating a deficient plant which has come to its prime, if the plant cannot yield the proper fruit of character to produce friendship and virtue.'

ing, its sole end being friendship, not bodily enjoyment (καὶ μὴ εἶναι συνουσίας, ἀλλὰ φιλίας). (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.130)

It [the erotic virtue] is the knowledge of the hunt for young men of natural ability (τὴν δ' ἐπιστήμην νέων θήρας εὐφύων), encouraging them toward the knowledge (ἐπὶ τὴν) which is in accord with virtue, and, overall, a knowledge of nobly loving. (Arius Didymus, apud Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.7.5b)<sup>213</sup>

Asymmetrical love (ἔρωσ) towards the less knowledgeable—albeit ‘apt’—person thus aims at developing a symmetrical friendship, literally at ‘making friends’ (φιλοποιέω), sharing in the same knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). Similarly, Seneca assures Lucilius that moral imitation is not a hierarchical one-way street: ‘I summon you, not merely that you may derive benefit, but that you may confer benefit; for we can assist each other greatly.’<sup>214</sup> I will discuss a similar type of asymmetry as regards *pistis* in the Pauline correspondence, with a similar tension between initial asymmetrical teacher-student relations and reciprocal equality (see esp. §5.4.4 below).

## 5.4 Faith as Transformative Persuasion in Paul’s Letters

### 5.4.1 *Peithō and Derivatives in Paul: Convincing People and Reaching a Christ-Centred Confidence*

As I stated in the introduction, there is an etymological connection between the roots *pist-* and *peith-*, a connection which, it was established, is also present in terms of ‘usage’ in the Hellenistic and early Roman period. The ranges of their meanings for a large part overlap: whereas *pistis* may indicate someone’s cognitive persuasion, *peithō* can refer to a relational attitude of trust and reliance. The verbs *πείθω* (LSJ (AI) ‘prevail upon, persuade’), its medium and passive variants (LSJ (BI) ‘to be prevailed on, won over, persuaded, listen to, obey’, and ΒΙΙ ‘believe, trust in’), its perfect tenses (LSJ (BIII/IV) ‘trust, rely on, believe’), its negative counterpart *ἀπειθέω* (LSJ (I) ‘to be disobedient, refuse compliance’), and the derived substantives *πεισμονή* (LSJ (1/2) ‘persuasion, confidence’), *πεποιθῆσις* (LSJ ‘trust, confidence, boldness’), and *ἀπειθεία* (LSJ ‘disobedience’) together occur 33 times in the undisputed Pauline corpus and

<sup>213</sup> See Wachsmuth & Hense 1884, 2.66: 6–8 (SVF 3.717).

<sup>214</sup> Seneca, *Epistles* 6.6. On the discourse of moral imitation, see the next chapter.



40 times in the Pauline literature as a whole. Before we turn towards specific passages in which *pistis* vocabulary is used in the context of persuasion and wisdom, it is helpful to have a preliminary idea of how this related word stem functions in Paul, and whether cognitive or relational overtones dominate.

The *peithō* vocabulary we find in the Pauline letters serves an array of purposes. It roughly differentiates two groups of people based on the object of their trust, obedience, or conviction: those who live in accordance with the truth, and those who do not (Gal 5.7–8: τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πείθεσθαι (...) ἢ πεισμονῇ; Rom 2.8: ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ). These are said to obey injustice, which shows how *peithō* can imply more than a cognitive conviction. In *Galatians*, the contrast is with ‘running well’ (Gal 5.7–8), which also confirms that the context is one of long-term relationships and ethics (see the metaphor of the athlete discussed in §6.3.2 and §6.4.1). Similarly, in *Romans* 10–11, it is Israel’s and the addressees’ disobedience or unpersuadability which is connected to the availability of divine mercy (Rom 10.21, 11.30, 31, 32).<sup>215</sup>

Perhaps the most striking convergence of *peith-* and *pist-* vocabulary is when the negative present active participle ἀπειθούτων is used as a designation of those in Judea who ‘refuse to obey’ (Rom 15.31)—a designation which comes very close to the *apistoi*-designations I will discuss in the final chapter and which, I will argue, always bears strong persuasive, relational, or moral connotations (see chapter 8). In fact, in the LSJ, ἀπειθέω is discussed as synonymous with ἀπιστέω, which also explains why many translations (NRSV, NIV, RSV, KJV) have ‘unbelievers’ or ‘them that do not believe’. Unfortunately, the relational or ethical overtones (disobedient, disloyal, unfaithful, or untrustworthy) completely disappear in this translation.

The contrasts phrased by means of *peith-* vocabulary are not only contrasts between truth and injustice, but also between those who put confidence in their own abilities (Phil 3.3: ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες) and those who ‘boast in Christ’ (Phil 3.3: καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). In general, self-confidence does not seem to be the best type of confidence: it is misguided to think that you can

215 Matthew Jensen (2019) proposes, based on a semantic domains approach not unlike my own, that *apeith-* terminology in the New Testament indicates a state of unpersuadability, not disobedience (see at 405–406 on Rom 11.30–32). I would agree with his statement that there is a considerable overlap in domain between *pist-* and *peith-* vocabulary (as stated at 398), and that a behavioural facet (disobedience) is not as frequent or dominant as most translations would have it. However, Jensen’s strict understanding of the meaning of *pist-* vocabulary, namely as indicating a form of volition to be distinguished from cognitive or behavioural senses (see at 400, 406), seems to impose an unnecessary and artificial straightjacket upon the language, while keeping its relational aspect out of view.

be a guide or light to others without teaching yourself (Rom 2.19). Moreover, in the context of a personal crisis or illness of which Paul speaks, he juxtaposes trusting in ourselves with what seems to be an existential trust in 'God who raises the dead' (2 Cor 1.9: *μὴ πεποιθότες ὦμεν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς*). This trust or reliance does not seem to be merely a strong type of knowledge, but rather an integrated cognitive-relational attitude of faith in and reliance upon God.

Even more frequently, the confidence in question is a specific confidence of Paul. He speaks of his confidence about either the right thoughts, behaviour, or response of his addressees (Gal 5.10: *ἐγὼ πέποιθα εἰς ὑμᾶς*; 2 Cor 1.15: *ταύτη τῇ πεποιθήσει*; 2 Cor 2.3: *πεποιθὼς ἐπὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς*; Phlm 1.21: *πεποιθὼς τῇ ὑπακοῇ σου*; Rom 15.14: *πέπεισμαι (...)* *περὶ ὑμῶν*). These phrases seem to add some rhetorical force to his message or, alternatively, to encourage his addressees. Furthermore, Paul is convinced that his presence in this life is for the good of his addressees (Phil 1.25). Alternatively, and somewhat less specifically, he expresses his confidence in the completion of the good work in his addressees at the end of time (Phil 1.6) and in the irrevocable presence of Christ's love (Rom 8.38).

A peculiar Pauline expression of Paul's own or his addressees' persuasions is that they are persuasions 'in the Lord' (*ἐν κυρίῳ* ('*Ἰησοῦ*)): Gal 5.10, Phil 1.14, Phil 2.24, and Rom 14.14). The contents of these particular convictions diverge from being confident to speak (Phil 1.14), to being confident about things being clean (Rom 14.14, see §5.4.5), and from the right conviction of his addressees (Gal 5.10), to Paul's coming to the Philippians (Phil 2.24). This prepositional phrase 'in the Lord' (*ἐν κυρίῳ*) seems to add even more force and authority to the persuasion in question, presenting it as a Christ-centred and Christ-formed type of knowledge. A more elaborate characterization of this Christ-like persuasion is given in *2 Corinthians*, where Paul addresses the issue of his own authority: 'Such is the confidence that we have through Christ towards God' (2 Cor 3.4 *πεποιθήσιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν*). As 'letters of Christ' (2 Cor 3.3), the Pauline communities are to reflect Christ and in a sense Paul as well as the minister who wrote the letter. It is the type of persuasion that reminds us most about the philosophical persuasion which is derived from the example of a great teacher or sage, with the actual teacher as the intermediary (see the next chapter on this imitation motive in Paul and in Hellenistic-Roman philosophy).

Paul's own preaching and his contested authority to do so recur several times as the background and context for *peithō* terminology. Paul summarizes his mission thus: 'we are convincing people' (2 Cor 5.11: *ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν*). Yet while he had in the same letter described his communities as his letters of recommendation, they are not the ultimate touchstone for the genuineness of

his role. Instead, it is the fear of the Lord and being open to him (2 Cor 5.11), the confidence of belonging to Christ (2 Cor 10.7), and convincing God (πειθῶ (...)  
τὸν θεόν) and pleasing God (Gal 1.10) which, Paul states, guide his persuasive activity among the communities. Again and again, he presents himself as the intermediary between God/Christ and his audience with a confidence that is only present insofar as it reflects Christ himself.

All in all, the *peithō* terminology in the Pauline letters reflects the same mixture of cognitive and relational overtones we will see as regards his *pistis* terminology and have seen already as regards the Graeco-Roman sources. Tending to the persuasive relationship is a necessary prerequisite for the transference of cognitive insights. Both are an essential part of the process of Paul's mission to convince and transform people.

The question that might be raised here is whether this emphasis on the divine sanctioning of Paul's persuasion means that his type of persuasion is of a different, unearthly kind altogether. Is Pauline persuasion and Pauline faith the opposite of human rhetoric and wisdom? In §5.2.3, I explored the thinking of some scholars who are convinced that this is the case. I now turn towards specific (in)famous Pauline passages that seem to suggest such an antithesis.

#### 5.4.2 *So That Your Pistis Might Rest Not on Human Wisdom (1 Cor 2.5): Faith versus Sophistic Persuasion*

There are several texts in the corpus Paulinum in which *pistis* vocabulary is used in the context of speech, proclamation, and persuasion. Some of these suggest an antithesis between faith and persuasion, so it is good to have a closer look at these texts first.

The main source which allegedly proves such an antithesis is *1 Corinthians*, in particular the first four chapters. In the beginning of the letter, the theme is already presented in terms of wisdom versus foolishness, proclamation, and faith:

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who are convinced (διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας). (*1 Corinthians* 1.21)

Taken at face value, the saving quality of the response of faith to a foolish proclamation may suggest that such a response is of an altogether different quality than a response to any type of worldly persuasion. Wisdom is designated as foolishness—is this not a rejection of all human thought and persuasion?

A little further, Paul elaborates on this theme:

My speech and my proclamation (ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου) were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power (οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις] ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως), so that your conviction might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God (ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾗ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ). (1 *Corinthians* 2.4–5)

As Edgar Krentz remarked, ‘the heaping up in this paragraph of terminology at home in Greek rhetoric is impressive.’<sup>216</sup> There are text-critical difficulties when it comes to the phrase here translated as ‘plausible words of wisdom’ (NRSV).<sup>217</sup> Yet, for the purpose of interpretation, the variety in textual transmission is not particularly problematic. It is clear that ‘persuasion/argument of wisdom’ or ‘persuasive words of wisdom’ is contrasted with ‘demonstration of spirit and power’ (probably a hendiadys).<sup>218</sup> Again, this suggests a general rejection of human or worldly persuasion.<sup>219</sup> In the correspondence with the *Corinthians*, similar contrasts appear to be used repeatedly. Paul’s adversaries

216 Krentz 2003, 280.

217 The three different readings (leaving aside some more minor variants) and their main textual witnesses are: 1) πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις: the original Sinaiticus + Vaticanus; 2) πειθοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις: the Alexandrinus + second corrector of the Sinaiticus; and 3) πειθοῖς σοφίας in a papyrus fragment from about AD 200, which is the oldest extant witness. The *lectio brevior*, ‘with persuasive (things) of wisdom’ (πειθοῖς σοφίας) is also the *lectio difficilior* (persuasive what?) and thus seems a plausible choice here: this wisdom was then later explained as ‘human’ in accordance with the ‘wisdom of humans’ in the ensuing clause. The sigma of πειθοῖς (a derivative of the in extant Greek literature unknown adjective πειθός, which is probably a variant of πιθανός and πιθός) belongs to the oldest available layer of transmission, as it is only missing in some minuscules (in which it may have fallen out by accident). However, since it is a construction parallel to ‘with a demonstration of the Spirit’ (ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος: singular dative + singular genitive) the sigma may have been already absent in the *Ausgangstext*, in which case we read the singular dative πειθοῖ of the rare substantive πειθῶ, ‘persuasion’, ‘persuasiveness’ (as also Nestle-Aland’s 28th edition deems likely, yet which is in the short form without Greek attestation, though may have been *Vorlage* to the Latin *persuasione sapientiae*: as a conjecture it was first proposed by Richard Bentley (in 1720), according to the *Amsterdam Database of New Testament Conjectural Emendation*). The change into the plural dative adjective πειθοῖς, ‘persuasive (things)’, then accounts for a later addition of λόγοις.

218 So e.g. Fitzmyer 2008, 173; Krentz 2003, 280.

219 It is, for instance, taken at face value (and drenched in theological reasoning) in Fitzmyer 2008, 173: ‘Thus Paul is rejecting explicitly the art of persuasion cultivated by the orators trained in Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition.’ Cf. at 174: ‘Because *pistis*, “faith,” is the human reaction to the proclamation of the gospel (1.21) or the “preached word” (Rom

are rebuked by the remark, 'I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power (οὐ τὸν λόγον τῶν πεφουσιωμένων ἀλλὰ τὴν δύναμιν), for the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power' (1 Cor 4.19). I could also point to Paul's self-description of being 'unskilled in speech (ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ) but not in knowledge (ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ γνώσει)' (2 Cor 6.11). So, it seems reasonable to interpret these contrasts as distinguishing merely human persuasive talk from powerful divine disclosure of knowledge, whereby Paul intends faith to belong to the latter category. But is this the best interpretation?

There is a passage at the beginning of 1 *Thessalonians* that has often been used to draw such a distinction between the human effort to rhetorically persuade people and the divine empowerment of such a message. Here (at 1 Thes 1.4–5), Paul distinguishes between 'merely in speech' (ἐν λόγῳ μόνον) and 'in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction' (καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ). In particular, the juxtaposition of 'speech' or 'reason' on the one hand and 'power', 'the Holy Spirit', and 'full conviction' on the other has led many commentators to argue that here the human component of speech is contrasted with the divine empowerment of this speech; some even downplay the relevance of the former in preaching or mission. Commentators thus infer, for example, that 'the effectiveness of the Gospel is not dependent upon human learning (= learned discourse)' or that to search for such human intelligibility is to search for worldly wisdom ('Weltweisheit').<sup>220</sup> In this specific text, however, it is not quite so clear that *logos* (speech/reason) and *dynamis* (power) are being contrasted by Paul, as they are in the Corinthian examples. They seem to be used in a climactic enumeration of persuasive tactics.<sup>221</sup> Moreover, if they are used antithetically, they may very well be contrasted to underline Paul's rhetoric as one that is to be distinguished from mere sophistry, in line with the argument later in this letter (1 Thes 2.3–13), as I will discuss below (§5.4.3).

The question remains, however, what the purpose of the Corinthian contrasts is. In his article on this specific verse, Timothy Lim argues that a sociological reading is a necessary complement to theological readings. More precisely, he discusses the letters to the Corinthians in light of the presence of

10.8), it clearly cannot rest on or be born of human wisdom and its achievements (see 1 Thes 1.5). (...) Hence "human wisdom" has nothing to do with it.'

220 Citations from Lineberry 1960, 33, and Schürmann 1962, 38, as quoted by Kemmler 1975, 152–153. Kemmler cites from many other commentaries to illustrate this tendency.

221 As it is argued in Dieter Kemmler's *Faith and Human Reason* (1975), who concludes that the verse presents not so much a contrast as a climax, by which 'Paul emphasizes the additional testimonies of the gospel as clear proofs of the Thessalonians' election' (166).

sophistic preachers in this polis, against whom Paul polemicizes. On this matter he is quite persuasive. However, when it comes to interpreting the verse in question, he states that:

Taken together as a phrase οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις explicitly means the setting aside of the art of persuasive speech. It is a phrase which rejects the discipline of what the Greeks called ῥητορικὴ. (Lim 1987, 146–147)

While Lim acknowledges Paul's usage of specifically rhetorical terms like 'demonstration' (ἀποδείξις) in this sentence, he claims that by adding 'Spirit' and 'power' this word has been emptied of its rhetorical meaning. This way, he creates another only slightly more sophisticated antithesis between divine Pauline faith and worldly Greek rhetoric.<sup>222</sup>

A similar conclusion is reached by Nijay Gupta in his monograph on Paul's language of faith. Gupta argues that

Paul purposefully used conventional rhetorical language here, but he was doing more, perhaps even alluding to a rhetoric term with a bit of irony. Paul may have tried to catch their ear with the word 'conviction' (*pistis*) but intended *pistis* to be understood in light of a more Jewish prophetic use of faith language. (Gupta 2020b, ch. 6, 'Strange Wisdom')

Gupta thus understands *pistis* here as 'a sort of grasping in the dark, a leap into the abyss', which amounts to the type fideistic (or more accurately, existentialist) understanding we criticized as anachronistic in the previous chapter.<sup>223</sup>

From the perspective of discourse analysis, a less anachronistic conclusion may present itself. In order to appreciate the complexity of the argument, we need to take into account the subtle irony interwoven in the entire letter.<sup>224</sup>

---

222 Cf. Lim 1987, 149: 'To this end, it [i.e. the article] has clarified Paul's attitude to rhetoric as one which is willing to employ human eloquence, this is intrinsically neutral, as long as it remains subservient message of the Gospel and the divine work of the Spirit.'

223 In this chapter, Gupta later speaks of this as 'blind faith', as a 'a kind of wager, the risk of faith', and states that 'it is utterly dependent on the revelation of the *deus absconditus*' which indeed suggests an interpretative angle based on the thought of 'proto-existentialist' Blaise Pascal.

224 For a case against such irony, see Mihaila 2009, 137–139. His main argument is that such irony is 'counterproductive' (at 138) for it would undermine Paul's theology of the cross, since he then would only veer weakness. Still, even an ironical use of his own weakness could help Paul's bigger purpose of confronting the Corinthians with the error of their

Paul is arguing against Corinthian opponents and attitudes that ridicule and patronize his persuasive performance. To counter these voices, he embraces the portrait painted of him by his adversaries and turns it against them by alluding to the classical contrast between philosopher and sophist. This is evident from the type of behaviour he ascribes to his antagonists, which perfectly fits the discourse between philosophy and sophistry which we described in §5.3.2 and which I will here compare with Paul's texts. Yet this need not imply the existence of two strict categories: Corinthian sophists who used rhetoric and Paul who rejects such secular techniques and embraces the role of philosopher.<sup>225</sup> As we saw, the categories of 'philosopher' and 'sophist' were fluid, and even those who would certainly score highly on a measuring rod of sophism present themselves as non-sophists. By participating in the discourse about good and bad behaviour of preachers, Paul shows himself to be 'at home' in this environment. And, as I will argue hereafter, by including *pistis* in this discourse, he shows how his message is meant to be life-changing and profound persuasion instead of mere superficial persuasion.

I will focus now on four anti-sophistic themes or characteristics that shed light on these passages that contain *pistis* vocabulary, and I want to start by briefly noting how these four characteristics are being used by Paul and adapted to the specific argument he makes in 1 and 2 *Corinthians*.<sup>226</sup> A first contrast often drawn in this anti-sophistic discourse is that between merely words (λόγος) and true righteousness, or between external cleverness and internal virtue. A second theme of the anti-sophistic discourse is the presence or absence of personal disciples to make some profit of the trait. Thirdly, the pretence of having special knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) was seen as a sophistic trait, which was countered by professing or at least ironically claiming a Socratic ignorance. Fourthly and finally, simply addressing large crowds became associated with sophism, as opposed to dialectic, persuasion used in a private setting to persuade only the trustworthy. I will now discuss these four characteristics

---

sophistic attitudes and showing the merit of actual life-changing faith effectuated by true persuasion.

225 That Paul would style himself a philosopher indeed seems to be a bridge too far for those endorsing an anti-sophistic reading: cf. Betz 1986, 36: 'Here Paul clearly takes the side of the philosopher over against the orator, but his concerns are still different from those of the philosopher'; Krentz 2003, 282: 'He uses the language to identify himself as a teacher of wisdom and his message as the true wisdom—though not claiming to be a philosopher.'

226 For the sake of brevity, I cannot give an exhaustive overview of all anti-sophistic material in the letters to the Corinthians, for which I can refer to excellent treatments by others whose work I have discussed above (§5.2.4).

one by one and demonstrate how Paul is making use of similar anti-sophistic polemic when addressing the Corinthians.

First, there is the antithesis of words versus virtuous action. As we just saw, Paul also claims that his performance consisted of more than words alone, there was also ‘power’ (δύναμις) involved. This may very well refer to the presence of God’s action, as it is also specified as ‘power of God’ (1 Cor 2.5: ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ). Yet, we may still ask what sort of power or potential this is, even if the divine origin is clear. A possible frame is that the *dynamis* in question is the capacity of the community to hold fast to Paul’s message so as to incorporate it into their lives, the type of power that turns persuasion into moral transformation and thereby bridges the gap between speaker and audience. The persuader then not only persuades but also encourages the audience to become his imitators in virtue (this is the theme of our next chapter).

Such a usage of *logos* and *dynamis* can be found in the interesting contemporary philosophical treatise *On Virtue*. This treatise, written in an archaizing Doric dialect, contains a mixture of Pythagorean, Platonic, and Peripatetic ethics and has been variously dated between the third century BC and the first AD.<sup>227</sup> The nature of virtue is here concisely described as consisting of three elements, corresponding to three parts of the soul:

For it is necessary that virtue possesses all three of these, reason and power and moral choice (λόγον καὶ δύναμιν καὶ προαίρεσιν): reason by which one judges and theorizes (ὃ κρίνει καὶ θεωρεῖ), power by which one holds on and prevails (ὃ ἀντέχει καὶ κρατεῖ), and moral choice by which one cares and loves (ὃ στέργει καὶ ἀγαπῇ).<sup>228</sup> (Pseudo-Metopus, *On Virtue* 117.2–5)

So, internal virtue requires more than *logos*, it requires ‘power’ (δύναμις), which enables it to last, and an additional volitional act that turns it into a loving attitude towards others. ‘Power’ may thus well be part of a discourse of internal,

<sup>227</sup> See, for a useful analysis of the main contents in relation to Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Plutarch, Pinnoy 1981. See, for the dating of the debate between Thesleff (earlier dating) and Burkert (later dating), in Von Fritz 1972: H. Thesleff, “On the Problem of the Doric Pseudo-Pythagorica: An alternative Theory of Date and Purpose” (59–87), and W. Burkert, “Zur geistesgeschichtlichen Einordnung einiger Pseudopythagorica” (25–57); and see the discussion at 88–102.

<sup>228</sup> Translation my own; Greek original: ἀνάγκα δ’ ἀρετὰν πᾶσαν τρία ταῦτα ἔχεν, λόγον καὶ δύναμιν καὶ προαίρεσιν· λόγον μὲν, ὃ κρίνει καὶ θεωρεῖ· δύναμιν δέ, ὃ ἀντέχει καὶ κρατεῖ· προαίρεσιν δέ, ὃ στέργει καὶ ἀγαπῇ.



moral transformation, also for Paul. Paul's defence and criticism of his antagonists is then construed by means of a contrast between external words and internal virtue, a characteristic of the anti-sophistic discourse.

This argument is also supported by Paul's encouragement at the end of *Romans*, that his addressees ought to be 'wise in view of what is good' (Rom 16.19: θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς σοφοὺς εἶναι εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν). Here, being wise is qualified ethically and pitted against the teachings of others, who 'by smooth talk and flattery deceive the hearts of the simple-minded' (Rom 16.18: διὰ τῆς χρηστολογίας καὶ εὐλογίας ἐξαπατῶσιν τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἀκάκων). The composites of *logos* vocabulary used to express the adversary's power to impress the masses is reminiscent of the sophists, who were said to 'trust in words' (τῷ λόγῳ πιστεύοντας) while 'not trusting in what is just' (οὐ τῷ δικαίῳ πιστεύων).<sup>229</sup> Paul's language is similarly differentiated: it matters not so much whether someone is 'wise' (*sophos*), whether one uses 'reasonable speech' (*logos*), or whether one has a 'persuasion' (*pistis*), but what the effects are: do they lead to 'what is good' (*to agathon*) by means of the 'transformative power' (*dynamis*) of God?

A second characteristic I identified is the sophistic trait of making a living by offering paid lectures and instructing students, which only added to the criticism that sophists were driven by love of being honoured (*φιλοτιμία*) and a love of money.<sup>230</sup> The idea was that sophists only tried to please their public, not actually teach them virtue, so that they would gain more students and income. As it happens, the idea of belonging to and honouring a specific teacher is precisely the problem Paul encounters in Corinth: 'What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each (διάκονοι δι' ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε, καὶ ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ κύριος ἔδωκεν)' (1 Cor 3.5, cf. 1 Cor 1.12). According to Paul, these public figures, teachers, and preachers are not to be used as banners to rally around. In response to what he views as boasting about a relationship with a specific teacher, Paul terms the role of those who teach 'servants', including himself in this category. As Paul summarizes at the end of the letter (1 Cor 15.11): 'whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have begun to be persuaded (οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε).' Those who persuade perform a subordinate role in the process of inducing *pistis*: they plant and water, while God provides the growth (1 Cor 3.6).

*Pistis* is thus more than being persuaded by a good speech and should in fact be independent of any specific teacher: it concentrates on holding fast to

229 Demosthenes, *Against Lacritus* 40, see §5.3.2 above.

230 On the debate over if and how a philosopher may earn a living, see the overview offered in Hock 1980, 52–59, and see 59–65 for Paul's position in this debate.

and acting on the message in the long-term, or else it is 'in vain' (1 Cor 15.1–2). In other words, not only does Paul criticize certain sophistic tendencies, his self-presentation is such that he forestalls potential criticism on his own performance. Or perhaps, in light of his defence of his right to 'reap material benefits' (1 Cor 9.11), he was already being accused of such sophistic tactics. Alternatively (or additionally), the Corinthians may have been so accustomed to this practice that they considered it a sign of Paul's rhetorical inability to refuse payment, as Paul's ironical question whether not accepting a charge is a sin suggests (2 Cor 11.7).<sup>231</sup> In *2 Corinthians*, he polemicizes against others who are 'peddlers' (καπηλεύοντες) of God's word (2 Cor 2.17), a term by which sophists who made a profit out of their words were also labelled.<sup>232</sup>

This problem Paul addresses of boasting about teachers is also connected to the third, wider theme addressed in *1 Corinthians*: namely, that of boasting about knowledge and arrogance related to wisdom. It was precisely human wisdom, as opposed to foolishness (μωρία), which was at stake in the passages with which I started this subsection and which was said to be an undesirable ground for faith. The Corinthians are repeatedly said to have become 'puffed up' or 'arrogant' (4.6, 4.18, 4.19, 5.2, 8.1), which is caused either by their knowledge (1 Cor 5.2), or by lack of morals (1 Cor 8.1). Epictetus, too, calls an orator who seeks praise from his audience 'puffed up': 'if he is praised, he goes off the stage all puffed up (φουσηθείς ἐξήλθεν); but if he is laughed to scorn, that poor windbag of his conceit (τὸ φουσημάτιον ἐκεῖνο) is pricked and flattens out.'<sup>233</sup> Paul, on the other hand, is eager to present himself and his message as foolish, perhaps in the same ironical fashion as we saw with Dio Chrysostom, but at the very least in order to set up a contrast which fits the contemporary discourse of sophistic wisdom versus true wisdom. By calling himself 'untrained' (ιδιώτης) with respect to 'reason'/'speech' (λόγος) but not as regards 'knowledge' (γνώσις) (2 Cor 11.6), he employs the same ironical anti-sophistic language we saw in Dio's orations. The Corinthians end up at the sophistic side of the divide: 'We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ (φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ). We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute' (1 Cor 4.10). So, Paul seems to ask, who is the sophist here? 'If you think that you are wise in this age', he argues more explicitly, 'you should become fools so that you may become wise' (1 Cor 3.18: μωρὸς γενέσθω, ἵνα γένηται σοφός). The Corinthians 'wisdom' must be read ironically as between quotation marks,

231 So Lim 1987, 144, following Barrett 1973, 281–282.

232 See for some references Lim 1987, 142–143.

233 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.16.10.

similar to Lucian's use of the term when he personified Philosophy to describe the sophists: 'so there flared up among them that useless and superfluous "wisdom" of theirs (ἡ ἀχρεῖος ἐκείνη καὶ περιττὴ σοφία), in their own opinion invincible.'<sup>234</sup>

In 1 *Corinthians*, human wisdom stands in opposition to God's wisdom: a type of 'hidden' wisdom which Paul does acknowledge to speak, but only to 'the mature' (1 Cor 2.6–7), to those who have the 'mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2.16: νοῦς Χριστοῦ), who are 'spirit-like' and who might understand 'spirit-things' taught by (the) Spirit (1 Cor 2.13: ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες), as opposed to those who are still 'flesh-like'. Paul even introduces this passage as concerning the proclamation of the 'mystery of God' (1 Cor 2.1).<sup>235</sup> This brings us to the fourth characteristic: the art of persuading large crowds in itself became a marker of sophism. Maximus of Tyre advised that one should speak 'as if to his equals and attempting to persuade them by philosophical dialectic (οὕτωςι πείθων καὶ διαλεγόμενος), speaking words of insight to the insightful, words worthy of trust to the trustworthy (πιστὰ πιστοῖς), words of inspiration to the inspired.'<sup>236</sup> Even though such usage of 'spirit' (πνεῦμα) and 'flesh' (σάρξ)—words that are best left untranslated in order to avoid an overly theological reading—is not found as such in the pagan discourse now under consideration, the idea that true wisdom can only be shared among the insiders, the faithful, the likeminded, is evidently present in Paul as well.

The combination of these four characteristics makes it credible to argue that Paul participated in the widespread anti-sophistic discourse of his time. If we read the passages we started off with in this light, they no longer testify to an absolutist contrast between simple faith and well-trained persuasion, or between divinely empowered proclamation and human wisdom. Instead, Paul is shown to be concerned that the faith of his addressees grows into real faithfulness and virtue. He is afraid that it may be endangered by those he sees as honour-driven flatterers, in other words, sophists (whether they would indeed consider themselves to be sophists is not the issue here). Moreover, he feels the need to counter the accusation that seems to have been directed at him of being sophist-like by showing that the measure used (i.e. impressive persuasive performance) is sophistic in itself. Therefore he embraces, with a

<sup>234</sup> Lucian, *The Runaways* 10. Cf., for a similar ironical reference to the 'wisdom' of the sophists, Plato, *Republic* 493a, quoted below in §8.4.2.

<sup>235</sup> The textual witnesses are divided between 'witness' (μαρτύριον) and 'mystery' (μυστήριον) without a clear 'winner' based on their relative weight in extant manuscripts.

<sup>236</sup> Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 16.4.

certain irony, the reputation of proclaiming like a fool and turns it into his advantage. He furthermore offers a defence of other characteristics he seems to be accused of, such as the right to material sustenance by his followers.

Our conclusion, then, is that the main issue in these passages is not that faith is foolish according to all human standards, but that *pistis* encompasses something more transformative than being enchanted by a superficial rhetorical masterpiece.

The question yet to be answered is how we ought to understand Paul's use of *pistis* in 1 *Corinthians* 2.5. Bruce Winter suggested that this passage is one of the very few in which we should understand *pistis* as 'proof' or 'that which persuades' in the Aristotelean sense: our 'proof' should be based on divine power and the Spirit.<sup>237</sup> The use of technical rhetorical terms such as 'demonstration' (ἀποδείξις) weighs in in favour of such a reading. However, in 1 *Corinthians* 2.5, 'your *pistis*' is used analogically with 'my speech and message', so it is logical to suppose that *pistis* here involves the audience's response to Paul's persuasive activities. Moreover, the contrast I discussed between showing off external eloquence and teaching internal virtue—an important part of the sophist-philosopher discourse—puts *pistis* in a different light: it belongs to the language of moral transformation, of implementing a message in one's life. It is the type of conviction that is not unlike that of the Stoic sage, who has reached an internal stability of mind and is therefore completely good and trustworthy.<sup>238</sup>

The response of *pistis* envisioned by Paul is, unlike the response triggered by sophists, a deep internal persuasion, one that, by the involvement of God's power and Spirit, fosters virtue inside those persuaded. The apostle wants his followers to be not merely impressed by his words, but ethically transformed by the message of the cross.<sup>239</sup> Persuasion that effectuates this type of faithfulness is considered by Paul to be proper persuasion; it is persuasion that leads to 'moral imitation', as I will argue in the next chapter. In the following subsection (§5.4.3), the 'energizing' or 'actualizing' quality of *pistis* will be discussed, which will confirm the conclusion I have reached here: Pauline *pistis* is characterized by its transformative power.

237 See Winter 1997, 160 and Winter 2003, 339.

238 Cf. on this comparison also Engberg-Pedersen 2000, 72: 'The wise man is completely convinced (he is said to *pisteuein*) by his grasp of the good and he remains steadfast in it (...) even in cases where weaker people might be tempted to loosen it. Conviction (*pistis*) and steadfastness are of course central concerns of Paul's too.'

239 The next chapter will deal in greater detail with the 'ethical' discourse related to *pistis*.

#### 5.4.3 *Active in the Pisteuontes (1 Thes 2.13), Pistis at Work through Love (Gal 5.6): the Actualizing Quality (Energeia) of Faith*

The combination of *pistis* and *energeia* (from ἐν and ἔργον: ‘working’, ‘effectiveness’, ‘actualization’) in the letters of Paul, has been brought to our attention by a present-day philosopher who has taken an interest in the apostle. In *The Time that Remains*, Giorgio Agamben explains how he understands the inter-relationship of these terms:

Immediately following the greeting of the *Letter to the Romans*, Paul defines the essential relation between *euangēlion* and *pistis* in the following terms: ‘the announcement is power [*dynamis*] for the salvation of he who believes [*panti to pisteuonti*]’ (Rom 1.16). This definition seems to imply that inasmuch as the announcement entails *dynamis*, potentiality (*dynamis* signifies power as much as it does possibility) it needs the complement of faith (‘whoever believes’) for it to be effectual. Paul is perfectly aware of the typical Greek opposition—which pertains both to categories of language and thought—between potentiality (*dynamis*) and act (*energeia*). He even refers to it several times (Eph 3.7: ‘according to the *energeia* of his *dynamis*’; and Phil 3.21: ‘according to the *energeia* of *dynasthai*’). (...) But for Paul, this principle is not external to the announcement; rather, it is precisely that within it which makes potentiality active [*ne mette in atto la potenza*] (Gal 3.4: ‘that which makes potentiality operative [*energōn dynameis*] among you, comes from the hearing of faith [*euangelizetai tēn pistin*]’), (...) Faith is the announcement’s being in act, its *energeia*. (Agamben 2005, 90)<sup>240</sup>

Thus, according to Agamben, *pistis* is that which makes the good news or announcement active from within. His analysis of *euangēlion* as *dynamis* and *pistis* as *energeia* may seem somewhat speculative. Naturally, his results arise from a different approach to the text, yet they can nevertheless be of heuristic use to New Testament scholarship. In this case it is highly interesting to see whether his results concur with semantic insights based on an analysis of contemporary Greek discourse and whether his conclusions apply to all of Paul’s language of ‘faith’ in contexts of ‘actualization’.

240 I have not corrected the final citation in this quote, which is supposedly from *Galatians* 3.4 but more akin to *Galatians* 3.5, yet without containing the words *euangelizetai tēn pistin*, which appear to be taken from *Galatians* 1.23). Instead, *Galatians* 3.5 reads (without any notable textual variants): ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; For a more viable translation than Agamben’s, see below in this subsection.

A quick look at the occurrence of *energeia* vocabulary (derived from the stem ἐνεργ-) per author by means of a TLG search shows that both nominal and verbal forms were used predominantly in philosophical sources. Aristotle and the corpus Aristotelicum have the highest count with more than 750 uses, up until the second-century physician-philosopher Galen (counting more than 2500 occurrences). Aristotle is followed by the Stoic Chrysippus (ca. 150 occurrences), a high number when taking into account that of Chrysippus's many works only fragments survived. It was probably not the most ordinary of word stems, then, in Paul's days, and it is the type of vocabulary that was particularly at home in philosophical discourses. The question remains, however, whether the somewhat technical Aristotelean contrast between potency and act was evoked in Paul's letters.

Fortunately, there is a specific usage of *energeia* by Aristotle that places it in a more general semantic frame of persuasion. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle states that for words and sayings to have an impact on an audience (ποιεῖ πάσχειν), they ought to contain metaphor (μεταφορᾶς), antithesis (ἀντιθέσεως)—that is, they must be put before the eyes (πρὸ ὀμμάτων ποιεῖ)—and actuality (ἐνεργείας), 'for we ought to see what is being done rather than what is going to be done' (ὄρᾶν γὰρ δεῖ τὰ πραττόμενα μᾶλλον ἢ μέλλοντα).<sup>241</sup> *Energeia*, hence, has got everything to do with watching things happen in the present. It is used 'to deepen this argument that vivid language possesses a principle of life capable of transforming human action. (...) When a speaker expresses an idea with *energeia*, a listener or reader will not merely comprehend but also begin to act on that idea.'<sup>242</sup>

In rhetorical and philosophical contexts, *energeia* seems to have been understood not unlike the almost identical though etymologically unrelated *enargeia* (from ἐν and ἀργός: 'bright'). Aristotle may in fact have had this word-play in mind in his *Rhetoric*. In rhetorical theory, *enargeia*, 'vividness' referred to the re-enactment of a story to help vividly present a scenario the audience had not witnessed itself. In a section specifically dealing with the meaning and purpose of *enargeia*, Quintilian explains this quality of speech as that which goes beyond the ears and vividly represents the message to the audience's mind's eye.<sup>243</sup> *Energeia* also functioned in broader philosophical contexts,

241 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.10.6 (1410b).

242 Allen 2011, 60.

243 Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 8.3.62: 'It is a great virtue to express our subject clearly and in such a way that it seems to be actually seen (*ut cerni videantur enuntiare*). A speech does not adequately fulfil its purpose or attain the total domination it should have if it goes no further than the ears (*si usque ad aures valet*), merely being told the story of the

where it could indicate the state of the persuaded mind itself. We already saw that it could indicate a certain ‘clarity of mind’ in Epicurean writings (§5.3.4) and was as such used as a parallel to *pistis*. Academics used it to describe the clarity of common, established convictions such as the existence of God, with the Latin equivalent being *evidentia* (on this usage, see also §8.3.3 below).<sup>244</sup>

Returning to *energeia*, this lexeme was not only used in Aristotelean rhetorical or metaphysical discourses, but appears as a key term in Epicureanism. Epicurus possibly appropriated it via the teachings of Nausiphanes of Teos.<sup>245</sup> It functions in what seems to be one of his basic definitions of philosophy. Sextus Empiricus writes that ‘Epicurus declared that “philosophy is an activity (τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἐνέργειαν εἶναι) which secures the happy life by arguments and discussions.”’<sup>246</sup> Here, too, it expresses a life-changing quality of speech, the bridge between language and truly living the philosophical life. As I will now argue, the Pauline texts Agamben focuses on also show how *energeia* is used in this domain of philosophical, transformative persuasion and closely connected to *pistis*.

In 1 *Thessalonians*, Paul expresses his gratitude for the Thessalonians’ acceptance of his message as God’s own word:

We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us (παρλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν), you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers (καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). (1 *Thessalonians* 2.13)

1 *Thessalonians* 2.13–16 is a passage whose authenticity is contested, yet in terms of discourse it certainly fits the context.<sup>247</sup> The verb ‘to be at work’ (ἐνεργέω), derived from ‘work’ (ἔργον), is connected to the manner in which Paul’s message, which is here equated to God’s message, has shaped the lives of those who have not only heard, but also trusted (or were faithful to) this message.<sup>248</sup> And as *pisteuontes*, they are presented by Paul as witnesses to

---

matters he has to decide, without their being brought out and displayed to his mind’s eye (*narrari credit, non exprimi et oculis mentis ostendi*).

244 On the convergence of *energeia* and *enargeia* and on the latter’s usage in rhetoric and epistemology, see Bussels 2012.

245 See Wolfsdorf 2013, 165.

246 Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 11.169 (Fragment 219 in Usener 1887).

247 Cf., for arguments for and against the authenticity of this section, Pearson 1971; Weatherly 1991; Jensen 2019.

248 On the designation *pisteuontes*, see chapter 8 below.

his blameless conduct towards them (2.10): they deemed him trustworthy and imitation-worthy (cf. 1.6). This theme of imitation is further developed when the Thessalonians are said to have become imitators (μιμηταί) of churches in Judaea as well (2.14), a concept on which I will elaborate in the next chapter (see esp. §6.3.4).

Yet there is not only a ‘moral-mimetic’ semantic domain at play here. The acceptance as *pisteuontes* of Paul’s message as ‘God’s word’ (2.13) is used here in a context in which Paul sets himself apart from sophistic manners: he is not set on pleasing mortals (2.4: ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκοντες) with trickery (2.3: ἐν δόλῳ) or flattering words (2.5: ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας), seeking human honour (2.6: ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν). Moreover, he did not depend on the Thessalonians for his sustenance (2.9), which was an important theme in anti-sophistic rhetoric (see §5.4.2). Likewise, the message he preached was not his own, but God’s, and the effect it had was not superficial, but it is ‘at work’ (ἐνεργεῖται) in its receivers as they have become *pistis*-people (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). *Pistis* is used as a designation here not merely because that is simply how they are called void of any contextual significance (cf. my argument in chapter 8)—indeed, then the designation of *adelphoi* in the very next sentence would be quite redundant—but because it highlights the Thessalonians as ‘people actively transformed by their persuasion’.

In *Galatians* 3.5, Paul explicitly links ‘hearing which results in faithfulness’ (ἀκοή πίστεως) to ‘working of powers’ (ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις) or, as Agamben would prefer to translate, ‘hearing of faith’ to ‘that which makes potentiality operative’. There are several interpretative problems related to this text, one of which, the meaning of the first phrase, will be discussed separately in another chapter (see §7.4.3). I would hesitate to interpret the substantivized participle ‘working’ (ἐνεργῶν) here as an impersonal one, like Agamben does, since it is accompanied by the masculine article and refers to the same agent who also ‘supplies [them] with the spirit’ (ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν). The question whether Paul envisions God, Christ, or even himself as the actor (or a combination) can best be left unanswered, as the Greek also does. Furthermore, Agamben’s very technical Aristotelean reading ‘that which makes potentiality operative’ (ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις) would require more contextual markers to suggest such a semantic frame. After all, it is used paradigmatically to ‘the one who supplies the spirit’, which seems to be less of an Aristotelean concept. Still, a more basic reading of *dynameis* as unspecified ‘powers’ or ‘potencies’ which are made effective based on how faithful they are received by Paul’s audience (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως) is quite possible. In this passage too, *pistis* can be understood as something that ‘actualizes’ or ‘energizes’ an otherwise pale or inoperative message.



Another clue as to the manner in which *pistis* is able to ‘work’ is given further on in the same letter (Gal 5.6): ‘For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love (πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη).’ This short statement closely connects faith and love: faith *in act* implies loving. The contrast with (un)circumcision indicates the importance of *pistis* as a new identity marker. This is also emphasized by Michael Wolter, who points to the parallel formulation in *Galatians* 6.15, ‘For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!’<sup>249</sup> Wolter, however, emphasizes the meaning of *pistis* as ‘certitude’ (‘Gewissheit’) in this context, and explains it in cognitive-individual terms as ‘holding for true’ (cf. my reaction to Wolter in §7.4.1 and §6.2.1). Instead, I would choose to foreground the transformative and communitive aspects of ‘faith’ here, highlighted in this chapter (esp. in §5.3.3): *pistis* as a philosophical persuasion and allegiance, made active in contexts of communal love.

A similar usage of *pistis* and *energeia* in a communal context is found in the thanksgiving section of the *Letter to Philemon* (verses 5–6), where Paul first praises Philemon’s love and faith; to continue with the additional prayer that his participation in faith or the sharing of his faith (ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς σου) may become actualized (ἐνεργήσῃ). A more detailed discussion of the complexities in this paragraph of *Philemon* will follow in the next chapter (§6.4.2). As for now, it suffices to notice the communal setting and relationships of love in which faith is said to ‘work’ or ‘become effective’. A faithful reception is required to actualize Paul’s Christ-message, and this actualization in turn implies loving others.

Similar co-occurrences of *pistis* and *energeia* can be found in the disputed Pauline letters. In the opening prayer of *2 Thessalonians*, God is asked to fulfil every good resolve and ‘potential work of faith’ (2 Thes 1.11: ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει). Even though the traditional rendering (of ἐν δυνάμει) as ‘by his power’ is a valid option, the philosophical contrast between potential act and actual act can be a possible frame of reference here. Similarly, whereas in *Colossians* 2.12 we customarily translate something like ‘through faith *in* the power of God, who raised him from the dead’ (Col 2.12: διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν), we may also interpret the genitive form of *energeia* as an explication of *pistis* here: it then either refers to ‘the energizing power of faith in God’ who raised Christ from the dead or even to ‘God’s energizing faithfulness’. For here as well, the Greek is ambiguous as to whose *pistis* is at work.

<sup>249</sup> Wolter 2017, 358.

All these (deutero-)Pauline instances perfectly fit the Hellenistic usage of *energeia* as a term indicating the appropriation and actualization in real life of a message heard. Rather than referring to a particular abstract metaphysical distinction, as Agamben suggested, Paul's combined usage of *pistis* and *energeia* can be taken to express the broader philosophical idea that 'faith' has the quality to actively implement the message preached in the lives of its audience. *Pistis* in this context expresses the process of being persuaded by a message and at the same time re-presenting or actualizing the message in one's own life, particularly in the shape of other-regarding *agapē*.

#### 5.4.4 *I do Not Mean to Lord It over Your Pistis (2 Cor 1.24): Persuasion, Control, and Ownership of Faith*

Preaching and teaching, that is engaging in persuasive activities, brings about a certain status. Above (in §5.4.2), I discussed Paul's unease with the student's preference for particular teachers in Corinth as the background for his participation in the discourse of philosophy versus sophism. Paul himself also seems to wrestle with the precise relationship he maintains with his followers and the role of *pistis* in this relationship. We now turn to a text that follows immediately after a text already discussed in the previous chapter (§4.4.2) in 2 *Corinthians*. There, we saw that the statement that 'God is *pistos*' functions as a guarantee for both the addressees' perfection at the *Parousia* and for Paul's own trustworthiness, in a particularly intriguing specimen of rhetoric which is now found at the beginning of 2 *Corinthians*. Paul's 'yes' towards the Corinthians is as stable as Christ's 'yes' to humans, representing God's promises, and Christ's 'amen' to God, representing human acknowledgement of God's glory (2 Cor 1.18–21). Human trustworthiness and firmness of conviction is thus grounded in divine stability.

To a non-negligible extent this picture converges with the Stoic pattern I distinguished with regard to the cognitive-relational disposition of the wise. In both schemes, epistemological judgements and the trustworthiness of one's character are knitted closely together and both are expressed by means of the root *pist-*. Additionally, both 'schools of thought', the Stoic and the Pauline, teach that when people have a firm conviction a trusting symmetrical friendship is made possible. It is precisely this symmetry and reciprocity in *pistis*, or lack thereof, which is the topic of Paul's developing argument.

Indeed, in the continuation of his argument, conceptual difficulties arise for Paul when the idea of guidance or authority of a teacher-figure comes into play. The suggestion that Paul did not visit Corinth in order to 'spare' the Corinthians (1.23: ὅτι φοιδοῦμενος ὑμῶν) seems to have evoked an unwelcome connotation of inequality, for Paul hastens to explicate that 'I do not mean

to imply that we lord it over your faith (οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως); rather, we are workers with you (συνεργοί) for your joy, because you stand firm in the faith (τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε)' (2 Cor 1.24).<sup>250</sup> To Paul, it is at least rhetorically important—though as we will see perhaps also important in terms of content—to emphasize equality and a mutually reinforcing power when it comes to possessing *pistis*.<sup>251</sup> He seems anxious to assert that the *pistis* of his followers does not rest completely on his own. So, how can we imagine a *pistis* that may be strengthened by apostles (e.g. 1 Thes 3.10) yet does not ultimately depend on them or even ends up being equal to them in strength?

Here, Paul's philosophical predecessors and contemporaries offer valuable insights that may prove helpful in making sense of Paul. As we saw in §5.3.6, the Stoics consider like-mindedness (ὁμόνοια) the characteristic of friendship as it is enjoyed among the wise. Moreover, even in asymmetrical relationships in which a wise person loves and teaches a student, the aim is to make this student as wise as his master and thus 'create a friend' (φιλοποιέω). Even though Paul uses different terminology, we have already seen that he partakes in the same cognitive-relational semantic domain. Therefore, it is not surprising to see similar patterns at play expressed in different terms.

In this section of the letter, Paul wants to uphold both his and Timothy's importance as the Corinthians' main 'champions of *pistis*', yet this is opposed to other claimants of the title, not vis-à-vis the firmness of the Corinthians' *pistis*. Their *pistis* has grown to be of similar, 'apostolic' strength, for both Paul and his addressees find their firm foundation in Christ.<sup>252</sup> Consequently, his role as example and teacher, his own confidence, is only there insofar as it is 'such confidence that we have through Christ towards God' (2 Cor 3.4: πεποιθήσιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν).<sup>253</sup> In the sight of

250 Cf. Morgan 2015, 258: 'Paul is sensitive to the fact that characterizing himself as *pistos* towards the Corinthians, which implies that they exercise a kind of *pistis* towards him, does look hierarchical, and is anxious—disingenuously, since he has just admitted that he does see himself as having a degree of authority over them—to deny that it is.'

251 Cf. Alexander 2018, 284: 'Paul seems careful to resist using it of himself, just as he resists asking his communities to 'obey' him. Their faith, love and obedience are all directed towards God. (...) This 'de-centering' of authority is a preoccupation of Paul's.'

252 Cf. for a different interpretation Frank Matera (2003), who perceives a hierarchical relationship between Paul and the Corinthians in this passage (at 55): 'In effect, Paul forges a chain of faithfulness that extends from God to Christ, from Christ to Paul, and from Paul to the Christian community.' I would agree with his observation that a chain of faithfulness is a Pauline idea (see below, §§6.4.3–5), yet in this particular situation, I maintain that the suggestion of inequality in *pistis* is exactly what Paul addresses and hopes to avoid.

253 Just like πίστις, πεποιθήσις is also derived from the verb πείθω: see §5.4.1 above.

God, there is only one *pistis*, one community of trust, and the relative strength or value of it in a community or individual cannot so easily be judged, not even by the apostle.

A similar rationale of a careful approach to the faith in another and of personal ‘ownership’ of faith can be found across Paul’s letters. It seems to be behind the subtle *correctio* in the opening of *Romans*:

For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine (τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ). (*Romans* 1.12)

Here also, the potentially asymmetrical relationship of a leader-figure to a community is restated in terms of reciprocity in *pistis*. The NRSV cited here suggests that this faith is of ‘each other’, yet the construction used with the preposition ἐν and the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλοις suggests that the faith they have in one another is what Paul refers to here, the community of trust, of which Paul also hopes and claims to be a part (τε καὶ ἐμοῦ).<sup>254</sup> Likewise, when Paul was curious whether the faith of the Thessalonians was strong enough in times of adversity, he describes how he accordingly sent Timothy ‘to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of faith’ (1 Thes 3.2: εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν) but ended up being ‘encouraged about you through your faith’ (1 Thes 3.7: παρεκλήθημεν (...) διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως). *Pistis*, as both an interhuman and divine-human quality, is the material from which relationships are built up; it cannot be enforced from above.

Even if he seems prone to doubt his audience’s faith, he is wise to frame this ‘test’ in terms of self-examination:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in faith (εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει). Test yourselves (ἐαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε). Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, you fail to pass the test! I hope you will find out that we have not failed. (2 *Corinthians* 13.5–6)

Such a judgement in terms of self-examination very much fits the Stoic discourse of progress in virtue. We already saw that Seneca only dared express his hope in his student’s progress, not his confidence, and advised Lucilius not to

<sup>254</sup> As argued in Schumacher 2017, 317.

think too highly of himself either (see §5.3.5). The same Senecan passage continues, however, with the attitude he should adopt: ‘Examine yourself; scrutinize and observe yourself in diverse ways’.<sup>255</sup> Philosophical teachers admonish their disciples to search their own souls. And rather than claiming to be ahead of their pupils, they take the role of fellow-patients who gladly share the remedy to a shared illness.<sup>256</sup>

The apostle Paul employs a similar strategy, even if his position in the community he addresses is considerably more precarious than that of the Stoic writing a collection of literary moral epistles to a more abstract, well-educated, benevolent audience. Instead of disqualifying the Corinthians’ faith or rejecting them as Christ-followers (which would not serve Paul’s interest in the end), the apostle is forced to strike a balance between setting limits and creating space, between demanding loyalty and acknowledging reciprocity. He focuses on the Corinthians’ acceptance of his life in *pistis* and leaves their own condition to their own judgement. Here again, the *pistis* of the Corinthians seems to be at stake not merely because some have sinned (2 Cor 13.2: τοῖς προημαρτηκόσιν), but also because their trust-relationship with Paul is under pressure. This mistrust challenges their entire bond of trust, including their relationship with God.

This is how we can understand Paul’s admonition in the beginning of the same apologetic section (chapters 10–13), ‘if you are confident that you belong to Christ (εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι), remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to Christ, so also do we’ (2 Cor 10.7). Again, we see complex interplay here between the Corinthians’ personal ownership of faith and Paul’s external control over their faith. A shared commitment to Christ is deemed essential for the network of *pistis* relationships to flourish, yet this relational virtue coincides with a more personal and cognitive aspect of *pistis*, expressed in terms of self-examination, progress, and joy. A firm *pistis* disposition of each member ensures a sustainable *pistis* community.

Even if there is some kind asymmetry at play among different members of the community, as could possibly be argued with the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’ Paul addresses at the end of *Romans*, there should be no judgements passed, for ‘it is before their own lord that they stand or fall; and they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.’ With this text, we both return to the metaphor of ‘standing’ Paul uses so frequently to express the condition of *pistis*, as was discussed in the previous chapter (§4.4.1), and arrive at the topic

<sup>255</sup> Seneca, *Epistles* 16.2: *excute te et varie scrutare et observa.*

<sup>256</sup> See Seneca, *Epistles* 27.1, quoted above (§5.3.5).

of the next subsection, in which Paul's use of *pistis* language in *Romans* 14–15 is discussed.

**5.4.5 *Whatever Does Not Proceed from Pistis Is Wrong (Rom 14.23):  
Identifying with the Strong and the Weak***

Paul's usage of *pistis* and cognates at the end of *Romans* (14.1–15.14) may be considered a bit unusual, for it seems to carry a very subjective overtone.<sup>257</sup> The occurrence of *pistis* in the sentence, 'the faith that you have, have as your own conviction before God' (14.22: σὺ πίστιν ἣν ἔχεις κατὰ σεαυτὸν ἔχε ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ), is one of the view instances in which some English translations opt for a more 'cognitive' translation of *pistis* like 'conviction' or 'belief'.<sup>258</sup> I will argue in this subsection that in most—yet not in all instances—this makes excellent sense from the background of the Stoic epistemology discussed in this chapter. Moreover, this contemporary pagan usage of *pistis* as the 'persuasion of the wise' involves more implications for the interpretation of this text, connecting *pistis* once again with love in the sense of social accommodation. First, however, we need to consider the main interpretative issues involved.

In the scholarly continuum between an abstract or doctrinal and a specific, historical, or situational reading of this letter as a whole, the passage plays an important role. It is often used to identify different groups in the Roman Christ-community.<sup>259</sup> The most common interpretation in this regard is the identification of the 'weak' with Jewish and gentile Christ-followers who upheld (parts of) the Torah or the Halakha, whereas the 'strong' represent gentile but also Jewish Christ-followers who did not, including Paul himself.<sup>260</sup> Paul only mentions a few characteristics that distinguish the one group from the other, namely abstaining from food (14.3), ascribing special value to certain days (14.5), deeming certain food unclean (14.14–15), and not eating meat

257 On the demarcation of 14.1–15.14, see Glad 1995, 217.

258 Cf. also Barclay 2013, 195: 'The language of "faith" in these chapters is mixed with that of cognition or conviction. (...) But this does not mean that we may translate πίστις in chapters 14–15 as "conviction" or "confidence", downplaying its primary meaning, "faith".'

259 E.g. Watson 2007, 177: 'This interpretation of *Romans* 14.1–15.13 helps us to identify Paul's addressees in Romans and so to clarify his reasons for writing the latter as a whole.'

260 E.g. Oosterhuis 1992, esp. p. 77; Fitzmyer 1993, 687; Barclay 1996, 293, and 2013, 193; Bryan 2000, 211; Esler 2003, 341–344; Watson 2007, 175–182; Roberts 2012; Lee 2014, chapter 5: 'The "Weak" and the "Strong" at Table in Romans 14.1–15.13' (136–162). For a more extensive bibliography, see Hultgren 2011, 496, n. 3 and Reasoner 1999, 6–22. One exception worth mentioning is Mark Nanos's thesis that the 'weak' are non-Christian Jews: Nanos 1996a; for a critical response cf. Gagnon 2000.

or wine (14.21).<sup>261</sup> There has been some scholarly discussion over the question whether these characteristics can be considered part of a law-observing lifestyle, since the Torah does not impose restrictions related to wine or to all meat in general.<sup>262</sup> While there are sources that confirm that such practices existed in certain Jewish circuits,<sup>263</sup> and even though the actual situation of law-observing Christ-followers eating from a non-observant's table helps to understand these wider restrictions,<sup>264</sup> Paul's descriptions are so vague<sup>265</sup> that one can, with some imagination, also argue for pagan practices of abstinence or observance of special days as his reference point.<sup>266</sup>

J. Paul Sampley found his starting point in precisely this vagueness on Paul's part: he argues for an intended obliqueness in this passage, aiming to unite a variety of convictions in one community.<sup>267</sup> Even though Sampley's interpretation has been criticized for its lack of socio-cultural embeddedness (along with Karris's argument, upon which it elaborates), all in all, Sampley's position is a moderate one between the doctrinal and the situational, for it negotiates Paul's outsider position and his insider involvement.<sup>268</sup> 'Effective indirect discourse',

261 That abstinence from wine is not specifically connected to the weak is held by Cranfield (2004b [1975], 725), who argues that it may be hypothetical or derived from a standard formula: βρωσιν και ποσιν (Rom 14.17). Cf. Karris 1991, 69, n. 27.

262 Cf. Käsemann's resolute conclusion (1980 [1973], 355), '[g]enerelle Enthaltensamkeit von Fleisch und Wein gab es dort nicht.'

263 Barclay (Barclay 1996, 291, n. 14) refers to the *Therapeutae* described in Philo, *On the Contemplative Life* 37.73.

264 Barclay 1996, 291–292.

265 Cf. also Given 2001, 169: 'If Paul is addressing actual problems between hostile groups in Rome, whatever they may be, he has chosen to do it too subtly.'

266 Most famously argued by Rauer (1923, i.a. 28–30, 148–154, 164–168), who refers to Gnosticism, Neopythagoreanism and Orphism, but also mentioned as an option by Käsemann (1980 [1973], 355–356), Barrett (1991, 257–258) and Fitzmyer (1993, 687).

267 Sampley 1995; for the distinction between direct speech (παρηρησία) and oblique speech, see at 45: 'Direct speech is argumentative and confrontational while figured speech is allusive and evocative; direct speech needs proofs, while figured speech invites the hearer to establish its veracity by self-application.'

268 Robert Karris forcefully declares the 'history of religions approach' to the passage 'bankrupt' (1991, 69–70) and interprets the passage as a generalized version of the advice in 1 Cor 8–10. A generalized reading of the passage is also rejected in favour of a situational one in Reasoner 1999, 41: 'we do well to ask, with Käsemann and Marcus, why Paul would spend so much space in his letter describing and addressing a situation that is only hypothetical. The best answer seems to be that it was not hypothetical, but was a church division occurring in Rome, of which Paul had been informed.' For Reasoner's response to J. Paul Sampley, see pp. 21–22. Reasoner's own interpretation can be viewed as a more moderate situational one, for he identifies the strong and the weak with groups of different social status in Rome.

Sampley explains based on ancient rhetorical theory, ‘must operate within the window framed on the one side by the author’s necessity not to score a direct hit and on the other by a need to be close enough to the really divisive issues to encourage the hearers’ self-application.’<sup>269</sup> Hence, issues dividing law-observants and non-observants, stereotyped as Jews and gentiles, may be foremost in his mind, as is evidenced by *Romans* 15.7–14, yet he consciously broadens the scope of his prescriptions so as to attain the maximum effect of his message, while at the same preserving appropriate boundaries.<sup>270</sup> The ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’ are addressed with singular substantivized adjectives using singular verbs, so Paul’s audience was not meant to identify them as specific groups in their midst, but to identify *with* them as different mindsets.<sup>271</sup>

This more general interpretation of Paul’s approach in *Romans* 14.1–15.14 is substantiated by several studies that place it in the tradition of ‘ancient reformatory ethics’ or ‘psychagogy’, in which different stages in moral education are distinguished by labels such as ‘weak’ and ‘strong’, ‘powerful’ and ‘inferior’.<sup>272</sup> This tradition goes back to debates on political justice, such as the one in Plato’s *Gorgias* where Callicles claims ‘that right has been decided to consist in the sway and advantage of the stronger over the weaker.’<sup>273</sup> Seneca connects this ‘habit of nature’ to the rule of wise men in the Golden Age, who in fact ‘protected the weaker from the stronger’ (on the Golden Age,

269 Sampley 1995, 48.

270 Here, I probably diverge from Sampley’s position, with his strong claim that ‘[t]he rhetorical notations of “weak” and “strong” have no objective referents in the Roman congregations’ (48). It seems to me that, precisely by being indirect, Paul may wish to address certain specific situational issues wrapped within more general ethical advice. Cf. also Dunn 1988a, 799–800, who refers primarily to Jewish(-Christian) dietary practices, but allows for ‘whatever other practises can be included in its sweep’.

271 Cf. Hultgren (2011, 502), who concludes based on an analysis of these singular lexemes that ‘[h]e addresses a concept, not a group of persons’. Cf. Stowers 1994, 320–321: ‘Thus the weak and the strong (or mature or wise and so on) are not groups or parties or theological positions, as New Testament scholars have thought, but dispositions of character.’

272 See Glad 1995, 214. Apart from the studies I discuss here in the ensuing paragraph, cf. Stowers 1994, 321 (depending on Glad).

273 Plato, *Gorgias* 483d: ‘[N]ature, in my opinion, herself proclaims the fact that it is right for the better to have advantage of the worse (τὸν ἀμείνω τοῦ χειρόνος πλέον ἔχειν), and the abler of the feeble (τὸν δυνατώτερον τοῦ ἀδυνατώτερου). It is obvious in many cases that this is so, not only in the animal world, but in the states and races, collectively, of men—that right has been decided to consist in the sway and advantage of the stronger over the weaker (τὸν κρείττω τοῦ ἥττονος ἀρχειν καὶ πλέον ἔχειν).’



see §3.3 above).<sup>274</sup> According to Epictetus, the rule of the stronger is even seen as a divine law, yet he interprets it in light of his theory of value: only our judgements (δόγματα), our moral choice (προαίρεσις), is completely within our control, so the better person in respect to these judgements can never be overcome by the morally weaker person.<sup>275</sup> And when Plutarch speaks of the Egyptian practice of treating animals as gods, he explains that such an opinion affects the weak and strong in opposite yet equally detrimental ways:

There is engendered a dangerous opinion (δόξα δ' ἐμφύεται δεινή), which plunges the weak and innocent into sheer superstition (τοὺς μὲν ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἀκάκους εἰς ἄκρατον ὑπερείπουσα τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν), and in the case of the more cynical and bold, goes off into atheistic and brutish reasoning (δὲ δριμυτέροις καὶ θρασυτέροις εἰς ἀθέους ἐμπίπτουσα καὶ θηριώδεις λογισμούς). (Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 379E)

In Plutarch's take on morality, the weak are prone to accept superstitious opinions and act upon them, while the strong are more likely to reject such opinions and act in conformity with their rejection.<sup>276</sup> In *Romans* 14, the weak also act in conformity with their opinion (here expressed in *pistis* terms) that certain food is unclean, while the strong reject this (cf. 14.20). Thus, in the development of this discourse, the labels of 'weak' and 'strong' are used in an ethical sense, the social responsibilities of the strong are reviewed, and the strong do not always come off unscathed.

It is in the context of Stoic thought that several interpreters have found particularly relevant parallels to Paul's approach in this part of *Romans*. Sampley briefly alludes to Stoicism in stating that 'For Paul, keeping or not keeping days and eating and abstaining (14.6) are *adiaphora*.'<sup>277</sup> Thorsteinsson refers not only to the theory of moral indifferentes (*adiaphora*), but also to the general

274 Seneca, *Epistles* 90.4–5: 'For nature has the habit of subjecting the weaker to the stronger. (...) [T]he greatest happiness rested with those peoples among whom a man could not be the more powerful unless he were the better. (...) Accordingly, in that age which is maintained to be the golden age, Posidonius holds that the government was under the jurisdiction of the wise. They kept their hands under control, and protected the weaker from the stronger.' See also §3.3.6 *supra*.

275 See Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.29.1–24.

276 Cf. on the influence of words on behaviour Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 379C: 'Hence it is an excellent saying current among philosophers that they that have not learned to interpret rightly the sense of words are wont to bungle their actions.'

277 Sampley 1995, 41. Barclay (2015, 515) records a similarly brief allusion. On Paul and Stoic *adiaphora*, see Deming 2003 (and the revised version from 2016).

ethic of adaptability in Stoicism.<sup>278</sup> Barclay compares the ‘Stoic recalibration of worth’ to ‘Paul’s reassessment of values’ in light of ‘the new reality created in Christ’.<sup>279</sup> A more in-depth comparison, however, can be made between Paul’s conviction that ‘whatever does not proceed from *pistis* is sin’ (Rom 14.23: *πάν δὲ ὃ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἁμαρτία ἐστίν*) and Stoic teaching that ‘only the act which proceeds from correct judgements is well done, and that which proceeds from bad judgements is badly done’ (*τὰ μὲν ἀπὸ δογμάτων ὀρθῶν καλῶς, τὰ δ’ ἀπὸ μοχθηρῶν μοχθηρῶς*).<sup>280</sup> More than a century ago, this similarity was noted in the second part of Adolf Bonhöffer’s *Epiktet und das Neue Testament* (1911), in which the author discusses converging words and thoughts.<sup>281</sup> A similar short reference to this similarity is made in passing by Max Pohlenz, who quotes the same Pauline expression when discussing the Stoic aim to achieve ‘perfect action’ (*τὸ κατόρθωμα*).<sup>282</sup>

The case for the relevance of this Stoic context was made more profoundly, however, by Nico Huttunen, who argued that to Paul, just as to Epictetus, ‘it becomes clear that sin is not a plain act, but an act against one’s personal faith. Sin is also a matter of inner disposition and judgment.’<sup>283</sup> Furthermore, he calls attention to Epictetus’s advice in dealing with weaker or less wise persons: they ought to be approached in a mild and considerate manner, while avoiding the imposition of incomprehensible philosophical knowledge on them.<sup>284</sup> Similarly, in the same year, Troels Engberg-Pedersen published an article in which he demonstrates the strong similarity with the Stoic conception that ‘the mistaken ascription of the predicate “bad” to something in the world renders it objectively bad for the person who does the ascription.’<sup>285</sup> Yet,

278 Thorsteinsson 2010a, 33–34.

279 Barclay 2013, 200.

280 Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.8.3. Cf. Seneca, *Epistles* 92.13: ‘the good involved will be my judgment regarding these things, and not the things themselves.’

281 Bonhöffer 1911, 327: ‘Wie für Ep[iktet] das richtige Dogma, die richtige Überzeugung von dem Wert der Dinge, Quelle und Maßstab jeder sittlich guten Handlung ist, so für P[au]l der Glaube, in jener umfassenden Bedeutung nämlich, in welcher er auch das praktische Urteil in sich schließt als ein aus dem Willen Gottes geschöpftes, das zwar bis zu einem gewissen Grade, d. h. auf dem Gebiet des Erlaubten, der Allgemeingültigkeit ermangelt, aber doch als Glaube stets subjektive Wahrheit und Verbindlichkeit besitzt.’ The author’s aim in the first part, however, is to demonstrate complete independence of both worlds of thought.

282 Pohlenz 1948, 128–129.

283 Huttunen 2009, chapter 4: ‘The Strong and the Weak’, 62–74, esp. 72–73.

284 See Huttunen 2009, 65–67. Cf. Glad’s reference to the friendship tradition according to which the strong would carry the weight of their weaker friend’s burden (1995, 229).

285 Engberg-Pedersen 2009, 28.

he also notes an important difference in Paul's conviction that this 'badness' is actively endorsed by God's condemnation, when this person is standing 'before the judgement seat of God' (Rom 14.10).<sup>286</sup>

A particular convergence with Stoicism that has so far, to my knowledge, not been observed, but one that stands out from the perspective of our discussion above, is the importance to the sage of having a strong *pistis* (see §5.3.5 and §5.3.6 above).<sup>287</sup> Sages were viewed as not assuming anything 'in a weak manner' (ἀσθενῶς) or with 'changeable and weak (ἀσθενή) assent', but always from a position of *pistis*, which Arius Didymus defines as 'a strong apprehension, confirming what is assumed' (ὑπόληψιν ἰσχυράν, βεβαιούσαν τὸ ὑπολαμβάνόμενον).<sup>288</sup> If *pistis* is considered to be a strong, cognitive position of the wise, opposed to weak assent, it makes sense that in a community that defines itself by means of such a 'conviction' people would look down upon those who assume that indifferent things have moral value or who act against their own weak convictions. The question might arise whether such people belong 'in faith'.

Paul's aim in this section, then, is to redefine *pistis* in terms of a congruence between personal conviction and relational ethics, including a welcoming attitude towards the 'weak'. If weak people are 'fully convinced in their own mind' and act accordingly, it would be worse for the 'strong' to force them to act incongruently than to play along for their sake with actions that are morally indifferent to them anyway. Paul's main concern is to make sure that those who are considered weak also share in the faith-community. Thus, the weak may end up acting congruently with their more cautious convictions, whereas the strong end up acting incongruently (by refraining from things they deem all right) for the sake of the weak.<sup>289</sup> Paul's argument, in short, is that if *pistis* is seen not so much in terms of internal congruence with a smug strong conviction, but is seen to include respect for another's congruence of conviction and

286 Engberg-Pedersen 2009, 28–29.

287 Oosterhuis's work on the weak and the strong in *Romans* (1992) never seems to question the meaning or context of *pistis*, whose cognates are consistently rendered as 'the faith' and 'believers'. Thorsteinsson (2010a) discusses *pistis* simply as 'faith' and never mentions the usage of the term in Stoicism (at 180): 'It is clear that when Paul here uses the term 'weak' he is referring to individuals who are or may be 'weak' in faith (τῇ πίστει), that is, in their attitude towards and practice of their faith.' Cf. Thorsteinsson 2010b, 101: 'the discussion concerns persons who are 'weak in faith' (ἀσθενῶν τῇ πίστει), i.e. in the practice of their faith.'

288 See Arius Didymus, apud Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.7.11m, quoted in full in §5.3.6 *supra*.

289 As Neal Elliot has pointed out (2002, esp. p. 244), rather than rejecting the supposed 'asceticism' of the weak, Paul endorses their asceticism and advises a second type of asceticism to the strong.

actions, if *pistis* relationally configured and ‘at work through love’ (Gal 5.6), then the addressees can truly be a faith-community.

Is the weak disposition then ‘weak in / with respect to faith’ (*dativus mensurae*), as so many scholars hold, based on the opening sentence, ‘Welcome those who are weak *tēi pistei*’?<sup>290</sup> Such a label could arguably either be used with full approval by Paul—as we have seen, Paul often speaks of different degrees of faith (see §4.4.1)—or ascribed by him to the ‘strong’. According to the position of the strong, the weak do not even partake in faith proper, which entails a strong apprehension of truth, because they attach value to indifferents like food and festivals. Perhaps that is also why the weak are *not* said to ‘believe’ in eating vegetables, while the strong are said to ‘believe’ in eating anything (14.2).<sup>291</sup> Yet from the strong person’s perspective, these convictions may still be designated as ‘weak faith’ or ‘weak with respect to faith’, for their conviction is lacking. From Paul’s perspective, however, strong and weak alike are perfectly welcome to be ‘fully convinced in their own minds’ (14.5), so he credits them both with a certain kind of faith and does not strongly disqualify either position in advance, even if he himself is ‘persuaded’ of the same views as the ‘strong’ (14.14).<sup>292</sup> On the other hand, the ‘weak’ (those who ascribe value to indifferents) may also additionally ‘act weakly’ (*ἀσθενεῖ*), act in nonconformity with their conviction, due to the strong (14.21) and come to ‘judge themselves’ for it (14.22).<sup>293</sup> It is only this latter type of weakness which troubles Paul and which he disqualifies explicitly as, ‘not out of conviction’, that is ‘not faithful to one’s own conviction’ (14.23: οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως), be it weak or strong. Consequently, labelling people ‘weak in faith’ is not conforming to Paul’s agenda of ‘welcoming’, nor is it in accordance with his strong rejection of incongruence, a defect which is never done out of any kind of faith. At most, it could have been used by him as a rephrasing of the position of the strong.<sup>294</sup>

290 E.g. Nanos 1996b, 105, 120; Sampley 1995, 41; Rauer 1923, 31; Thorsteinsson 2010a, 180; Barclay 2013, 194.

291 Cf. Barclay 2013, 194, who misses the change in verb usage in this verse and states that when it comes to faith, ‘the differences of opinion regarding food are described in similar ways.’

292 Note the interchangeable usage of *peithō* and *pistis/pisteuō* in this section: see also §5.3.1.

293 Translations (e.g. NRSV, KJV, ESV, RSV, NIV) often choose to render ὁ διακρινόμενος (14.23) as ‘those (he) who have (has) doubts’; however, it is not so much indecision as it is acting in non-accordance with your (firm) conviction that is rejected by Paul. Hence, *pistis*, in this context, is not the opposite of doubt, but rather the opposite of incongruence.

294 Cf. for a different position Barclay 2013, 195 and 205, whose strongest argument in reading ‘weak in faith’ is the similar phrasing in *Romans* 4.19–21 (thrice with a dative: μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει, ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει, and οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ). I do not agree, however, that

A more likely option, though, is that Paul makes use of the rich network of meanings *pistis* evokes to a Christ-follower in his opening sentence (14.1), including the element of love and community, and then connects this to the more specialized meaning of a personal, cognitive conviction in the next sentence and the rest of the section (14.2, 14.22, 14.23).<sup>295</sup> If we relate the phrase ‘in faith’ (14.1: τῇ πίστει) to the subsequent verb, ‘welcome’ (14.1: προσλαμβάνεσθε),<sup>296</sup> there are quite a number of different interpretative possibilities that all possess a certain logic: welcome the weak ‘to the (community of) faith’ (*dativus finalis*), ‘by means of faith’ (*dativus instrumentalis*), ‘owing to / in accordance with faith’ (*dativus causae*) or ‘for the sake of faith’ (*dativus commodi*). *Pistis*, in its turn, may refer to either (or both) the weak person’s faith, the strong person’s faith, Christ’s faith, or (and) Paul’s message of faith in general (‘the faith’, though cf. §6.4.1 and §7.4.1).<sup>297</sup> It is another one of Paul’s very concise phrases that include a form of *pistis*, with a variety of possible reference points. However, based on the comparison with Christ, both in the immediately prior (13.12–14) and subsequent context (15.1–9), I would argue that *pistis* here (in Rom 14.1) refers to Christ’s self-giving, other-regarding, and inclusive disposition. Christ is the ultimate ‘wise person’ whose self-giving love the self-acclaimed ‘strong’ should imitate, should ‘put on’ (Rom 13.14).<sup>298</sup> They are to live ‘to the Lord’ (Rom 14.8: τῷ κυρίῳ) and as being ‘of (the same mind as) the Lord’ (Rom 14.8: τοῦ κυρίου). This way, the strong are ‘welcoming in accordance with (Christ-like) faith’ (14.1) when they imitate Christ in ‘serving the circumcision’, i.e. those who are fully convinced of the moral value of indifferents. They do this by sacrificing their personal truths and convictions precisely

---

‘it is implausible to suggest that Paul now uses it in a different sense’ as Paul often plays with different senses of a word, and what is more, the example of Abraham who did *not* ‘weaken in faith’ would not be helpful in Paul’s argument in favour of welcoming ‘the weak in faith’ at the end of the same letter.

- 295 I purposefully avoid the adjective ‘subjective’ for the usage of *pistis* here, because, in line with its usage in Stoicism, to have *pistis* is to approach objective knowledge: *pistis* cannot differ from one sage to another.
- 296 This has been suggested by Schumacher (2009, 491 and 2017, 320–323), who refers to Kudill (2000, 49–88), Schneider (1996, 15), and Meyer (1865, 490) who argued for this position before him. Schumacher emphasizes the, according to him, ‘Latin’ (cf. my §1.2.1 and §7.2.2) interpretation of *pistis* as ‘protection’ or *bona fide* offered to a client or friend (the weak), along the lines of the semantic domain I discuss in chapter 7.
- 297 For the sake of clarity, I leave all the other options for rendering *pistis* here aside, but of course faithfulness, trust, loyalty, conviction, and persuasion are all possible translations.
- 298 This topos of imitation is extensively discussed, particularly in relation to *pistis*, in the next chapter.

in view of God's truth (ὕπερ ἀληθείας θεοῦ), thus including outsiders in glorifying God (15.7–9).

In the other instances where *pistis* is used in this section (Rom 14.2, 22, 23), it is used in the more limited and Stoicizing sense of a personal, cognitive conviction relating to indifferents. This is the narrower sense that the strong seem to emphasize. Such a conviction is here only deemed of secondary value, subservient to other-serving love. This is even explicitly stated by Paul in his critique: by grieving the weak, 'you no longer walk in love' (Rom 14.15: οὐκέτι κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατεῖς). 'Strong persons' must know when to keep their personal *pistis* 'to themselves' (14.22: κατὰ σεαυτόν), like the Stoic wise must, in order to serve the weak in the community. This narrow, personal sense, Paul reasons, is not all *pistis* is supposed to be, as it should include 'welcoming' the other. In this section, Paul makes use of *pistis*'s wider range of meanings to teach his addressees that faith proper comprises both cognitive convictions and relational attunement to the good of the community.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The semantic domain I have discussed in this chapter highlights the close semantic connection between *pistis* and *peithō*, faith and persuasion. It is within this domain that we find ample ground to reject the widespread dichotomy of relational faith versus cognitive faith, a dichotomy that is often fuelled by the equally unfounded opposition between Jewish and Greek thought.

In our sources, a first obvious link between *pistis* and persuasion is found in rhetorical theory, in the use of *pistis* as 'rhetorical evidence'. Within this context, the 'character' or *ēthos* of the rhetorician stands out as the most important means of persuasion: in what type of person would you invest trust? Within the competitive culture of the Hellenistic-Roman philosophical schools, the question of which school and teacher deserve trust gains traction: cognitive convictions are developed within the boundaries of loyalty to a specific school and teacher. Likewise, in Paul's thought, the object of trust is deemed important: instead of being self-confident or relying on 'the flesh', Paul's addressees are supposed to trust in God's actions or should, like Paul, have convictions 'in the Lord' or 'through Christ towards God'. Thus, convictions are to be aligned with the object of one's allegiance: just as in the philosophical schools of the period, cognitive and relational overtones of *pistis* and *peithō* coincide. Allegiance to Paul as teacher appears to be much more precarious, however, than allegiance to God. In Paul's letters, self-confident emphasis on his role as Christ's ambassador is alternated with a

careful acknowledgement that the *pistis* of the community is their own and may even reversely be an inspiration to the apostle.

*Pistis* in the sense of ‘persuasion’ was seen in a much more negative light within the discourse on the difference between true philosophy and sophistry. This antithesis, however, proved more nuanced, as the contrast within this discourse was phrased in terms of ‘trust in words’ versus ‘trust in what is just’ and by pitting ‘shallow persuasion’ against ‘transformative persuasion’: *pistis* and persuasion are important to the philosophical enterprise as long as they effectuate an internal transformation towards virtue. In Paul’s words, the corresponding contrast is between *pistis* grounded in human wisdom and *pistis* grounded in divine power: power that actually transforms those who are persuaded, not showy and superficial rhetoric. The connection between *pistis* and *energeia* found in Aristotelian and Epicurean sources as well as in Paul’s letters confirms the importance of enacting the message heard in one’s actions. All in all, persuasion as such is not disqualified in Paul’s letters, only the sophistic variant is, wherefore Paul attempts to distance himself from sophistic persuasion in multiple ways.

A final remarkable insight from this domain of *pistis* and persuasion is that in Epicurean and even more so in Stoic philosophy, *pistis* is used to express an important mental quality of the ideal wise person. In this discourse, having a strong *pistis* implies having a stable epistemological grasp of the world. Yet this wise disposition also implies being trustworthy so as to be able to engage in relationships of friendship with others. We saw how the tension between persuading and teaching others in an asymmetrical relationship on the one hand, and experiencing fellowship and love as among equals in *pistis* on the other, is also evident in Paul’s usage of this semantic domain. In warning against the self-centeredness of the *pistis* of the ‘strong’ in the Roman community, he may even have had this Stoic, emancipating *pistis* in mind. And like Stoic teachings on this subject, he emphasizes the accommodating and other-regarding outlook of the sage’s strong persuasion: the ‘weak’ or ‘less-advanced’ should not be forced into a similar *pistis* but welcomed in accordance with the inclusive and transformative persuasion of the ultimate sage, Christ. This ‘chain of imitations’ is the main theme explored in the subsequent chapter on the ethical dimensions of *pistis* language.

## Pistis, Ēthos, and Mimēsis: Faith as Attitude and Virtue Imitating the Divine

### 6.1 Faith and Works: an Unhappy Couple?

In Christian, particularly post-Reformation theology, there is an awkward juxtaposition of the concepts of faith and works or, alternatively, of the areas of soteriology and ethics.<sup>1</sup> In relational terms, the one seems unable to live with or without the other. The historical *exemplum* of this tenacious struggle is Martin Luther's infamous judgement of the *Epistle of James*, the epistle in which faith without works is deemed dead, as an 'epistle of straw', whose strategy he deems unsuccessful, whose apostolicity erroneous, and whose canonicity contentious.<sup>2</sup> Less well-known yet perhaps even more telling is Luther's resistance to the reconciliation attempt at the diet of Regensburg (1541), where the reformers Philipp Melancthon and Martin Bucer reached an agreement with, among others, Johannes Gropper and Gasparo Contarini regarding the doctrine of justification.<sup>3</sup> In a letter to the Elector of Saxony, Luther torpedoed their compromise and claims that

the two ideas of justification by faith alone without works (Rom 3:28) and faith working through love (Gal 5:6) had been thrown together and glued together (*zu samem gereymet und geleymet*): whereas one refers to becoming righteous, the other to the life of the righteous. (Luther 1930–1985, 9:406–9, #3616, as quoted by Fink 2010, 214, n. 27)

From Luther's perspective, apparently, faith can be construed in two fundamentally different ways.<sup>4</sup> Faith is the antonym of works in the context of

1 Cf. for a more recent defence of this contrast, cf. Moo 2013, 210, commenting on *Galatians* 3: 'The Reformers, therefore, were entirely justified to find in Paul's argument here a fundamental and universally valid principle about the exclusive value of believing versus doing.'

2 In contrast to popular belief, this judgement was made only by comparison, and the letter was not deemed completely worthless or unbiblical, as Luther's own preaching demonstrates: see Wengert 2015.

3 See e.g. Lane 2004, 237–238; Fink 2010, 213–214.

4 Cf. e.g. Chester 2017, 162–164.



becoming righteous, yet it is the precondition of works (in the form of love) in the context of living the righteous life.

Luther's overall evaluation of faith may be more balanced than his rather pointed expression have made it appear, yet the unease with doing good deeds has left its mark on both the image and self-understanding of protestant Christianity and, simultaneously, on the image and understanding of the concept of faith. Although the project of this book is to distinguish between different forms of life of *pistis*, and whereas I concede to the Reformers that there is a difference between a discourse of justice and a discourse of ethics, the question remains whether we should think of it in terms of continuity or inversion. By building on the narrative of justice, law, and faith presented in chapter 3, this chapter aims to draw both discourses, that of 'justice and justification' and that of 'works and ethics', more closely together.<sup>5</sup>

So, are we correct in calling faith a virtue? In the wake of Luther, the idea has taken root that if faith is endowed by divine grace alone, it cannot be a virtue at the same time. Virtue requires human practice and progress, in other words, works. And works are so suspect that not only faith but even virtue in general is claimed in some theologies to come naturally to Christians, powered by the Spirit of God. On the other hand, few people would deny that the Christian tradition bases itself on Paul's own words—discussed at length in the previous chapter—when it calls faith one of the theological virtues. And why all the imperatives, does Paul not trust the ethical transformation by the Spirit? A logical escape would be to name faith a virtue of a different kind, one that escapes the slippery slope of human effort and is altogether different from the pagan variety. The idea that biblical faith could be something as Greek as a virtue 'bedevilled' the history of theology according to some scholars:

Faith is the *leptikon organon*, the divinely given instrument by which man is enabled to apprehend the personal grace of God in Christ. Faith is not a human work (...) In fact, however, the misunderstanding which sets faith itself in the category of meritorious works has bedevilled the history of theology to an extraordinary degree. (Lampe 1954, 62 quoted approvingly by Hebert 1955, 379)

But before we assume such an essential difference between early Christian and pagan conceptions, as these scholars so, we must ascertain if that is indeed

---

<sup>5</sup> This is the route I also took in §3.4.3, on participation in and imitation of the living law, Jesus Christ.

what Paul meant and what Paul's audience would have understood. Is it time for the virtue of faith to make a comeback?<sup>6</sup>

To a certain extent, the discussion about whether faith is a virtue is caught up in the debate on the meaning of *pistis* itself. The semantical breadth of the word group includes both what we might describe as a relational attitude, 'faith', 'belief', or 'trust' in someone or something, and a dispositional quality, 'faithfulness', 'loyalty', or 'trustworthiness'. From this semantic perspective, it is almost incredible how the Christian (particularly protestant) tradition managed to separate those two aspects of faith and faithfulness that are captured in one single Greek noun, *pistis*. If we read scholarly works on *pistis* from a century ago, however, both senses are apparently easily distinguishable: William Hatch bluntly states that 'Paul uses πίστις only twice in the sense of faithfulness.'<sup>7</sup>

In particular the meaning of *pistis* in the so-called *pistis Christou* formulations has turned into a hotly debated topic in the last decennia of New Testament scholarship (for some outlines of this debate, see §6.2.1 below): do these formulations bear the meaning of 'faith in Christ' or 'faithfulness of Christ'? In other words—and the words I will use often in this chapter—is *pistis* here an attitude or a virtue? Though I would have preferred to avoid the *pistis Christou* pitfall altogether, I cannot justify simply taking a detour and leaving this topic be. Indeed, I would submit that the comparison with pagan source material has a bearing on the understanding of *pistis Christou* as well. In this chapter, I argue that the cultural discourse of moral imitation forms the background of an important part of Pauline *pistis* vocabulary, including the seven occurrences of *pistis Christou*. From this perspective, the ambiguity of *pistis* as simultaneously an attitude towards a model and a virtue to imitate stands out. Faith is very much a matter of dependence and trust as an other-looking attitude. Yet part of this outward-looking, more-or-less 'transitive' aspect is the desire and endeavour to become like Christ or Christlike in thought, emotion, attitude, and action, i.e. in the virtue of faithfulness.

As for the structure of this chapter, I start off with an outline of scholarly discussions concerning *pistis Christou* (§6.2.1) and moral imitation in Paul (§6.2.2), after which I suggest converging the themes of *pistis* and *imitation* based on the Hellenistic-Roman discourse on moral imitation and 'becoming like God' (§6.2.3). In the next section (§6.3), this discourse is set out with its

6 This is the conclusion of Wright 2008, 489: 'Faith, then, is indeed a virtue. It demands hard work, not because it isn't a gift, but because it is; not because it isn't authentically flowing from within us, but because it is.'

7 Hatch 1917, 32.

more general and more specific layers and its prominent participants. I first survey a diversity of genres attesting to the function of *pistis* as means and end of moral imitation, i.e. *pistis* as an attitude enabling imitation and as a moral quality to imitate (§6.3.1). Hereafter, I discuss the specific setting of Hellenistic-Roman philosophy, defined as a particularly practical enterprise, aimed at the development of a virtuous attitude, that could be described in terms of *pistis* (§6.3.2). Next, this philosophical education demonstrates that *pistis* as such functions in a mimetic chain of masters and students as both attitude and quality (§6.3.3). Thereafter, a much more specific ancient philosophical topos is addressed that goes by the name of *homoïōsis theōi*, in which the gods are the object of imitation, participation, or assimilation (§6.3.4), sometimes even with respect to *pistis* (§6.3.5). From this setting, I return to Paul, arguing that often in his letters, *pistis* is enacted in precisely such a setting of practical philosophy and moral perfection (§6.4.1). Moreover, the practice of a mimetic chain of faith is also evident from the Pauline epistles (§6.4.2), with different human models functioning as trusting and trustworthy intermediaries between the faithful God and the faithful believer (§6.4.3). The main address of a human attitude of *pistis* for Paul, of course, is Christ, who at the same time functions as an example for the virtue of *pistis* (§6.4.4). Whereas *pistis*-as-an-attitude may be aimed at God, Christ is the embodiment and model of *pistis*-as-a-virtue: in the final section (§6.4.5), the presence of this motive of imitation in the *pistis Christou* passages is brought to light.

## 6.2 Faith in Christ versus Faithfulness of Christ and the Key Discourse of Imitation

### 6.2.1 *Pistis Christou and the Option of Sustained Ambiguity*

Within New Testament scholarship, a very particular debate has been carrying on for decades now, related to the meaning of several variations of the expression *pistis Christou* in the letters of the apostle Paul.<sup>8</sup> The discussion arises from the plurality of possible meanings, due to the ambiguity of the noun *pistis* and to the various possible relationships denoted by the genitive case, resulting in the most common translations of ‘faith in Christ’, a so-called objective genitive, or ‘faithfulness of Christ’, a so-called subjective genitive construction.

8 The seven occurrences have slight variations in phrasing: διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 2.16); ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (Gal 2.16); ἐν πίστει (...) τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 2.20); ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 3.22); διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (Phil 3.9); διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 3.22); ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3.26).

Grammatically, both options are valid and possible.<sup>9</sup> Contextually, the Pauline epistles can support both positions. Theologically, there is a lot at stake, for different interpretations offer different answers to questions such as ‘how can one be made righteous?’, ‘is righteousness an individual or collective affair?’, and ‘how human do we envision Christ to be?’<sup>10</sup>

Already in the 1850s, there was a debate on the proper translation of *pistis* language in the Netherlands, sparked by a Leiden dissertation by Hendrik Berlage (1856) which argued for the sense of a ‘Jesus authored faith’ (*genitivus auctoris*) with God as its object.<sup>11</sup> On another side stood the ‘Groningen school’, which argued for a meaning of ‘trust in / surrender to Christ’. The traditional ‘belief in Christ’ was defended against both of these positions in a monograph by theologian Jan Wernink.<sup>12</sup> Judging from some recent contributions, the dust has still not quite settled.<sup>13</sup> The interpretation of Pauline theology as a whole, if such a construct exists, affects the interpretation of the formula, while the same is true in the opposite direction, thus trapping the interpreter

9 In an exchange of views published in the SBL Symposium Series, both Hays (supporting the subjective genitive reading) and Dunn (supporting the objective genitive reading) held that the phrase itself is inconclusive, though each also maintains that the outcome of the grammatical arguments favours his own interpretation: see Hays 1997, 39 (reprinted as appendix in Hays 2002, 272–297) and Dunn 2002, 67 (reprinted as appendix in Hays 2002, 249–271).

10 For an overview of these and other theological concerns, see Hays 1997, 55–57.

11 This Dutch discussion, together with some other early *pistis Christou* debates, was dusted off by Benjamin Schliesser (Schliesser 2015, 76–83).

12 See Wernink 1858, and see a contemporary Dutch review of this monograph (v.p. 1859, 302): ‘Dus wordt tegenover de Groninger School gehandhaafd, dat πίστις εν πιστεύειν niet door vertrouwen, maar door geloof en gelooven behooren te worden overgezet, en dat ze, met εἰς verbonden, niet iets innigs, eene naauwe aansluiting en overgave te kennen geven, maar eenvoudig een gelooven met betrekking tot (in de rigting naar); terwijl ook de Leidsche School, wanneer zij de πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ door geloof in God verklaart, hetzif gelijk Christus dat zelf gehad heeft, of wel—beter—waarvan Hij de bewerker is, zich den haast gewonnen zegepalm betwist ziet door eene kloeke verdediging der *interpretatio recepta*, die hier het geloof in J.C. zelven bedoeld acht.’

13 A comprehensive overview of the current situation, including ‘both sides of the story’ is offered by Bird and Sprinkle (2009), and cf. for the latest state Gupta 2020a. Ulrichs’s *Christusglaube* (2007) ultimately defends the ‘faith in Christ’ position while incorporating New Perspective insights. Ulrichs’s work is rich in biblical exegesis, yet very minimal in contextualizing Paul’s language in extra-biblical sources (all non-biblical sources fit on one page in the register and as for pagan material, it only mentions one text from Plutarch and two by Thucydides). Another recent contribution by Downs and Lappenga argues ‘that the Pauline expression πίστις Χριστοῦ and related variants refer primarily to the faithfulness of the risen Christ Jesus who will remain faithful to those who, in their own faith, are justified through union with Christ, raised and exalted’ (2019, 3).

in a hermeneutical circle.<sup>14</sup> Thus, to put it in optimistic terms, the question is how to escape this two-dimensional closed figure. I argue that in the ancient Mediterranean moral praxis of imitation, particularly as it was practised in philosophical schools, and even more specifically in the philosophical topos of assimilation to God, we find an external model that may help us to visualize the logic behind Paul's *pistis Christou* formulations.<sup>15</sup>

Before I discuss these themes of imitation and assimilation, it is helpful to have a look at the linguistic presuppositions involved in the *pistis Christou* debate. What most contributions (in both subjective and objective positions) have in common is the wish to 'disambiguate' the formula.<sup>16</sup> Recently, however, there seems to be a growing awareness that it may not be a matter of either/or. One early exception to the disambiguation trend is Thomas Torrance, who published a short article in which he compares *pistis* and *emunah* terminology. He argues:

*Pistis Iesou Christou* (...) is essentially a polarized expression denoting the faithfulness of Christ as its main ingredient but also involving or at least suggesting the answering faithfulness of man, and so his belief in Christ, but even within itself the faithfulness of Christ involves both the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of the man Jesus. (Torrance 1957, 113)<sup>17</sup>

14 Cf. the conclusion of an overview of arguments in Easter 2010, 42: 'interpreters resort either intentionally or unintentionally to their larger models for reading Paul that are already in place.'

15 Granted, this Mediterranean model will form nothing but an even wider circle with the Pauline material, yet I presume that at least here, the amount and variety of the sources will leave less room for ideological presuppositions.

16 As formulated literally by Matlock (2007, 177) and Barclay (2015, 380: 'The phrase is helpfully disambiguated by Paul himself in the centre of 2.16 by the appearance of the verb, used not of Christ but of believers'), yet implied by many others. Thomas Schumacher emphasizes the reciprocity of *pistis* throughout his comprehensive monograph (2012), yet opts for an interpretation of *pistis Christou* as a subjective genitive 'bei dem die πίστις auf die Zuwendung Jesu Christi zu den Menschen bezogen ist' (463). Michael Wolter (2017, 365) dismisses both subjective and objective readings; his alternative of a *genitivus qualitatis*, Christ-faith ('als metonymische Umschreibung für das Christusgeschehen'), comes close to the interpretation argued here, yet remains quite cognitive (cf. my response to Wolter in §7.4.1 *infra*) and lacks the reciprocal dynamic inherent to the classical process of imitation.

17 Torrance also suggests that when we read words like *pistis* or *dikaioσynē*, 'we must see behind them the Hebrew words' (1957, 112), a reasoning rightly addressed and rebutted in Barr 1961, 201–205.

A second name to mention is Richard Hays, who in the late nineties was responsible for putting the matter firmly on the scholarly agenda with *The Faith of Jesus Christ*.<sup>18</sup> Regarding the choice between faith or faithfulness, he ‘challenges’ James Dunn, a spokesperson for the ‘faith in Christ’ interpretation, ‘to show that it was semantically possible in Hellenistic Greek to make such a conceptual distinction. The single word πίστις carries both connotations. Therefore, Dunn’s distinction is anachronistic, a semantic fallacy.’<sup>19</sup> In response to him, however, Barry Matlock refers to lexical semantics and encourages us to start ‘thinking in terms of the contextual selection of discrete senses of words.’<sup>20</sup> Hays may indeed fall prey to yet another fallacy, namely supposing that all meanings or uses of a word apply to any given instance, James Barr’s famous ‘illegitimate totality transfer.’<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Matlock’s approach, to ‘de-theologize’ the debate by calling in the help of linguistics, is in this sense a fruitful one, and I fully acknowledge that language users generally understand ambiguous words by excluding the non-applying meanings based on markers in the direct context. What Matlock does not address, unfortunately, is the possibility that the ambiguity was in fact intended, or at least not intentionally excluded by Paul.

Apart from Hays, this possibility of intended ambiguity has been hinted at in passing by scholars such as Gerhard Freidrich, Daniel Lynwood Smith, Robert Jewett, and Benjamin Schliesser.<sup>22</sup> Friedrich refers to the Kühner-Gerth grammar of classical Greek, which is helpful to quote here at length:

- 
- 18 An even earlier warning not to choose between a subjective and an objective genitive can be found in Schmitz 1924, on *pistis Christou* see 91–134.
- 19 Hays 1997, 58; cf. Hays 1983, 174–175: ‘We should be willing to recognize that Paul’s language may sometimes be ambiguous by design, allowing him to speak in one breath of Christ’s faith and our faith.’
- 20 Matlock 2000, 16; cf. Matlock 2002, 315, building on linguistic theory as explained by Cruse (2000).
- 21 See Barr 1961, 218.
- 22 Friedrich 1982, 105: ‘Glaube im Neuen Testament ist Christusglaube, Glaube durch Christus und Glaube an Christus. Er ist durch Christus entstanden, auf Christus gerichtet und an Christus gebunden.’ Smith 2015, 174: ‘understanding a concept does not always require us to choose one meaning at the expense of another meaning. Sometimes, to understand *pistis* in a given context, you need to take into account both senses of the word: faith and faithfulness.’ Jewett 2007, 277–278: ‘neither of the strict construals matches what the original audience would have understood. I wonder whether the ambiguity may have been intentional on Paul’s part’. Schliesser 2016, 289: ‘Adhering too slavishly to the rubrics of grammarians hampers one’s comprehension of the formulation in question, since it neither acknowledges the complexity of the Greek genitive nor the originality of Paul’s language.’ Of these four, Schliesser has developed the most comprehensive account on *pistis Christou* as an ‘eschatological event’, on which see also §3.4.1 *supra*. This view,

According to the above, the genitive only very generally expresses the relationship between two terms, and, at the same time, the grammatical categories of the possessive, objective, partitive (etc.) genitive are by no means to be clearly distinguished from one another. (...) It must also be admitted that not all genitives can be comfortably squeezed into the grammar scheme. (Kuhner & Gerth 1955, 334)<sup>23</sup>

In his commentary on *Romans*, Christopher Bryan also calls upon present-day grammarians who ‘in admitting such ambiguity (...) have in general been a good deal more forthright than the commentators.’<sup>24</sup> Among others, he quotes Nigel Turner, who stated that ‘there is no reason why a genitive in the author’s mind may not have been both subjective and objective.’<sup>25</sup>

An excellent case for ‘sustained ambiguity’ on the basis of the evidence of ancient semantics is made by Gerald Downing. Downing establishes that, in ancient reflection on language, ambiguity was recognized and, in case of the Stoics, also problematized. Yet, in more general philosophical writing there is no evidence of any concern that it is necessary to distinguish meticulously between different senses of words.<sup>26</sup> After thus surveying a range of ancient authors on the issue of language ambiguity and using these insights as a lens to read Paul’s faith(fulness) language, he concludes:

In Paul’s world, trust in someone was itself founded in, and displayed and presupposed belief in their trustworthiness (as well as, most likely, their

---

however, seems to fit the occurrence in *Galatians* yet is less well-suited to the ‘imitative’ contexts of the others: see §6.4.5 below.

23 ‘Da nach dem oben Bemerkten der Genitiv nur ganz allgemein die Zusammengehörigkeit zweier Begriffe zum Ausdruck bringt, andererseits aber die grammatischen Kategorien des gen. possessivus, objectivus, partitivus u. s. w. keineswegs scharf gegeneinander abzugrenzen sind. (...) Auch muss zugestanden werden, dass überhaupt nicht alle Genitive sich bequem in das von den Grammatikern aufgestellte Schema einzwängen lassen.’

24 Bryan 2000, 109, on *pistis Christou*, see 108–111.

25 Moulton & Turner 1963, 210.

26 See Downing 2010, 146: ‘When Seneca discourses on tranquillity, providence, constancy, anger, clemency; or Plutarch on education, tranquillity, friendship, fortune, virtue and vice, marriage; or Dio of Prusa on kingship, tyranny, virtue, usefulness, or faith (περὶ πίστεως), no word and no set of words “encapsulates” let alone itself defines “the idea”. It is always outside and beyond the words; and, *a fortiori*, there is no attempt to discriminate—let alone then to prioritise and exclude—various possible senses, connotations, of the various individual terms deployed, nor does there seem to be on any other topic.’ On the Stoic interest in ambiguity as a result of their general philosophical outlook, see Atherton 2007, chapter 3, ‘Morality Talks: The Origins and Limits of Stoic Interest in Ambiguity’ (39–130).

willingness to trust you): faith in Jesus would necessarily imply (unless explicitly denied) at the least a trust in his faithfulness. Ancient expectations of words have them carry much of their semantic baggage with them, whatever part of their range appears in context to be foregrounded; that is, unless some elements of their range have been specifically discarded. (Downing 2010, 160)<sup>27</sup>

It is an important observation that trust (faith) in fact implies the trustworthiness (faithfulness) of the one in whom trust is placed. Speaking of ‘semantic baggage’ may sound too much like ‘illegitimate totality transfer’—which is why Kevin McFadden accuses Downing of a fault similar to the one Matlock had found in Hays. McFadden, however, does not seem to acknowledge the possibility of a deliberate ambiguity, as he only mentions this option in one concessional clause: ‘It is true that authors occasionally use deliberate ambiguity in their language, but typically “context serves to eliminate multiple meanings.”’<sup>28</sup> The question is whether the context does so in the cases at hand.

Taking a fresh approach to early Christian texts from the perspective of the ‘shape of trust’ in the Graeco-Roman society, Teresa Morgan arrives at a similar understanding of *pistis Christou* as ‘doubly reciprocal’:

It is precisely the fact that Christ is both faithful to God and worthy of God’s trust, trustworthy by human beings and trusted by them, that enables him to take those who *pisteuein* into righteousness (and human beings, in turn, to spread the word to others). (Morgan 2015, 273–274)

To take any one of these two or even four dimensions away, then, would do a major injustice to the core message of the apostle.<sup>29</sup>

If it is indeed plausible that Paul exploits this ambiguity in his *pistis Christou* formulations, based on ancient semantic theory and actual language use of

27 Cf. Downing 2010, 155–156: ‘What is ruled out, then, it is here argued, is any hard precision, any clear lines between possible connotations of particular words, the kinds of “nice” distinctions desired in some theological or ideological discourse. In interpreting sympathetically our ancient texts it will, rather and almost inevitably, be a matter of discerning family resemblances among uses of particular lexemes.’

28 McFadden 2015, 257, quoting Silva 1994, 150.

29 That Paul exploits the ambiguity of terms has also been noted in regard to different words and passages, see e.g. (with regard to *κατοπτρίζω* and *καταργέω*) Stockhausen 1989, 127: ‘The wisest course is simply to admit that when Paul uses an ambiguous term or form, he means to play upon that very ambiguity. We must allow him to do so.’



the *pistis* (and *fides*) word group in Paul's time, it is helpful to understand how this ambiguity plays out if we were to imagine its 'enactment'. One of the many merits of the renewed philosophical attention to Paul is the understanding of faith as a performative utterance, as elucidated by Giorgio Agamben: it 'immediately produces a real fact'.<sup>30</sup> Yet what is the underlying reality or materiality, the associative background—or, in terms of cognitive linguistics, the 'frame'—of *pistis Christou*? Hays explicitly lists as an area that requires further elaboration 'the cultural/semantic background of Paul's πίστις language: how would Paul's uses of this terminology have been understood by his readers within the ancient Mediterranean world?'<sup>31</sup> Downing does not offer a specific cultural embeddedness. Morgan suggests that a parallel can be found in the ancient practice of mediation, like that between the emperor Tiberius and revolting legions in Germany with the help of Germanicus, his nephew (Tacitus, *Annals* 1.31–52).<sup>32</sup> Another option is offered in the form of a short observation by Peter Lampe in his survey of patronage relations in the Pauline epistles:

Because loyalty is a mutual attitude in patron-client relationships, the question whether the expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (...) represents a subjective or an objective genitive might present false alternatives because it is both. (Lampe 2016, 226)

We will indeed return to this important semantic domain of political mediation and public patronage in the next chapter, although it does not seem to me to be the first context evoked by the phrase *pistis Christou*. While patronage and mediation offer interesting illustrations of the multivalence of and reciprocity inherent to *fides* language, there is a more obvious choice when looking for a cultural 'habitat' of Paul's *pistis Christou* language, because of both its day-to-day occurrence in the social context of Paul's addressees and its frequent explicit and implicit use in the Pauline epistles, even in the direct context of the *pistis Christou* formula (see §6.4.5). I am referring to the practice of moral imitation.

30 Agamben 2005, 131: 'we have to venture something like a performative efficacy of the word of faith realized in its very pronouncement.'

31 Hays 1997, 38.

32 Morgan 2015, 292–294. Cf. on imitation and *pistis* language p. 257, n. 162: 'Though imitation (of God, Christ, or those entrusted with authority) is not often connected explicitly with *pistis* language here or elsewhere in the New Testament, imitation can be seen as one way in which human beings learn how to respond to the *pistis* that God and Christ extend to them.'

### 6.2.2 *A Brief Scholarly History of Pauline Imitation: Personal Example versus Authority?*

With saying like ‘imitate me as I imitate Christ’ (1 Cor 11.1) or ‘you became imitators of us and of the Lord’ (1 Thes 1.6), Paul explicitly describes his project in terms of ‘imitation’ or, to use the Greek term, *mimēsis*.<sup>33</sup> There is an increasing amount of literature on the subject of imitation and its application within the Pauline letters. From the perspective of this study, it is remarkable that in these publications the topic of imitation in *pistis* is overlooked and Graeco-Roman sources are only rarely taken into account.

One of the earliest and most influential contributions, the entry in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* by Wilhelm Michaelis (ThWNT 1942; TDNT 1968), lists three distinct uses of the verb μιμέομαι (‘to imitate’) in the New Testament: namely, (1) simple comparison, (2) the following of Paul’s example, (3) obedience to the authority of the apostle. He downplays the importance of the first and second categories in favour of the third, including a large number of imitation-texts (such as 1 Cor 4.16, 1 Cor 11.1, 1 Thes 1.6) in this context of obedience to authority.<sup>34</sup> With Michaelis’s division, we can already distinguish the two issues which will dominate the ensuing scholarly discussion: the relative importance of personal, moral imitation of Paul (including its relation to imitation of Christ) and the extent to which this motive is used by Paul to claim authority or power. Here, I briefly sketch these two lines of argumentation in what I intend to be a representative yet by no means exhaustive overview, in each case sticking to the chronology of publications.<sup>35</sup>

First, we have the responses to Michaelis’s downplaying of personal imitation. While endorsing Michaelis’s focus on obedience, David Stanley adds that Paul’s *imitatio Christi* is a ‘mediated imitation’, leaning on Paul as ‘a concrete *Vorbild*, the specific examples and lessons contained in Paul’s own version of the Gospel as preached and lived by him.’<sup>36</sup> Stanley, however, is sceptical about comparisons with Greek literature, as they ‘provide no real parallels to Pauline usage’ and, moreover, ‘the notion of collecting a group of disciples around

33 Pace Michaelis 1968, who views this text not as an example of personal imitation but of emphasizing obedience to Paul’s authority (esp. at 669). Cf. below, in this section and in §6.5.2.

34 On the imbalance in Michaelis’s division, and his preference for authority even in passages he earlier listed as examples of the second category, see Dodd 1999, 19, 29.

35 I omit the publications relating to the usage of literary or rhetorical *exempla* by Paul, such as Mitchell 1991, 39–60 and Smit 2013, 16–30. I have also purposefully left out some publications I refer to in the remainder of this chapter, relating to more specific points, in order to keep this overview brief and coherent.

36 Stanley 1959, 877.

his own person is so foreign to Paul's mind that the word μαθητής is found nowhere in his epistles.<sup>37</sup> Of particular interest to my study is the work of Willis Peter de Boer, who draws heavily on both Graeco-Roman and Jewish source material to demonstrate the ubiquity of the idea of personal imitation to achieve moral growth and development of character.<sup>38</sup> De Boer supplements Stanley's emphasis on mediated imitation with the observation that it is Paul's ultimate goal that his 'pupils' and 'children' grow towards maturity, which according to De Boer implies that Christ will then be imitated directly.<sup>39</sup> Imitating Paul's personal example is thus only an intermediary stage.

By focusing on imitation in 1 *Thessalonians*, Mary Ann Getty again shows that 'Michaelis and others have underestimated the importance of the imitation theme in Paul' and furthermore demonstrates a diachronic development starting in this letter as an 'incipient pattern' that becomes more prominent and gradually give more weight to imitation of Christ besides imitation of Paul and other communities.<sup>40</sup> Focusing primarily on the 'authority' theme in imitation, Jo-Ann Brant notices in passing, based on her reading of Aristotle, that 'just as an object of art can teach one about beauty, Paul's example teaches others about life in Christ.'<sup>41</sup> Here, she nails the ontological connection I discussed in length in the context of epistemology in chapter 4, which now returns in the context of ethics: Paul is a model, but only insofar as he reflects the ultimate goodness as it was 'lived' fully by Christ, the divine model. This scheme is well-recurred throughout my own discussion of Graeco-Roman sources, and it offers the key to evaluate the second issue in the scholarly debate on Pauline imitation: the power and authority behind the motive and practice of imitation.

This second issue is also raised by Michaelis's treatment of *mimēsis* and concerns Paul's aim of subjecting his addressees to his authority. Michaelis's emphasis on authority first led to some relativizing responses. Focusing on 1 *Corinthians* 4.16, Boykin Sanders asks how Paul envisions to be imitated, arguing that it we ought to understand this call as a call to stop the division caused by favouring one teacher above another; Paul presents himself by contrast as a 'father' that establishes a communal principle.<sup>42</sup> Benjamin Fiore, who writes on imitation in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles, devotes a chapter

37 Stanley 1959, 859.

38 De Boer 1962, esp. his conclusions on p. 211.

39 De Boer 1962, 215. Cf. §5.4.4 *supra* on *pistis* and growing towards maturity.

40 Getty 1990, 283, 278, 279, respectively.

41 Brant 1993, 299.

42 Sanders 1981.

to Paul in which he argues vehemently against Michaelis.<sup>43</sup> Fiore is reluctant to see a call to imitation as bluntly exerting authority, whereas he does leave ample room for 'simple comparison'. Adele Reinhartz delves further into the power relations inherent to imitation and addresses the question whether Paul's appeal to imitate him does not render him at best immodest and at worst hypocritical. Her analysis brings together Paul's attitude of humility and his superiority as expressed in his call to imitate him: both are responses to Paul's opponents, 'including possibly other apostles'.<sup>44</sup> Abraham Malherbe compares Paul's imitation language with that of contemporary philosophers and argues that Paul was far less hesitant to call for following his own example. However, in contrast to the Stoics it was not his own merit but the strength he received from God that made him a suitable model.<sup>45</sup>

Less commendable yet nonetheless very important to the ensuing debate is the picture painted by Elizabeth Castelli in her monograph *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (1991). She defends the thesis that Paul is solidifying his position of power by making use of the hierarchical and unifying tendencies that determine ancient imitational structures.<sup>46</sup> From this Foucauldian deconstructionist perspective, an appeal to divine strength is obviously the ultimate power play. Yet, Castelli seems to depend on modern presuppositions about what power looks like, while neglecting evidence from ancient honorific culture. While nowhere directly responding to Castelli, Jo-Ann Brant agrees with Reinhartz that there is an intrinsic logic behind Paul's simultaneously authoritative and humble call to imitation and refers to Aristotle to demonstrate that this logic is in fact embedded in the idea of imitation:

The actor is not the creator of the form; he or she is the agent who exercises his or her abilities in order to reproduce that order in a concrete form. (...) By adhering to external authority, the actions of the agents are more powerful than any actions which they can conceive on the basis of their own determination. (Brant 1993, 298)

---

43 Fiore 1986, esp. chapter 7, 'Example in the Letters of Paul' (164–190). See esp. at 190: 'he aims at imitation rather than obedience of this authoritative prescriptions.' Dodd (1999, 23–26) notes that Fiore is not entirely consistent in his evaluation of Paul's motive of exercising authority. On (my response to) Fiore's interpretation of 1 Thes 1.6, see §6.4.3 below.

44 Reinhartz 1987, 403.

45 Malherbe 1989, 57.

46 Castelli 1991, 87.

Thus, according to Brant's analysis of the internal structure of *mimēsis*, Paul is not exercising power over passive followers, but allowing his followers to share in his creative power to rise above their own possibilities. A careful reading of the context of all relevant imitation passages by Andrew Clarke is also meant to establish that the motivation of Paul is ultimately non-egoistic since he always points beyond himself to Christ and emphasizes the need that believers become examples themselves.<sup>47</sup> This complete denial of the influence of power, however, seems somewhat artificial.

In his comprehensive monograph (1999) on Paul's use of imitation as an explicit and implicit literary strategy, Brian Dodd aims to overcome the dichotomy between imitation as (soft) pedagogical technique and as (strong) assertion of authority.<sup>48</sup> He further emphasizes the diversity in Paul's self-portrayal, depending on each letter's situation, and posits a strong correlation between Paul's epistolary and real-life example.<sup>49</sup> Dodd's balanced approach offers a decisive critique of the one-sidedness of Castelli's sociological reductionism, a critique that is further developed in Victor Copan's interdisciplinary research on imitation and Paul's aim of spiritual guidance: to this noble end, the use of power is helpful and culturally accepted.<sup>50</sup> Copan is also exemplary in involving an analysis of Graeco-Roman imitation along different lines of parent-child, leader-people, teacher-student, and divine-human: in this chapter only the latter two will be addressed since these contexts render the most promising occurrences of *pistis* in the semantic domain of ethics, leaving the parent-child and leader-people perspectives to the discussion of *pistis*'s social potential in chapters 7 and 8.<sup>51</sup> Finally, there are two more contributions arguing directly against Castelli. Dustin Ellington inveighs against Castelli's interpretation that Paul's imitation command 'has no specified content', whereas he sees a rich content in 'the pattern of Christ's death for others'.<sup>52</sup> And Drake Williams brought the evidence of Paul's contemporary Ignatius of Antioch to the fore, who interprets the imitation motive in Paul in terms of suffering instead of power and authority.<sup>53</sup>

---

47 Clarke 1998, 359.

48 Dodd 1999, 29–30.

49 Dodd 1999, 237.

50 Copan 2007, 181–218.

51 Copan 2007, 40–71.

52 Castelli 1991, 114; Ellington 2011, 313.

53 Williams 2014.

All in all, there is no use denying that in any relationship of imitation, power and authority play a part. The question is which part in what 'play'.<sup>54</sup> My analysis in this chapter takes as its 'stage' moral imitation in Graeco-Roman philosophy, according to which we will see that teachers and school founders are authorities insofar as they mirror the divine ideal *ēthos*. Furthermore, by comparing Paul to this discourse, the most remarkable feature of the Christian 'play' will appear to be the converse script of a paradigm (Christ, but also Paul) taking on the suffering position of the image (man), in order that that image can become like the paradigm.

### 6.2.3 *Enacting Pistis Christou on the Graeco-Roman Stage of Moral Imitation*

To sum up, we have seen how ample attention has been given to the motive of imitation in the Pauline epistles and how scholars agree that it is important, also in terms of personal *Nachfolgung* of Paul. Yet, imitation of Paul always implies imitation of Christ, such that Paul's authority is that of an earthly model referring to the divine model. These themes will also recur in my own discussion of Pauline texts in §6.4. This subject of imitation, however, is scarcely taken into account in interpreting Pauline *pistis* in general and in the *pistis Christou* debate in particular. In pointing out the presence of *pistis* in ancient discourses on imitation (of both human and divine models), it may be possible to contribute to the intricacies of the *pistis Christou* debate.

The motive of imitation is not completely alien to this debate. Here, it usually belongs to the terminology of those arguing for a 'faith(fulness) of Christ' interpretation: it is Christ's faith(fulness) in/to God that believers imitate.<sup>55</sup> Conversely, a mimetic explanation is oftentimes discarded by the opposite position for being too ethical, too horizontal, for expecting too little of Gods

54 The references to theatre, stage, (en)acting, audience, and such which I use here are merely metaphors to conveniently describe the idea of a real-life associative context. A case can and has been made, however, for viewing Paul's imitation (or *mimēsis*) language (esp. in *Philippians*) against precisely this backdrop of the Graeco-Roman love for theatrics and dramatics: see Eastman 2008 and cf. the perspective of the visual and ritual elements in Pauline imitation offered by Jane Heath, who argues 'that Paul is presenting himself in [2 Cor] 4.7–12 as an "image of Christ", closely associated with the iconic character of Christ himself' (Heath 2009, 276).

55 E.g. Williams 1987, 446: 'Christian faith is Christ-faith, that relationship to God which Christ exemplified, that life-stance which he actualized and which, because he lived and died, now characterizes the personal existence of everyone who lives in him. Christ is not the "object" of such faith, however, but rather its supreme exemplar—indeed, its creator.'

saving act and too much of the human response.<sup>56</sup> However, in her 2016 article, following up on her earlier contributions, Morna Hooker explicitly combines a stance on *pistis Christou* being purposefully ambiguous with the model of imitation: ‘The lexica’s different definitions reflect what is in fact a hen-and-egg situation. Our trust/faith is founded in the trustworthiness/faithfulness of God, but those who trust in him become like him, trustworthy in their turn.’<sup>57</sup> Like others, Hooker is uncomfortable with the connotations of the word ‘imitation’, proposing to speak of ‘participation’, ‘conformity’, or ‘sharing in what Christ is’ instead.<sup>58</sup> While the wish to avoid unhelpful modern connotations is quite understandable, this should not make us blind to the ubiquitous presence of imitation in ancient societies. It is unfortunate that, even though the model of imitation as such is sometimes mentioned in relation to Paul’s usage of *pistis Christou*, the model is, to my knowledge, solely used as an exegetical tool within the Pauline corpus, leaving aside the extensive resource of contemporary pagan material.

In early Christian interpretations of Paul, *pistis* appears to have been closely aligned with imitation of Christ (and even of God). Less than a century after the writing of Paul’s letters, Polycarp writes a letter to encourage the Philippians:

Stand fast therefore in these things and follow the example of the Lord (*domini exemplar sequimini*), being firm in faith and immovable (*firmi in fide et immutabiles*), in love of the brotherhood kindly affectioned one to another. (Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians* 10.1)<sup>59</sup>

When it comes to imitation of Jesus, Polycarp first specifies this as being ‘firm in faith’. Roughly two hundred years after Paul, Clement of Alexandria brings together the Platonic ideal of *homoïōsis theōi* (see §6.3.4–5 below) and Paul’s

56 For these reservations and their rebuttal, see Hooker 1989, 323. This also seems to be the rationale behind Hays’s critique (1997, 52) of Williams: ‘he downplays the vicarious elements of Paul’s story of salvation. I would prefer to speak less of Jesus as “exemplar” and somewhat more of Jesus as the σπέρμα (“seed”) whose apocalyptic destiny of death and resurrection reshapes the destiny of those who are now “in” him.’

57 Hooker 2016, 53; cf. Hooker 1989 and Hooker 1990, chapter 14, ‘Pistis Christou’ (165–186).

58 Hooker 1989, 323: ‘participation is a much better word than imitation’; Hooker 1990, 92: ‘Of course this is not imitation, it is conformity’; Hooker 1990, 183: ‘it is thus a question of sharing in what Christ is, not a question of imitation.’

59 Translation Lightfoot 1889. This part has been preserved in Latin translation, not in the extant Greek manuscripts.

‘mimetic chain’ (see §6.4.3 below) by calling assimilation to God the ‘aim of faith’:

And openly and expressly the apostle, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, says, ‘Be ye followers of me, as also I am of Christ,’ in order that that may take place. If ye are of me, and I am of Christ, then ye are imitators of Christ, and Christ of God. Assimilation to God, then, so that as far as possible a man becomes righteous and holy with wisdom, he lays down as the aim of faith, and the end to be that restitution of the promise which is effected by faith. (Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 2.22.136)<sup>60</sup>

With this synthesis, Clement places Paul’s imitation language squarely in the Platonic discourse of ‘assimilation to God’. Moreover, this topic comes up in a discussion of what *pistis* is: according to Clement, Plato’s *homoiōsis theōi* is in fact the ‘aim of faith’. These patristic witnesses give us ample reason to delve deeper into moral imitation and divine assimilation in order to determine if Paul’s *pistis* language is indeed participating in these discourses.

In this chapter, I aim to contribute to this discussion by combining the themes of *pistis* and imitation via their employment in Graeco-Roman thought. More precisely, I have chosen to use the more specific discourse of moral imitation, to which this chapter now turns, alongside the relevant sub-discourses of philosophical practice and teaching (§6.3.2–3) and imitating (or rather ‘becoming like’) God (§6.3.4–5).

### 6.3 Character Formation and Philosophical Imitation: Ethical Usage of *Pistis* in Graeco-Roman Discourses

In this section, I take a closer look at the ancient discourses related to moral imitation. That imitation in Paul has to do with ethics and not also, as for instance in Philo, with the realms of aesthetics or nature has been adequately covered in Karl Morrison’s survey, *The Mimetic Tradition of Reform in the West*.<sup>61</sup> The reason for delineating this specific discourse is, as in the other chapters, a matter of decisions made *en route*. In early surveys of Epictetus’s and Plutarch’s works, I found multiple relevant instances of *pistis/fides* and

<sup>60</sup> Translation Roberts & Donaldson 1869.

<sup>61</sup> Morrison 2014, 47 (cf. 42): ‘On balance, Paul had little to say about mimetic mediation in nature or in art, but he was passionately concerned with the area between nature and art: the area of moral reproduction.’



cognates in the context of moral imitation and education, which made me continue on this track and include key lemmata such as *ēthos*, *aretē*, and *mimēsis/mimētai/mimeomai*, *homoīōsis/homoioō*, *typos*, *paradeigma* (and in Latin: *mores*, *imitatio/imitare*, *exemplum*) in the TLG/LLT searches. This way, I found even more examples in the context of the ‘education for life’ that was offered by philosophical schools (§6.3.2–3). Delving deeper into the theoretical frame of thought behind this practice, the particular topos of imitation of the ultimate example personified in the gods (§6.3.4–5) was laid bare.

Notwithstanding these considerations, there are important contexts of imitation left unexplored in this chapter. An important case has been made by James Harrison for ‘the public context of imitation in civic life’ in an article which comprises the evidence of not only literary but also documentary and visual sources.<sup>62</sup> He begins his article by stating that the real-life imitation of someone else’s character has received relatively little scholarly attention among classicists and New Testament scholars, as compared to the attention for the ancient theoretical debate on *mimēsis* in aesthetics.<sup>63</sup> Harrison’s comparison of Pauline and pagan *mimēsis* language leads to a portrayal of the apostle vis-à-vis the ancient ‘great man’ as an anti-rhetorician and anti-imperialist.<sup>64</sup> In the next chapter, I will address these social implications of Paul’s gospel of *pistis*, arguing for a more subtle contrast in terms of a ‘making creative use of’ and a ‘reconfiguring’ instead of in terms of a radical ‘reversal’ or ‘inversion’ of ancient honour culture and imperial ideology.<sup>65</sup>

### 6.3.1 *Pistis/Fides as Relational Attitude and Dispositional Quality in Moral Imitation*

From the statues in the theatres to tablets with copying exercises, and from honorary inscriptions at the forum to literary rivalry, the whole social sphere of the early Roman empire breathed the air of moral imitation.<sup>66</sup> In the familial

62 Harrison 2013, citation from p. 214.

63 Harrison 2013, 213–214. Cf. for an elaborate overview of literature on the ancient aesthetics debate his n. 1 at p. 213. Among the exceptions, Harrison fails to include Van Kooten 2008.

64 Cf.: ‘Thus, another significant status-indicator of the “great man” in antiquity—rhetorical eloquence—is here debunked by Paul’s graphic portrayal of his self-lowering on behalf of others’ (251). And cf.: ‘Moreover, in confining the paradigm of imitation to Christ alone (...), Paul undermines the centrality of imperial *mimesis* in the first century’ (252).

65 Cf. ‘an unexpected reversal of cultural expectations’ (242), ‘radical reversal of human standards’ (245), ‘a reversal of social custom’ (250), and the article’s title for ‘inversion’.

66 See e.g. on intertextuality and imitation MacDonald 2001; on education and imitation Criore 2001, 132–136 and Witherington III 2011, 76–78; on imitation and rhetoric Smit 2013, 16–30; on imitation in rhetoric, education and literature Fiore 1986, 26–44.

context, children were expected to mimic their parents' and ancestors' civic virtues, while abstaining from their vices.<sup>67</sup> While some virtues were reserved for talented offspring only, the virtue of *pistis/fides* was among those which were considered to be in everyone's reach. Cicero indicates that not every child is capable of imitating every parental virtue such as speaking eloquently or conducting wars, yet as general virtues he lists *iustitia, fides, liberalitas, modestia, and temperantia*.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, as we saw in chapter 3, *fides* is listed in the subcategory of virtues that are beneficial to the human race, so that in the end these are not for the good of the imitator alone, but for the good of all. Imitation of virtues such as *fides* ('faith', 'faithfulness', or 'good faith') was therefore a matter of common benefit.<sup>69</sup>

Imitation was the foundation of the Roman system of education as well. Anyone who had the benefit of receiving some form of education would start by closely following the forms of characters written by their teachers and proceed to the rhythms of poetry, the rules of rhetoric, and the literary patterns laid out by model poets, orators, and philosophers.<sup>70</sup> Yet even in this educational context, imitation also included the aspect of character formation, for by imitating literary examples students achieved likeness (*homoiotēs*) to both the style of the author and the moral characteristics of the exemplary subject matter. Within literary genres such as rhetoric, biography, and historiography, virtues were demonstrated by using *exempla* from mythology or national history.<sup>71</sup> The teacher's role, however, was seen as the ultimate moral paradigm, a 'living voice' in front of the students.<sup>72</sup>

67 Most famous, perhaps, is the advice of Scipio's father at the end of Cicero's *On the Republic* (6.16) to 'like your grandfather here, like me, practise justice and piety which are indeed strictly due to parents and kinsmen, but most of all to the fatherland' (*ut avus hic tuus, ut ego, qui te genui, iustitiam cole et pietatem, quae cum magna in parentibus et propinquis, tum in patria maxima est*). Cf. on moral education and the imitation of ancestors Marrou 1956, 234–236. Some excellent examples of the imitation of ancestral glory have been collected by Harrison (2013, 223–228).

68 Cicero, *De officiis* 1.121.

69 Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.343–344. See §3.3.1 above.

70 In fact, according to Seneca (*Epistles* 94.51), their fingers were first 'held and guided by others so that they may follow the outlines of the letters; next, they are ordered to imitate a copy and base thereon a style of penmanship.' Yet even an experienced orator still had models, and not to imitate rhetorical excellence could be seen as sign of stupidity, as Pliny the Younger wrote (*Letters* 1.5): "Personally I do try to copy Cicero," I said, "and am not satisfied with the oratory of today. It seems to me foolish not to model oneself on the highest standards."

71 For Plutarch's and Seneca's usage of *exempla*, see Brenk 2007.

72 Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 2.2.8.

In literary *exempla*, *pistis* (or *fides*) recurs as one of the qualities worthy of imitation. Quintilian is proud of Rome's past filled with ideal examples:

But it is not only the content of such studies as these which we should know and constantly turn over in our minds; even more important are the records of the notable sayings and actions of the past. Nowhere is there a larger or more striking supply of these than in the history of our own country. Could there be any better teachers of courage, justice, loyalty (*fidem*), self-control, frugality, or contempt for pain and death than men like Fabricius, Curius, Regulus, Decius, Mucius, and countless others? Rome is as strong in examples as Greece is in precepts (*praeceptis valent*); and examples are more important. (Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 12.2.29–30)

Quintilian argues that oratory and philosophy, eloquence and virtue go hand in hand and that both need precepts and even more examples.<sup>73</sup> These examples are meant to 'constantly turn over in our minds'; we are to, as the following sentence states, 'drink deep draughts of justice from this source' for without it, we cannot live 'the good life' or 'run honour's race', nor can we hope of becoming a good orator. Offering moral examples from the lives of famous historical men seems to have been the primary motivation for authors such as Plutarch and Valerius Maximus to write whole collections of biographies (the *Parallel Lives*) or, in the latter's case, 'memorable deeds and sayings' (*facta et dicta memorabilia*).<sup>74</sup>

We already saw in chapter 3 how *pistis* and *fides* function as virtues of statesmen and even of the state itself (esp. §3.3.1). As an important virtue of the ruler, it actively or passively provides a model for subjects to imitate.<sup>75</sup> The ruler as ultimate example of virtue, or as *nomos empsychos*, was a familiar

73 Cf. Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 12.2.27: 'if indeed he is to attain perfection by the merits both of his life and of his eloquence'; 12.2.31: 'No one can be a perfect orator who does not both understand the language of honour and have the courage to use it (*qui honeste dicere et sciet et audebit*).'

74 Plutarch's *Vitae* are not all meant as examples to imitate directly, though. As noted by Christopher Pelling (1988, 274), sometimes, '[t]he moralism (...) is of a different sort, rather closer to that of tragedy: this is a more descriptive moralism, pointing a truth of human experience rather than building a model for crude imitation or avoidance.' See, on the multivalence in the *Lives* and the critical position Plutarch expects of his readers, Duff 2011. On the moral purpose of Valerius Maximus, see Skidmore 1996.

75 Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus* 2.6; Dionysius van Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.75.3. See §3.3.3 above.

motif, and it was commonly thought that the *ēthos* of the ruler affects the citizen's morality for better or worse (see §3.3.6 above).<sup>76</sup> Plutarch, for example, advises the 'uneducated ruler' to 'first gain command of himself, (...) regulate his own soul and establish his own character (καταστησάμενον τὸ ἦθος), then make his subjects fit his pattern (οὕτω συναρμόττειν τὸ ὑπήκοον).'<sup>77</sup> Pyrrhus of Epirus, however, was an example of unfaithfulness, yet also this vice was imitated by *hoi polloi*:

Whence we see that kings have no reason to find fault with popular bodies for changing sides as suits their interests; for in doing this they are but imitating the kings themselves (αὐτοὺς ταῦτα μιμοῦνται), who are their teachers in unfaithfulness and treachery (ἀπιστίας καὶ προδοσίας διδασκάλους ὄντας), and think him most advantaged who least observes justice (τὸν ἐλάχιστα τῷ δικαίῳ χρώμενον). (Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* 12.7)

Pyrrhus is here said to have been influential in offering a model of *apistia*, faithlessness, to the people. Another thing to take note of in this text is that language of teaching and language of imitation coincide, for whether in faithfulness or unfaithfulness, kings function as both teachers and models.

Yet, faith or trust is not only a virtue to be imitated, it is also an attitude towards models. It is the proper response or attitude of the people towards the trustworthiness that is inherent to the ruler's justice.<sup>78</sup> Conversely, distrust is the proper attitude towards kings and people that do not exhibit exemplary virtues. A cynic staged by Epictetus points at examples of vice to make clear that his public is looking for happiness in all the wrong places:

It is not in possessions. If you don't believe (εἰ δ' ἀπιστεῖτε), look at Croesus, look at the rich nowadays, the amount of lamentation with which their life is filled! (...) Whom are we going to trust about this question (τίσιν περὶ τούτου πιστεύσομεν)? (Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.22.27–28)

Here, people are asked to relate to negative examples, in order to determine where to place their attitude of trust in order to lead a good life. The first usage

76 E.g. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.1.21 ('he believed that he could in no way more effectively inspire a desire for the beautiful and the good than by endeavouring, as their sovereign, to set before his subjects a perfect model of virtue in his own person'); Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhetoric to Alexander* 1420b7 ('It will be necessary for you to know that for most people either the law or your life and speech are models (παραδείγματα).')

77 Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 780D.

78 Plutarch, *Cato the Younger* 44.7–8. See also §3.3.1 above.

of *pistis* language (ἀπιστεῖτε) concerns whether or not an argument is convincing (cf. chapter 5); the second (πιστεύσομεν) implies trust in a moral example, trust in one worthy to be imitated. The Delphic maxims also contain such general warnings about wrongly placed trust: ‘do not trust wealth’ (ΠΛΟΥΤΩ ΑΠΙΣΤΕΙ), ‘do not trust fortune’ (ΤΥΧΗ ΜΗ ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕ).<sup>79</sup> The virtue of ‘faithfulness’ thus depends on the ability to invest one’s ‘trust’ the right objects and models.

In the speeches of Epictetus (written down by his student Arrian) we encounter a philosopher educating a broad audience on the proper way of life, a genre in which positive and negative mythical or historical examples were the ideal rhetorical tool.<sup>80</sup> More specifically, with the teachings of Epictetus, we have arrived at a somewhat distinct cultural context in which ‘imitation in faith’ is especially evident and relevant to our purposes: the context of philosophical education. Before I engage with this specific context, however, it is possible to conclude that character formation was considered of utmost importance in the whole educational and cultural sphere and that *pistis* / *fides* functions in this context both as a dispositional quality, suitable for imitation, and as a relational attitude towards the model or another object worthy of one’s trust, whereas the opposite (*apistia*) represents either a quality to be avoided or the proper attitude towards unfit models.

### 6.3.2 *The Pistis of the Pudding:*<sup>81</sup> *Practising Faithfulness in Hellenistic-Roman Schools*

The semantic domain of *pistis* and *ēthos* is closely connected to the core business of the philosophical enterprise *per se*: the practice of philosophy in antiquity can perhaps be captured by the phrase ‘practise what you preach’ or ‘walk your talk’. Some brief quotes from different philosophical traditions and authors may serve as illustrations. Two Platonic dialogues are set in a palaestra (from παλαίω, ‘to wrestle’), evidencing the development of philosophy from public display to private training program.<sup>82</sup> The Platonic Academy itself is the classic example of how philosophy and physical exercise coincided and merged. Aristotle stated this principle in terms of *pistis*: ‘in matters of emotion

79 Apud Stobaeus, *Anthologium* 3.1.173 (128 and 142, respectively).

80 See Bultmann 1910, 50–51.

81 The proverb can also be understood from an ancient point of view, since Epictetus admonishes not to parade one’s philosophical principles, but to ‘digest’ them in order to display the good deeds that prove their worth. See Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 46 and cf. on this metaphorical usage of food in philosophical contexts Sellars 2003, 121–123.

82 Cf. Gardner 2016 on the educational background of the *Parmenides*.

and of action, words are less convincing/trustworthy than deeds (λόγοι ἤττον εἰσι πιστοὶ τῶν ἔργων).<sup>83</sup>

Since philosophy is considered to be an art (*technē*), Epicurus urges a student and friend that it must be practised by day and by night.<sup>84</sup> According to the first century Stoic Musonius Rufus, ‘virtue is knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) that is not merely theoretical, but also practical (πρακτικῆ) like the arts of medicine or music.’<sup>85</sup> Hence, since philosophy is the greater art, ‘practical training must follow invariably’ (τὴν ἀσκησιν ἐπακολουθεῖν πάντως), even more than in the study of medicine.<sup>86</sup> According to Musonius’s contemporary and fellow-Stoic Seneca, philosophy thus stands in opposition to amusement: ‘philosophy is no trick to catch the public; it is not devised for show. It is a matter, not of words, but of facts’ (*Non in verbis, sed in rebus est*).<sup>87</sup> Epictetus, Musonius’s most famous student, draws a contrast between philosophers and grammarians:

If, however, I admire the mere act of interpretation, what have I done but turned into a grammarian instead of a philosopher (τί ἄλλο ἢ γραμματικὸς ἀπετελέσθην ἀντὶ φιλοσόφου)? The only difference, indeed, is that I interpret Chrysippus instead of Homer. Far from being proud, therefore, when somebody says to me, ‘Read me Chrysippus,’ I blush rather, when I am unable to show him such deeds as match and harmonize with his words (ὅταν μὴ δύνωμαι ὁμοία τὰ ἔργα καὶ σύμφωνα ἐπιδεικνύειν τοῖς λόγοις). (Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 49)

In other words, Epictetus would probably not consider the modern academic discipline of philosophy ‘philosophy proper’. Thus, in short, when we speak of philosophical schools, we are not merely speaking about institutions of knowledge, but about schools of life: places of practical education by means of mental training.

83 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.1.3 (1172a34–35). Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.1.4 (1172b3–6): ‘Hence it appears that true theories are the most valuable for conduct as well as for science; harmonizing with deeds, they carry conviction (συνωδοὶ γὰρ ὄντες τοῖς ἔργοις πιστεύονται), and so encourage those who understand them to guide their lives by them (ζῆν κατ’ αὐτούς).’

84 Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* 135: ταῦτα οὖν καὶ τὰ τούτοις συγγενῆ μελέτα πρὸς σεαυτὸν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός.

85 Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 6, p. 22, r. 7–8 in Hense 1905. Translations of Musonius Rufus’s writings are from Lutz 1947.

86 Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 6, p. 23, r. 15–16 in Hense 1905.

87 Cicero said the same about *fides* being a matter of facts, not words: *De officiis* 1.40, cited in §7.3.2 below. On the opposition of philosophy and (show-off) sophistry, see §5.3.2 above.

Within this discourse of philosophy as a life-changing discipline, a recurring topos is the imagery of athletic training. Seneca states it in the following terms:

So let us also win the way to victory in all our struggles,—for the reward is not a garland or a palm or a trumpeter who calls for silence at the proclamation of our names, but rather virtue, steadfastness of soul, and a peace that is won for all time. (Seneca, *Epistles* 78.16)<sup>88</sup>

The ultimate goal of all this training is a victory in the form of the attainment of virtue and stability of soul, in other words, the attainment of sagehood. Making use of similar imagery, Epictetus compares walking the difficult road to virtue with wrestling a young wrestling partner whereby God is the trainer:

When a difficulty befalls, remember that God, like a physical trainer, has matched you with a rugged young man. (...) if only you are willing to make use of it as an athlete makes use of a young man to wrestle with. (Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.24.1–2)

Later in this chapter, Paul's usage of the same athletic metaphor will be discussed (§6.4.2).

The insight that Hellenistic-Roman philosophy took the form of an intellectual-ethical training for living well has been brought to our attention in present-day academic circles by Pierre Hadot (1995: *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, esp. chapter 11) and is investigated and scrutinized further by John Sellars (2003: *The Art of Living: the Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy*). Sellars describes the ancient understanding of philosophy as an art (*technē*), encompassing both rational principles (*logoi*) and practical exercise (*askēsis*) with the aim (*telos*) to produce corresponding actions (*erga*): 'With this conception, philosophical knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*) will directly impact upon one's life (*βίος*) because such knowledge will necessarily lead to philosophical actions (*ἔργα*).'<sup>89</sup> As John Cooper has shown, this 'lived' form of philosophy goes back to Socrates himself, for whom 'living one's philosophy meant living on the basis of a philosophically grounded conception of justice, piety, temperance, and courage as fundamental goods for a human being.'<sup>90</sup> Albrecht

88 Cf. for the related metaphor of battle Seneca, *Epistles* 71.37: 'When will it be our privilege, after all the passions have been subdued and brought under our own control, to utter the words "I have conquered!"'

89 Sellars 2003, 107. Sellars is concise on the role of *ethos*: see 119–121 on habituation (*ἔθισμός*) and esp. n. 53.

90 Cooper 2007, 40.

Dihle emphasizes that, even though the early Socratic tradition had a ‘connection with a philosophical lifestyle’, this focus came even more to the fore in post-classical times: ‘The Platonic-Aristotelean conception (...) narrowed down to the endeavours that were directly applicable to day-to-day living.’<sup>91</sup> In his monograph on philosophers in the Roman Empire, Michael Trapp states that philosophy as such could demand sacrifices: ‘Philosophy, taken as seriously as it showed itself to want to be taken, posed an evangelical challenge, to life-changing commitment of a kind that could make awkward demands on the individual; in particular, it could demand the adoption of values and targets at odds with those of ordinary civic society.’<sup>92</sup> Philosophy in Hellenistic and Roman times was thus very much seen as a divergent lifestyle, cultivated by practising virtues.

It is interesting that especially within this philosophical community of alternative values, the process of character formation includes the attainment of a trustworthy disposition, oftentimes expressed in terms of *pistis* or *fides*, as sources from diverse traditions confirm. In the Platonic letter that was quoted in full in the previous chapter (§5.3.2), Aristodorus was praised for showing ‘the most philosophic disposition of all who pursue philosophy’ (τὸ σοφώτατον ἦθος τῶν εἰς φιλοσοφίαν παρεχόμενον). This philosophical disposition is explicated as consisting in ‘the steadfast and trustworthy and sound’ (τὸ γὰρ βέβαιον καὶ πιστὸν καὶ ὑγιές).<sup>93</sup> Similar accounts can be found in the Epicurean and Stoic traditions. In the previous chapter, we showed that both Epicurus and Cicero saw the development of a firm conviction (*pistis*) or confidence (*fidētia*) as the goal of philosophy.<sup>94</sup> The Stoic Epictetus is most consistent in including *pistis* in his list of virtues (see also §5.3.6 and §6.3.1). Attaining virtue is thought of in terms of ‘help’ or ‘salvation’ versus ‘destruction’:

For it is within you that both destruction and deliverance (καὶ ἀπώλεια καὶ βόηθεια) lie.—But what good do I get after all that (τί μοι ἀγαθόν)?—And what greater good than this are you looking for? Instead of shameless, you will be self-respecting; instead of faithless, faithful (ἐξ ἀπίστου

91 Dihle 2009, 17: ‘Beziehung zur philosophischen Lebensgestaltung’ and ‘Die platonisch-aristotelische Konzeption (...) verengte sich aber auf das Bemühen um die Einsichten, die unmittelbar auf den Lebensvollzug anzuwenden waren.’ Cf. at p. 18: ‘Das rechte Leben ist Inhalt und Ziel philosophischer Lehre und sonst gar nichts, meinen kaiserzeitliche Autoren wie die Stoiker Musonios und Epiktet.’

92 Trapp 2013, 55.

93 (Pseudo-)Plato, *Epistles* 10 (358c), also discussed in §5.3.3.

94 Epicurus, *Letter to Pythocles* apud Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.85; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.80. See §5.3.3 and §5.3.4.



πιστός); instead of dissolute, self-controlled (ἐξ ἀκολάστου σώφρων). If you are looking for anything else greater than these things, go ahead and do what you are doing; not even a god can any longer save you (οὐδὲ θεῶν σέ τις ἔτι σώσαι δύναται). (Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.9.17)

The ultimate good for this Stoic is thus found internally, in self-improvement. To attain this goal, the imagery of training is frequently called upon. Epictetus uses the example of a grammarian: if a grammarian is in the habit (ἐθίσῃ) of writing ungrammatically, his art (τέχνη) will perish. Likewise, according to Epictetus,

modest acts preserve the modest man, whereas immodest acts destroy him (τὸν μὲν αἰδήμονα σώζει τὰ αἰδήμονα ἔργα); and faithful acts preserve the faithful man while acts of the opposite character destroy him (τὸν δὲ πιστὸν τὰ πιστὰ καὶ τὰ ἐναντία ἀπολλύει). And again, acts of the opposite character strengthen men of the opposite character; shamelessness strengthens the shameless man, faithlessness the faithless (τὸν ἄπιστον <ἀπιστία>), (...) That is why the philosophers admonish us not to be satisfied with merely learning, but to add thereto practice also, and then training (μὴ ἀρκεῖσθαι μόνῳ τῷ μαθεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μελέτην προσλαμβάνειν, εἶτα ἀσκησιν). (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.9.11–14)

*Pistis* vocabulary thus belongs within this semantic domain of philosophical training as one of the virtues to strive towards: to perform faithful actions is to build a faithful character.

### 6.3.3 *Imitation in and through Pistis: the Mimetic Chain of Philosophical Education*

To attain this philosophical goal of character transformation, described among others in terms of *pistis*, the ancients did not only deem practice and exercise essential, but also the imitation of examples. The importance of the leaders practising what they preach can also be understood from their function as their disciples' role models. Crucial in the process of philosophical education was the idea of imitation: the supposition was that the desired *ēthos* could best be achieved by mimicking another's. This will be the topic of this section, where I include references to that type of imitation that is conceptually related to the semantic domain of philosophical character formation, i.e. between the diverse layers of pupil, master, school founder, and, in the subsequent sections, sages and God (§6.3.4 and §6.3.5), with special attention to the role of *pistis* and cognates in imitation.

Given the fact that this cultivation of the right disposition is so important, it is not surprising that the merits of a specific philosophical school can be measured by the lives of its teachers, sages, and founders.<sup>95</sup> Their *ēthos* proves their trustworthiness. While comparing the behavioural merits of Epicureans, Peripatetics, and Stoics, Epictetus challenges his public: ‘show me a man fashioned according to the dogmas which he utters.’<sup>96</sup> Similarly, in an ironical portrait of an orator who thinks he is doing well because of the flattery of his disciples, he points out what an earnest searcher should be looking for: someone ‘who will teach him how he ought to live (πῶς δεῖ βιοῦν)’, who is ‘respectful (αἰδήμων), faithful (πιστός), and unperturbed (ἀτάραχος).’<sup>97</sup> Others schools are criticized for the lack of congruity between words and deeds. The manner of one’s death was deemed especially informative. Cicero is all too happy to cite Epicurus’s last words: ‘to prove to you the discrepancy between his practice and his principles’ (*ut intellegas facta eius cum dictis discrepare*).<sup>98</sup> Hence, the consistency of life and learning is the quality *par excellence* upon which philosophers ought to be judged. And particularly to this end, the attainment of a trustworthy disposition was deemed essential.<sup>99</sup>

Within this practical philosophical context, the relationship between model and image, example and imitator played an essential part. In the final paragraph of one of his *Epistles*, the Roman politician and Stoic philosopher Seneca quotes—as often—a precept by Epicurus, commenting:

Choose a master whose life, conversation, and mind-expressing face (*vita et oratio et ipse animum ante se ferens vultus*) have satisfied you; picture him always to yourself as your protector or your pattern (*illum tibi semper ostende vel custodem vel exemplum*). For we must indeed have someone according to whom we may regulate our characters (*aliquo ad quem mores nostri se ipsi exigent*). (Seneca, *Epistles* 11.8–10)

The master Seneca refers to, so it seems here, need not necessarily be someone you meet regularly or even someone you know personally, though intimate knowledge of his life and mind is very necessary. On the one hand, as he confirms in another epistle, philosophers such as Socrates and Plato, Zeno and

95 Cf. Dihle 2009, 17: ‘So ist es kein Wunder, dass die Umwelt Philosophen oft mehr nach ihrer Lebensführung als nach ihrer Lehre beurteilte.’

96 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.19.23.

97 Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.23.17–18.

98 Cicero, *De finibus* 2.30.96. Cf. Seneca, *Epistles* 66.48.

99 Cf. Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.22.25–27, 4.13.15.

Cleanthes function as teachers of the whole human race and should therefore be worshipped with divine ritual, celebrating their birthdays and erecting statues.<sup>100</sup> Yet, on the other hand, Seneca believes that the real-life transmission between master and student is fundamental, as we learn from a letter on 'sharing knowledge':

Of course, however, the living voice and the intimacy of a common life (*viva vox et convictus*) will help you more than the written word. You must go to the scene of action, first, because men put more faith in their eyes than in their ears (*quia homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt*), and second, because the way is long if one follows precepts (*per praecepta*), but short and helpful, if one follows patterns (*per exempla*). Cleanthes could not have been the express image of Zeno (*Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset*), if he had merely heard his lectures; he shared in his life, saw into his hidden purposes, and watched him to see whether he lived according to his own rules. Plato, Aristotle, and the whole throng of sages who were destined to go each his different way, derived more benefit from the character than from the words (*plus ex moribus quam ex verbis*) of Socrates. It was not the classroom of Epicurus, but living together under the same roof, that made great men of Metrodorus, Hermarchus, and Polyaeus. (Seneca, *Epistles* 6.5–6)

With this rich list of examples, Seneca confirms that transformation of character is the aim of philosophy. Just like Quintilian, to this aim he favours examples above precepts: the sharing of lives proves indispensable, for ordinary people at least.<sup>101</sup> This passage furthermore shows that the philosophical quest does not merely involve imaginary relationships of imitation, but real-life *Nachfolgung* of school leaders. These living embodiments of good character are better equipped to create the attitude of trust or belief (*credere*), for they can be seen rather than merely heard.

Epictetus formulates the aim of a philosophical teacher thus, in an address to a student:

100 Seneca, *Epistles* 64.9: *Suspiciendi tamen sunt et ritu deorum colendi. Quidni ego magnorum virorum et imagines habeam incitamenta animi et natales celebrem?* For the philosophers' names, see 64.10. A good example is the degree by the Athenians on Zeno of Citium, in which they decide to build him a tomb at public expense, praising him for 'affording to all in his own conduct a pattern for imitation in perfect consistency with his teaching' (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.10).

101 Cf. Seneca, *Epistles* 94.50, where he defends the use of precepts: 'Weaker characters, however, need someone to precede them, to say: "Avoid this," or "Do that."'

to make of you a perfect work, secure against restraint, compulsion, and hindrance, free, prosperous, happy, looking to God in everything both small and great; and you are here with the purpose of learning and practising all this. (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.19.29)

Even though, according to his own Stoic doctrine, this ought to be an attainable aim—it is not outside of our control—he wonders why the student in question does not succeed. He deems this both the student's and the teacher's fault, as can be expected in a relationship of imitation.<sup>102</sup>

An even more emphatic, if satirical, insider's perspective into the mind of the student is given in Lucian's *Nigrinus*, when the protagonist compares his state of newly found philosophical bliss with that of infatuated lovers:

So I, too, in the absence of my mistress Philosophy, get no little comfort out of gathering together the words that I then heard and turning them over to myself. In short, I fix my gaze on that man as if he were a lighthouse and I were adrift at sea in the dead of night, fancying him by me whenever I do anything and always hearing him repeat his former words. Sometimes, especially when I put pressure on my soul, his face appears to me and the sound of his voice abides in my ears. (Lucian, *Nigrinus* 7)<sup>103</sup>

While this is obviously an overstatement, it echoes the personal and emotionally affective nature of a master-student relationship within the context of philosophical education.

The process of imitating a master whom you know personally is continued when the student, in turn, becomes the exemplar. This is aptly phrased in the letter of comfort sent by the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry to his wife Marcella, a source dating from considerable later than our main period of interest (first century BC—second century AD), yet whose language indicates how *pistis* became more and more embedded in the conceptual field of philosophical imitation. Porphyry reminds her of the words spoken at her initiation into 'true philosophy' and counsels to act upon these words. For, so he writes,

it is a man's actions that naturally afford demonstrations of his opinions, and whoever holds a belief (ὅστις ἐπίστευσεν) must live in accordance

102 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.19.30–34.

103 Cf. Malherbe 2012, 2, for a comparison of the manner in which this passage is employing the theme of friendship to its employment in 1 *Thessalonians*.

with it, in order that he may himself be a faithful witness (πιστός μάρτυς) to his disciples of his words. (Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella* 8)

Having trust or, put more cognitively, a belief in something should change a master's behaviour, which in turn shows trustworthiness towards students. Thus, a 'chain of imitations' emerges, with *pistis* functioning as both quality of the links and relationship between different links. The trustworthiness or credibility of the model (its disposition) should generate trust or credence in the imitators (an attitude), who ought to become trustworthy (qua disposition) themselves. According to a variety of philosophical traditions, a place was reserved for the gods at the origin of such a chain.

#### 6.3.4 *Homoiōsis Sophōi and Theōi: Platonists, Stoics, and Epicureans on Assimilation to the Divine*

Before we turn to Paul and his *pistis Christou* language, there is one even more specific philosophical topos to discuss in this section and the next, which increases the relevance of this philosophical context just discussed. According to the majority of philosophical schools in the days of Paul, it was not only in the imitation of school leaders that this trustworthy disposition could be attained; ultimately, the goal of ethics was to become like, or assimilate to, the divine nature.

This ideal of 'assimilation to the divine' or 'becoming like God' (ὁμοίωσις Θεῷ) is a motive that is embedded throughout the Platonic oeuvre in the contexts of physics, epistemology, and ethics.<sup>104</sup> In his emphasis on moral instead of martial divine qualities, Plato's ideal of assimilation to God can be considered 'a way to philosophically redescribe—or if you will, demythologize—the old heroic ideal of deifying virtue.'<sup>105</sup> After Plato, it was embraced by a large range of philosophical traditions including Stoics and Epicureans, with some different emphases, as the sources I will discuss below confirm.<sup>106</sup> Still, it

104 The classical *loci* are *Theaetetus* 176b–c; *Republic* 611d–e and *Timaeus* 41d–47c.

105 Litwa 2012, 197.

106 The overview I offer of the main positions within this discourse does not treat Aristotle or the Peripatetic tradition separately, as Aristotle's contribution to the topos in question appears to have been less influential and quite minimal. He seems to have been reluctant to draw the human and the divine together and speak of 'likeness' in this context. Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, preserved through Iamblichus, appears to include the statement that a human being 'becomes like God abiding by reason' (μένων δ' ἐν τῷ νῷ ὁμοιοῦται θεῷ). On this topos in Aristotle, see Van Kooten 2008, 136–138.

was not until fairly recent that this pattern of ‘becoming like the gods’ gained a considerable amount of scholarly attention.<sup>107</sup>

The early Stoics already internalized and ‘cognitivized’ the relationship with the gods by redefining the condition of being the gods’ friend or enemy in terms of ‘harmony’ (συμφωνία) or ‘oneness of mind’ (ὁμόνοια) versus ‘disharmony’ (ἀσυμφωνία) or ‘two-mindedness’ (διχόνοια), respectively.<sup>108</sup> According to Epictetus, Zeno had formulated the ‘chief doctrine of the philosophers’ in this manner: ‘To follow the gods is man’s end (τέλος ἐστὶ τὸ ἔπεσθαι θεοίς), and the essence of good is the proper use of external impressions.’<sup>109</sup> Epicurus writes that the gods ‘are always favourable to their own good qualities (ταῖς γὰρ ἰδίαις οἰκειούμενοι διὰ παντὸς ἀρεταῖς) and take pleasure in men like themselves (τοὺς ὁμοίους ἀποδέχονται), but reject as alien whatever is not of their kind.’<sup>110</sup> The expression that *homoïōsis theōi* is the *telos* of ethics seems to occur for the first time in the early imperialistic period in a text by the Stoic Arius Didymus, in which he seems to rely on the Platonist Eudorus.<sup>111</sup> According to Didymus, Plato and Socrates followed Pythagoras in this teaching,<sup>112</sup> but Plato added the disclaimer that we can only resemble God ‘so far as possible.’<sup>113</sup> The idea that to imitate God is the goal of ethics is taken over by later authors such as Alcinous and Diogenes Laertius, which suggests that it was widely known in the imperial period.

In the literature on the topos of *homoïōsis theōi*, two apparent differences between schools stand out, which are helpful to eventually situate Paul’s conceptions in this field. The main apples of discord seem to be related to the amount of dissimilarity between divinity and humanity and, somewhat related, to the usefulness of following human examples.

In the Platonist outlook, the process of assimilating to God may be understood in terms of a transcendent movement beyond earthly standards. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates states that evil, as a necessary opposite of the good, will always ‘hover about moral nature and this place’, and he continues:

107 See i.a. Sedley 1999; Annas 1999; Erler 2002a; Armstrong 2004; Russell 2004; Mahoney 2005; Dombrowski 2005, 95–112; Van Kooten 2008, 124–181; Miller 2011; Athanassiadi & Macris 2013, 63–65.

108 Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.7.106 (SVF 3.661).

109 Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.20.15.

110 Epicurus, *Letter to Menoecus* apud Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.124.

111 For the presentation of *homoïōsis theōi* as *telos*-formula by Eudorus, see Dillon 1977, 114–135; Van Kooten 2008, 141–148.

112 A view that is shared by later Platonists such as Plutarch and might have been instigated by the possible Pythagorean dictum ‘Follow God’ (ἔπου Θεῶ) (see Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.249.8).

113 Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.7.3f.

Therefore we ought to try to escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can; and to escape is to become like God (φυγή δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῶν κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν), so far as this is possible; and to become like God is to become righteous and holy and wise (ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὄσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι). (Plato, *Theaetetus* 176a–b)

The assimilation process is on the one hand pictured as a ‘flight’, yet on the other explicated in terms of humanly attainable virtues. In the *Laws*, *homoiosis theōi* is explicitly set against the Protagorean adage that man is the measure of all things:

In our eyes God will be ‘the measure of all things’ in the highest degree (θεὸς ἡμῖν πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἂν εἴη μάλιστα)—a degree much higher than is any ‘man’ they talk of. He, then, that is to become dear to such an one must needs become, so far as he possibly can, of a like character (εἰς δύναμιν ὅτι μάλιστα καὶ αὐτὸν τοιοῦτον ἀναγκαῖον γίγνεσθαι). (Plato, *Laws* 716c)

The highest aim for humans, this passage suggests, is to become like this divine measure as much as possible (on ‘measure’ language in Plato and Paul, cf. §2.4.5 above).

In their interpretations and incorporations of passages such as these, important philosophical successors and competitors of Plato appear to diverge. Julia Annas speaks of ‘the alternative ancient tradition, that of Aristotle (in the main) and the Stoics and Epicureans, who see our final end as lying in the fulfilling of human nature, rather than in an attempt to become some other kind of thing.’<sup>114</sup> Christoph Jedan, who distinguishes between eight different ‘junctures’ upon which accounts of *homoiosis* may diverge, states that this is indeed the main apple of discord: ‘The juncture at which Stoicism exhibits the strongest contrast to Plato’s *homoiosis* is the question of how far imitation goes.’<sup>115</sup> Similarly, René Brouwer states, ‘For Plato, the good life consists in becoming like god so far as is possible for a human being (...), for the Stoics the ideal is to become god in the sense of becoming part of the divine power that structures the world.’<sup>116</sup> Gretchen Reydam-Schils puts it thus: ‘the issue for them [i.e. the Stoics] is not becoming like god, but rather allowing

114 Annas 1999, 52–53.

115 Jedan 2013, 66.

116 Brouwer 2014, 91, n. 133.

the fact that humans are like god (ὁμοίως ἔχειν) to come to its full fruition.<sup>117</sup> This way, Platonic *homoiōsis* stands in opposition to Stoic *oikeiōsis*, which, according to Boris Maslov, ‘replaces the logic of “escape” by [sic] a logic of “expansion” that obeys a natural, instinctual mechanism, in accord with the basic injunction of a life *kata physin* “in accord with Nature”.’<sup>118</sup>

It is worth asking, though, whether this difference between the Stoic and the Platonic position is not overstated. Does Plato’s language of assimilation to God imply some mystical flight from this world, to become more-than-human?<sup>119</sup> Do Stoics and Epicureans leave no distance between the divine and the humane by completely ‘immanentizing’ the former in the latter? As we shall see, the situation is quite complex.

According to (certain passages by) Plato, assimilation to God is simply the consequence of enjoying fellowship (ὁμιλέω) with God.<sup>120</sup> The ‘measure of God’ is not set against any proto-Stoic account on immanent divinity, but against Plato’s sophistic contemporaries, who were known as moral relativists—in Pauline terms, they were ‘measuring themselves by themselves.’<sup>121</sup> In fact, especially in the *Laws* but also in the *Republic*, the ideal of godlikeness is not reserved for guardians or philosophers, yet put to full,

117 Reydamas-Schils 2017, 158. In contrast to what this quote may suggest, Reydamas-Schils argues in her contribution that such Stoic ideas were (partly) taken up in Middle-Platonic discourse.

118 Maslov 2012, 460. Maslov argues that in Neoplatonism, both concepts merged and thereby provided a foundation for the Byzantine theories of *theōsis*, ‘becoming divine’.

119 Cf. Dombrowski 2005, 97: ‘Platonic *askēsis*, however, does not have to be seen in these terms in that the evidence of the dialogues of a certain hostility toward the senses does not necessarily indicate a desire to escape from the world but to transform it, or at least to transform our attitude toward it.’

120 Plato, *Republic* 500c: “Or do you think there is any way in which one would not imitate something one enjoys being associated with (ἔτῳ τις ὁμιλεῖ ἀγάμενος, μὴ μιμεῖσθαι ἐκεῖνο)?” “No, that’s impossible,” he said. “The philosopher who allies himself with the divine and orderly becomes divine and orderly, as far as is possible for a human being (Θείῳ δὴ καὶ κοσμίῳ ὃ γε φιλόσοφος ὁμιλῶν κόσμιός τε καὶ θεῖος εἰς τὸ δυνατόν ἀνθρώπων γίγνεται).”

121 See 2 *Corinthians* 10.12, a passage which could very well be aimed at opponents with similar sophistic views. On *Laws* 716c as anti-sophistic, cf. Van Kooten 2008, 134–135. On *homoiōsis theōi* with regard to the virtues of justice and piety as a means of combating sophists in the *Theaetetus*, cf. Sedley 1999, 313.



worldly use in educating all citizens.<sup>122</sup> In Plutarch's version, it remains very practical in outlook:<sup>123</sup>

Consider first that God, as Plato says, offers himself to all as a pattern (*παράδειγμα*) of every excellence, thus rendering human virtue (*τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀρετὴν*), which is in some sort an assimilation to himself (*ἐξομοίωσιν οὐσαν ἀμωσγέπως πρὸς αὐτόν*), accessible to all who can follow God (*τοῖς ἔπεσθαι θεῶ δυναμένοις*). (...) for man is fitted to derive from God no greater blessing than to become settled in virtue (*εἰς ἀρετὴν καθίστασθαι*) through copying and aspiring (*μιμῆσει καὶ διώξει*) to the beauty and the goodness that are his. (Plutarch, *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance* 550D–E)

Rather than some transcendent process, Plutarch maintains that to become like God means to copy (*mimēsis* is the word used here) God's virtues: human virtue in general may be understood as some sort of *homoiōsis* to God.

On the Stoic and Epicurean side of the spectrum, the possibility of indeed 'fulfilling human nature' was only realized 'so far as is possible' as well. The bold Stoic notion of simply 'becoming God' is somewhat relativized by the scarcity of such divine men, as Brouwer has established.<sup>124</sup> Epictetus entreats his public to show him 'a man who has set his heart upon changing from a man into a god', yet concludes 'Show him to me! But you cannot'.<sup>125</sup> In Epicureanism, it is rather the blessed state of the gods that is to be imitated. Philodemus

122 Cf. *Republic* 6.500d: "If then," I said, "some compulsion comes upon him to put into practice what he sees in the divine realm in the private and public lives of men (*ἥθη καὶ ἰδίαι καὶ δημοσίαι*), and to mold not just his own character, do you think he would become a bad creator of temperance, justice, and every other common virtue (*σωφροσύνης τε καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ συμπάσης τῆς δημοτικῆς ἀρετῆς*)?" "Certainly not," he said.' Cf. also Armstrong's thesis (in 2004, 171) that 'Plato's identification of god with *νοῦς* or intelligence in the *Timaeus*, *Philebus*, and *Laws* influences his conception of assimilation to god. Rather than fleeing from the sensible world, becoming like this god commits one to improving it.' On otherworldliness in the *Theaetetus*, see Mahoney 2004.

123 See Bonazzi 2012, 150: 'In Plutarch, *homoiōsis* is never limited to the exercise of mere contemplation, but actually comes to a head through practical activity. (...) In imperial Platonism *homoiōsis* has often been construed as taking flight from this world's woes, (...) But (...) even therein [Platonic texts] assimilation brings about imitation in that it implies the need for crafting or transforming oneself and others.'

124 On the occurrence of sagehood according to the Stoics, cf. René Brouwer's conclusion that 'the Stoics, Zeno included, were not self-declared sages' (2014, 135).

125 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.19.26–28.

states: 'those who believe our oracles about the gods will first wish to imitate their blessedness insofar as mortals can.'<sup>126</sup> Here as well, the formulation shows a certain hesitance to liken the mortal to the immortal.

There is some 'mysticism' involved, moreover, in Stoic accounts on *homoiōsis* as well, yet not so much in the form of a movement from earth to heaven, as in one from heaven to earth. The closeness between God and humanity is not merely an abstract conviction, it is of actual assistance in the process of cultivating the divine character. The words of Seneca are reminiscent of certain parables from the New Testament when he explains the working of this process as something effected by God in us:

Do you marvel that man goes to the gods? God comes to men; nay, he comes nearer,—he comes into men (*in homines venit*). No mind that has not God, is good (*nulla sine deo mens bona est*). Divine seeds are scattered throughout our mortal bodies (*semina in corporibus humanis divina dispersa sunt*); if a good cultivator (*bonus cultor*)<sup>127</sup> receives them, they spring up in the likeness of their source and of a parity with those from which they came (*similia origini prodeunt et paria iis, ex quibus orta sunt, surgunt*). If, however, the cultivator be bad, like a barren or marshy soil, he kills the seeds, and causes tares to grow up instead of wheat. (Seneca, *Epistles* 73.16)

We learn here that according to this Stoic, *homoiōsis theōi* is not necessarily conceived of as a construct based solely on human effort or merit: there is ample room for divine grace (a word consciously chosen to point out that 'becoming like God' is not necessarily at odds with a Lutheran emphasis on grace). True, if you seize moral perfection, you enter in a different, more equal relationship with the divine, for 'you begin to be the associate of the gods, and not their suppliant (*deorum socius esse, non supplex*)'.<sup>128</sup> But this must be seen in the context of rational worship aided by the gods. Seneca explicitly opposes the effort of cultic worship to a more rational indwelling of God or

126 Philodemus, *On Piety*, col. 71 in Obbink 1996, translation by Obbink.

127 Note the ambiguity inherent to the word *cultor*, meaning both worshipper and cultivator, which is lost in translation.

128 Seneca, *Epistles* 31.8. On convergences and differences between the views of Seneca and Paul on the roles of God and humans in the context of benefaction, see the next chapter (§7.3.6).

his spirit and concludes that ‘no man can be good without the help of God’.<sup>129</sup> Philosophy itself is a gift from the gods, only the actualization of the gift is a human responsibility.<sup>130</sup> At the same time, our being good is what pleases the gods: ‘whoever imitates them, is worshipping them sufficiently’ (*satis illos coluit, quisquis imitatus est*).<sup>131</sup> Thus, the goal of equality and friendship with God does not preclude regarding God and man as separate entities either helping or worshipping the other in imitation.

Platonists, on the other hand, were more accustomed to speak of divine intervention, mediation, or assistance as something coming from outside of the human sphere.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, Platonists could in the end be just as bold about divine-human interconnection. Maximus of Tyre, for instance, emphasizes the likeness between humanity and divinity. The soul of man is ‘something very close to God and like him in its nature’ (ἐγγύτατον θεῶ καὶ ἐμφερέστατον).<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, according to this second-century rhetorician, it is not true that they differ in trustworthiness, human intellect being *apistos*, while the divine is *pistos*: ‘Divine prophetic powers and human intellect—this is a daring thing to say, but I will say it none the less—are kindred faculties; if anything at all resembles anything else, then there is nothing more similar to divine intellect than human excellence.’<sup>134</sup> Human and divine excellence are also drawn together in Alcinous’s work. According to this Middle-Platonic author, Plato’s ‘flight towards godlikeness as far as possible’ (*Theaetetus* 176b: φυγή δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῶ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν) is reinterpreted as a mere ‘turning away from most human matters’ and *homoïōsis pros to theion* is described as nothing other than the state of the human soul called wisdom (φρόνησις).<sup>135</sup> This, in turn, is very much

129 Seneca, *Epistles* 41.1–2. Cf. for a different assessment Fitzgerald 2007, 275: ‘The contrast with Paul’s moral vision of humanity redeemed to love, worship and glorify God (...) could not be stronger. (...) In Seneca’s ethics, the moral power of the philosophic life, far from revealing the need for God or leading to worship of God, rather demonstrates one’s own equality with God.’

130 See Seneca, *Epistles* 90.1: ‘Who can doubt, my dear Lucilius, that life is the gift of the immortal gods, but that living well is the gift of philosophy? Hence the idea that our debt to philosophy is greater than our debt to the gods, in proportion as a good life is more of a benefit than mere life, would be regarded as correct, were not philosophy itself a boon which the gods have bestowed upon us. They have given the knowledge thereof to none, but the faculty of acquiring it they have given to all.’

131 Seneca, *Epistles* 95.50.

132 On the role of grace and divine provision in Middle-Platonism, see Erler 2002b; Helmig 2013.

133 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 2.3, translation Trapp 1997.

134 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 13.2.

135 Alcinous, *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae* 28.4, 2.2, 153.3–9. Translations of Alcinous’s treatise are from Dillon 1993.

like Plutarch's opinion of the human soul, who, 'when it has partaken of intelligence and reason and concord is not merely a work but also a part of god and has come to be not by his agency (ὕπ' αὐτοῦ) but both from him as source (ἀπ' αὐτοῦ) and out of his substance (ἐξ αὐτοῦ).'<sup>136</sup> In other words, for these later Platonists, *homoiōsis* has become 'inner-cosmic': the imitation of the World Soul.<sup>137</sup>

Still, even though Platonism gained this more 'immanent' picture of the divine, one main difference with the Stoic position remained.<sup>138</sup> The Platonists of the first and second century AD still distinguish between the immanent divine and the ultimate, transcendent divine by distinguishing between the 'God above the heavens, who does not possess virtue', and the 'God in the heavens' who apparently does, wherefore this immanent God is a proper object of assimilation.<sup>139</sup> This 'mediated' perspective on *homoiōsis* was perhaps pioneered by Philo of Alexandria, who claims that 'nothing earth-born is more like God than man' yet limits assimilation to the Logos or second God, while upholding God's transcendence.<sup>140</sup> This Logos performs an intermediary function: to 'separate the creature from the Creator' while being a surety to both sides.<sup>141</sup>

to the parent, pledging (πρὸς πίστιν) the creature that it should never altogether rebel against the rein and choose disorder rather than order; to the child, warranting his hopes (πρὸς εὐελπιστίαν) that the merciful God will never forget His own work. (Philo, *Who Is the Heir?* 206)

Noteworthy is that the reified usage of *pistis* as a 'guarantee' is the means by which the distance to the divine parent is bridged: the Logos offers a trustworthy proof to God on behalf of humanity. Platonic *homoiōsis* thus both

136 Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 2, 1001C. Ammonius's speech in *The E at Delphi* (391E–394C) does suggest a major contrast between the incorruptible divine and 'Heraclitean flux' of the world. Ammonius's portrayal is probably exaggerated compared to Plutarch's own stance on this matter, though: cf. Opsomer 2009, 173. See also §4.3.5 above.

137 See on Alcinoüs's reinterpretation of *homoiōsis* Reydams-Schils 2017, 151–152.

138 See Bonazzi 2017, 136: 'it is clear that 'assimilation' is different from 'identification': it is a movement towards 'as much as possible' and not a full possession, (...) Perfect knowledge is distinctive of God, and it would be impious for a Platonist to claim that we can become like God already in this life.'

139 Alcinoüs, *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae* 28.2, 181.44–46.

140 Philo, *On the Creation of the World* 69 and *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 2.62, respectively. For a discussion, see Van Kooten 2008, 181–199. For Philo's emphasis on transcendence, see §4.3.4 above.

141 Philo, *Who Is the Heir?* 205.

upholds and bridges the distance to the transcendent God via an intermediate divine figure. This provides us with an interesting branch of this discourse for understanding the figure of Christ in Paul's thought.

All in all, to come back to our initial question, the differences between how Platonists and Stoics speak of 'becoming like God' are subtle, not well captured in sweeping statements of essentially different orientations based on either a transcendent or an immanent theology.

The second issue responsible for some variation in positions among schools is the relationship between imitating God and imitating human examples of virtue. Michael Erler explains how in the Epicurean tradition '*homoiōsis theōi* becomes *homoiōsis sophōi*'<sup>142</sup> and places this phenomenon in a wider polemical context:

To present a perfected moral self as an example to be imitated was obviously to take a stance on an issue that was controversial between the schools. Plato and his pupils did not accept that *homoiōsis* of a mortal *sophos* can be as useful as *homoiōsis theōi* for achieving moral excellence. As Plato says in the *Laws*: 'Not man, but god is the measure of all things'. Later Platonists followed him in this. (Erler 2002a, 179)<sup>143</sup>

Erler refers to the anonymous *Commentary to the Theaetetus* and to Plotinus for this later Platonist debate and suggests that it 'documents a discussion that went on in the first century BC'.<sup>144</sup> Whether or not these references are enough to substantiate his claim, the passage from the *Laws* does not necessarily imply that imitation of humans per se is undesirable; rather, it voices anti-sophistic concerns.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, both the *Laws* and the *Republic* show Plato's vision for a whole society aimed at attaining divine virtue by means of virtuous leadership.<sup>146</sup> Of course, as we saw in chapter 2 and 4, in book x of the *Republic* (595a–608b), Plato seems to have a problem with imitation of sensible examples, namely when he speaks derogatively of painting and poetry as arts whose representations are twice removed from true Forms.<sup>147</sup> This

142 Erler 2002a, 178.

143 Erler is followed by Heath (2013, 83).

144 Erler 2002a, 179. The anonymous commentary was conventionally dated to the second century AD, though some argue for an earlier date (first century BC—early first century AD).

145 See Van Kooten 2008, 134–135.

146 Cf. *Republic* 6.500d, quoted above.

147 See §2.4.1 and §4.3.2 above. For diverse scholarly evaluations of the relationship between *Republic* book 3 and book 10, see Naddaff 2002, 136, n. 8.

type of imitation, however, concerns artistic imitation, not moral imitation.<sup>148</sup> Later Platonists were at the very least not univocal in their scepticism towards human examples. In a tract that prefigures the later ‘mirror for princes’ tradition, Plutarch presents the ruler as ‘image of God’ (εἰκὼν θεοῦ) who ‘by his virtue forms himself in the likeness of God’ (αὐτὸς αὐτὸν εἰς ὁμοιότητα θεῶ δι’ ἀρετῆς); he ‘must regulate his own soul and establish his own character (τὸ ἦθος), then make his subjects fit his pattern (οὕτω συναρμόττειν τὸ ὑπήκοον).<sup>149</sup>

To understand the differences between the Epicurean and the Platonic school, it is useful to have a look at one particular Platonic treatise that is perhaps less well known in this context but harbours an abundance of *homoiōsis* vocabulary: the *Phaedrus*. This dialogue uses rich imagery to show how the appropriation of virtue is effectuated by following in a chain of mimetic love. In a parable on the immortality of the soul, Zeus is pictured as leading a giant procession of gods and spirits (246e–247a) in the shape of chariots towards the heavens to behold justice, temperance, and knowledge as they are. In this, they are followed by other souls, who barely see these realities from below, since they struggle to restrain their horses. Yet, ‘that which best follows after God and is most like him’ (248a) might see some glimpses, and when this soul ends up being born as a human, it is most likely that of a philosopher or lover of beauty (248d). These more excellent human souls receive from the particular god they follow ‘character and habits, so far as it is possible for a man to have part in God’ (τὰ ἔθη καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, καθ’ ὅσον δυνατὸν θεοῦ ἀνθρώπῳ μετασχεῖν) and in their turn, choose a beloved soul to ‘make him, so far as possible, like their god’ (253a):

By imitating the god themselves (μιμούμενοι αὐτοί) and by persuasion and education they lead the beloved to the conduct and nature of the god (τὰ παιδικὰ πείθοντες καὶ ῥυθμίζοντες εἰς τὸ ἐκείνου ἐπιτηδεύμα καὶ ιδέα ἀγούσιν), so far as each of them can do so (ὅση ἐκάστῳ δύναμις); so that they exhibit no jealousy or meanness toward the loved one, but endeavour by every means in their power to lead him to the likeness of the god (εἰς ὁμοιότητα αὐτοῖς τῷ θεῷ) whom they honour. (Plato, *Phaedrus* 253b–c)

148 Though cf. *Republic* 600e: ‘all composers of poetry are imitators of images of virtue (μιμητὰς εἰδώλων ἀρετῆς) and of every other subject they deal with.’ Here, however, it still concerns artistic representation of virtues, not real-life imitation.

149 Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler* 780E–F and 780B (also quoted in §3.3.6 above), respectively. In this passage, the language of assimilation to God and being an image of God coincide, cf. on this subject Van Kooten 2008, 215.

The usefulness of several layers of mediators, lower divinities, and philosophers between Zeus and the ‘beloved disciple’ is evident from this account. Thus, whether in the setting of a city-state or philosophical education, the Platonic tradition offers ample material to allow for interhuman imitation, as a first step in approaching the excellence of the gods.

Plato’s perspective here, however, shows that he envisions *homoioōsis* to be part of the immortal soul’s progress. By contrast, the Epicurean materialistic stance on the cosmos did not allow for such immaterial suppositions, rendering their idea of assimilation to the divine of the mortal human being highly optimistic or even hubristic in Platonic eyes. Furthermore, the love these souls in the *Phaedrus* feel for the god they follow immediately translates into the desire to actively teach others to become likewise. By contrast, as Erler himself argues, Epicurus’s care for the development of others was only secondary in nature by merely providing them with an example of human perfection.<sup>150</sup> In sum, the main difference between Epicurean and Platonic traditions of *homoioōsis*, so it seems, does not lie in endorsing human intermediaries (which they both did). They differed in how optimistic they were about the possibility of reaching a divine level with a mortal body and in the motivation they attributed to sages to help others reach their level of assimilation. Platonists were less optimistic about reaching a divine level, but more optimistic about the possibility and motivation of wise people to act as intermediaries and educators of those less advanced.

### 6.3.5 *Pistis and the Topos of Homoiōsis Theōi*

One matter has thus far been left unexplored: can we connect this tradition of *homoioōsis theōi* to the vocabulary of *pistis*, *fides*, and their cognates? I already have discussed various examples of these word stems in connection to the practice of philosophical imitation (in §6.3.2), but what about the discourse of likeness to God or the divine in general? In passing, we saw Maximus of Tyre liken human trustworthiness to divine trustworthiness—or lack thereof—especially in the context of oracles. Philo described the intermediary function of the Logos in terms of a proof (*pistis*) to God that creation will not ultimately choose disorder over divine order.

Even though *pistis* is not a frequently praised virtue in Plato’s oeuvre, as an attitude or action it is used in the direct context of a *homoioōsis theōi* passage in book VI of the *Republic*. The subject under discussion is whether the majority will be able to set aside their prejudice (διαβολή) regarding philosophers as

---

<sup>150</sup> Erler 2002a, 177.

guardians so that the state can indeed be modelled after the divine. A philosopher is described as someone who ‘allies himself with the divine and orderly (Θείῳ καὶ κοσμίῳ)’ and hence ‘becomes divine and orderly, as far as is possible for a human being’. Thereupon he feels urged ‘to put into practice what he sees in the divine realm in the private and public lives of men, and to mold not just his own character (μὴ μόνον ἑαυτὸν πλάττειν)’ but become a ‘creator of righteousness, temperance, and any other kind of virtue’ (δημιουργὸν (...)) σωφροσύνης τε καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ συμπάσης τῆς δημοτικῆς ἀρετῆς).<sup>151</sup> Then, the question posed is:

But if the majority (οἱ πολλοί) see that we are telling the truth about him [i.e. the philosopher], will they get irritated with philosophers and refuse to believe us (ἀπιστήσουσιν ἡμῖν) when we say that a state would never otherwise be successful, unless artists portray it using some divine model (τῷ θείῳ παραδείγματι χρώμενοι)? (Plato, *Republic* 500d–e)

Faith in the philosophers, instead of prejudice, is a requirement in this reasoning for initiating the process of reforming a state according to the divine paradigm. *Pistis sophōi*, trust in the *homoïōsis theōi* of the wise, precedes a similar *homoïōsis* for the common people (*hoi polloi*). Thus, even though *pistis* does not function as a virtue to imitate, it is the proper attitude towards the philosophers, who act as intermediaries in assimilation to God.

In the Roman context, where Fides was worshipped as a prominent goddess (on the cult of Fides, see §7.3.1 below), it was also possible to speak of a transference of the divine quality of faith into human minds. This is what we encounter in the crucial episode of Silius Italicus’s epic *Punica*, at the point when Saguntum is sieged by the Carthaginians. Mercury pleads with Fides to intercede on behalf of the city and addresses Fides as ‘Goddess more ancient than Jupiter, glory of gods and men, without whom neither sea nor land finds peace, sister of Justice, silent divinity in the heart (*in pectore*) of man’.<sup>152</sup> She allows herself to be convinced to end her self-chosen exile from earth in order to give a final boost of faith to the struggling inhabitants of Saguntum:

Taking possession of their minds and pervading their breasts, her familiar habitation (*invadit mentes et pectora nota pererrat*), she instilled her divine power into their hearts (*immittitque animis numen*). Then, piercing even to their marrow, she filled them with a burning passion for

<sup>151</sup> Plato, *Republic* 500d.

<sup>152</sup> Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.484–486.



herself (*atque sui flagrantem inspirat amorem*). (Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.515–517)

What is especially noteworthy is the repeated connection between Fides and the human mind, breast, and heart. Notwithstanding her long absence as a virtue and the flourishing impiety she laments (494–506), she represents an affinity between the divine and the humane. The effect of her dramatic descent is an instilment of the same virtue she represents, opening up the possibility of the citizens to enact faith or confidence again.

Even more explicitly, Epictetus names being *pistos* as the first divine quality that comes to mind as suitable for human imitation. When describing what is the *proprium* of philosophy, as opposed to something like carpentry, he argues that one first ought to learn something (μαθών τινα), before putting it to work. In the case of philosophy, this has to do with the existence and nature of the gods:

Now the philosophers say that the first thing we must learn (μαθεῖν) is this: That there is a God (ὅτι ἔστι θεός), and that He provides for the universe, and that it is impossible for a man to conceal from Him, not merely his actions, but even his purposes and his thoughts (διανοούμενον). Next we must learn what the gods are like (ποιοί τινες εἰσίν); for whatever their character is discovered to be, the man who is going to please and obey them must endeavour as best he can to resemble them (ἀνάγκη πειράσθαι κατὰ δύναμιν ἐξομοιοῦσθαι ἐκείνοις). If the deity is faithful, he also must be faithful (εἰ πιστόν ἐστι τὸ θεῖον, καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι πιστόν); if free, he also must be free; if beneficent, he also must be beneficent; if high-minded, he also must be high-minded, and so forth; therefore, in everything he says and does, he must act as an imitator of God (ὡς θεοῦ τοῖνυν ζηλωτὴν τὰ ἐξῆς πάντα καὶ ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν). (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.14.11–13)

In this brief recapitulation of the importance of imitation of the divine for the philosophical enterprise, Epictetus considers the cultivation of faithfulness essential to gaining the right disposition (*hexis*). As we saw above, being *pistos* is an important quality to Epictetus, that is divine precisely because it is not dependent on external circumstances: practising *pistis*, one is able to die like a God, bear disease like a God (ἀποθνήσκοντα θείως, νοσοῦντα θείως).<sup>153</sup> At the same time, though, he considers it a divine command:

153 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.8.28.

Your faithfulness is your own (τὸ πιστὸν σόν), your self-respect is your own; who, then, can take these things from you? (...) Since you have such promptings and directions (ὑποθήκας καὶ ἐντολάς) from Zeus, what kind do you still want from me? Am I greater than he, or more trustworthy (ἄξιοπιστότερος)? (Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.3.12)<sup>154</sup>

The flexibility in Epictetus's use of *pistis* language is perfectly illustrated in this passage, as it is used first as a quality and thereafter as an attitude towards either him or Zeus: whom would you rather trust—who is, literally, more worthy of your *pistis*? Evidently, the sage or teacher loses out to the god. According to Epictetus, however, the virtue of faithfulness does not consist in this attitude towards Zeus, but in putting God's directions concerning the virtue of faithfulness into practice.

These examples show that when Christians in the early empire would speak of the importance of the virtue of faithfulness, or about the trust they put in their leaders, in Christ, in God, and of the trustworthiness of these 'objects of trust', worthy of their imitation, their message was unproblematically understood by their pagan contemporaries. Still, for the prominence of the virtue of *pistis* as a quality of men and attitude towards God at the same time, we must turn to a Jewish-Hellenistic version of the Platonic and Stoic philosophical traditions.

As we saw in chapter 4 (§4.3.4), in Philo's works, *pistis* is connected to Abraham and Moses. It represents the virtue of stability, certainty, trustworthiness, and, as a virtue, it consists precisely in an action or attitude of trust (*pisteuō*), for it must be placed in the right, trustworthy (*pistos*) object:

To purge away each of these, to distrust created being, which in itself is wholly unworthy of trust (ἀπιστήσαι γενέσει τῇ πάντα ἐξ ἑαυτῆς ἀπίστῳ), to trust in God, and in Him alone, even as He alone is truly worthy of trust (μόνῳ δὲ πιστεῦσαι θεῷ καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν μόνῳ πιστῷ)—this is a task for a great and celestial understanding. (Philo, *Who Is the Heir?* 93)<sup>155</sup>

While he adapts the Platonic epistemological division to allow for *pistis* to refer to the intelligible realm as well, he is perfectly in line with Platonism in juxtaposing the sensible and the eternal realm not only with the Delphic maxims in distrusting worldly goods but also with Stoicism when it comes to *pistis*

<sup>154</sup> Cf. for a discussion of this passage in light of the divine law §3.3.5 above.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Philo, *On the Virtues* 218: [Abraham] put his trust (πιστεύσαντα) in nothing created rather than in the Uncreated and Father of all.'

an important quality of the sage who is not distracted by indifferent externals. As we have seen, the novelty in Philo's use of *pistis* does not lie in some sort of inherent fideism, but rather in juxtaposing Abraham's faith in the eternal God with other people's faith in sensibles. In the terms of the current chapter, his innovation is the connection between the virtue of trust/trustworthiness and the action of trusting.<sup>156</sup> The virtue of *pistis* consists in trusting in accordance with the trustworthiness of the object, and, as I will demonstrate, even in becoming trustworthy by association and assimilation.

For even as in Philo, *homoiōsis theōi* as a topic *per se* is never discussed in terms of *pistis*, he comes close to suggesting that we ought to imitate God's *pistis*. Moses's privilege to 'stand' with God (Deut 5:31) is understood as a means to 'put off doubt and hesitation, the qualities of the unstable mind (ἵνα ἐνδοιασμὸν καὶ ἐπαμφοτερισμὸν, ἀβεβαίου ψυχῆς διαθέσεις ἀποδυσάμενος), and put on that surest and most stable quality, faith (καὶ βεβαιοτάτην διάθεσιν, πίστιν, ἐνδύσῃται).<sup>157</sup> In God's presence, Moses is able to clothe himself with the divine stability, whose corollary, at least on the human side, is *pistis*. Looking ahead to my reading of Paul, this vocabulary of clothing is also used in his letters to explicate imitation of the divine (see §6.4.5 below). Yet even more strikingly, Philo also calls *pistis* a quality that belongs to God, and that is precisely why the human variant is essentially different: it imitates divine *pistis*, yet will always remain an image of the divine archetype:

Such a person asserts that the faith which man possesses should be so strong as to differ not at all from the faith which belongs to the Existent (τὴν γὰρ πίστιν, ἧς ἔλαχεν ἄνθρωπος, οὕτω βέβαιόν φησι δεῖν εἶναι, ὡς μηδὲν διαφέρειν τῆς περὶ τὸ ὄν), a faith sound and complete in every way. (...) Enough for man is the power to possess the images of these (εἰκόνας αὐτῶν), images in the scale of number and magnitude far below the archetypes (τῶν ἀρχετύπων ἐλαττουμένης). (Philo, *On the Change of Names* 182–183: cf. on this passage §4.3.4 above)

Philo thus grounds the relationship of human and divine *pistis* in the ontological or even cosmological relationship of copy to original, image to example. Recalling Plutarch's epistemology (see §4.3.5 above), such a relationship is not a static or powerless one according to Middle Platonist thought: the original

<sup>156</sup> Cf. also Schlatter 1963 [1882], 65 on the interchangeability of faith and faithfulness in Philo.

<sup>157</sup> Philo, *On the Confusion of Tongues* 31.

grounds the existence of the image and shows what it can potentially become; it even acts as a *causa efficiens* leading the image in this direction. As a copy of divine *pistis*, Abraham's *pistis* is essentially weaker, but may strive towards the perfect original.

To sum up, by presenting Abraham and Moses as the ultimate examples of both the cognitive quality of unwavering faith and an attitude of trust, placed in the ultimate trustworthy object, i.e. God, Philo makes the utmost use of the multivalence of *pistis* language. Moreover, even though he does not connect *homoiōsis theōi* to *pistis* explicitly, by connecting Moses's stable faith to God's stability and by comparing human to divine *pistis*, we see the basic contours of the idea of assimilation to God in the quality of *pistis*.

## 6.4 The Mimetic Chain of Faith and Faithfulness in Paul's Letters

### 6.4.1 *Competing Together in Pistis (Phil 1.27): Faith as Virtue Rather than Kerygmatic Complex*

We have seen that ancient philosophy, particularly in the Hellenistic and early Roman period, was a 'lived philosophy' focused on practising virtue. Would it make sense to read Paul's usage of *pistis* in the context of the Graeco-Roman philosophical goal of practising 'the good life'? The first thing to notice in this regard is that the practical orientation of ancient philosophy can also be found in the Pauline tradition. Here, too, we find comparisons with the training of athletes, boxing exercises, and rigid self-control, not unlike we find in the Stoic tradition (see §6.3.2 above):<sup>158</sup>

Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9.24–27)

Like Seneca, Paul compares the garland of athletes to a reward for all time. Like Epictetus, he uses the metaphor of boxing and the difficulties involved. Here,

---

<sup>158</sup> For more thorough analyses of how Paul used athletic imagery in the footsteps of Hellenistic philosophers, see Sisson 2005 and Arnold 2014.

then, he evidently joins this philosophical topos of practising virtue. Can his usage of *pistis* vocabulary also be considered as partaking in this philosophical discourse of moral exercise?

In the beginning of *Philippians*, Paul draws on a figure of speech very similar to the one we just saw. After affirming his own commitment to their ‘progress and joy in faith’ (τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως), he admonishes them, among other things, to what I would translate as ‘competing together with one mind in the faithfulness expressed in the good news’:

Only, live your life (πολιτεύεσθε) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ), so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel (μὴ ψυχῇ συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). (*Philippians* 1.27)

The athletic metaphor suggests that the topic here is moral training: Paul wishes for their growth in the virtue of faithfulness in response to God’s offer of a reciprocal bond of trust as announced in the good news. Yet the translation cited above, the NRSV, seems to suppose that *pistis* is shorthand for the kerygma itself. This choice reflects the—in my view—later usage of ‘faith’ as ‘faithful teaching’ or even ‘religion’ and perhaps also a level of unease with the idea of faith as a virtue.

Such a view is both implicitly and rather more explicitly present in scholarly literature. Philip Towner, for instance, holds that, together with ‘the truth’ (ἡ ἀλήθεια), ‘the faith’ (ἡ πίστις) ‘describes the whole matrix of objective data of which the Christian religion consists.’<sup>159</sup> However, to equate faith with the content of ‘the Christian religion’ reflects a modern rather than an ancient perspective. Moreover, Towner bluntly asserts that the semantic potential of *pistis* in the entire NT can be neatly put in these two categories: one in connection with the believer’s personal relation to Jesus Christ and another one referring to the aforementioned objective, doctrinal sense of ‘the faith’.<sup>160</sup> This second category, Towner argues, is well-represented in the Pastorals, but he also organizes *Galatians* 1.23 under this heading, whereby he suggests that this meaning was prevalent in the early Pauline communities (on Gal 1.23, see §7.4.1 below). Similarly, Bradley Arnold, who wrote a monograph precisely on the topic of

159 Towner 2015, 121. For an opposite assessment as early as the late 19th century, cf. Cremer & Urwick 1886, 485 (s.v. πίστις): ‘To assume a meaning *doctrina fidei* is everywhere superfluous.’

160 Towner 2015, 121.

athletic imagery in *Philippians*, overlooks the possibility of interpreting *pistis* as the virtue of faithfulness, and out of the options ‘the act of believing’ and ‘the content of the faith’ he opts for the latter one.<sup>161</sup>

However, when we read this passage from *Philippians* with the Graeco-Roman discourse of practising moral virtue in mind, this is less obvious. We have seen (see esp. §6.3.2) that faith(fulness) as such was a virtue worth pursuing, a virtue that in the Pauline letters is deeply embedded in and coloured by the gospel narrative. Yet it is a virtue nonetheless. On a verbal level, the language of moral progress (προκοπή), civic conduct (πολιτεύομαι), and athletic training (συναθλέω) indicates that there is more at stake than acceptance of a message.<sup>162</sup> *Prokopē* was a well-known Stoic concept of moral growth used by Epictetus and Seneca, among others.<sup>163</sup> The verb *politeuomai* shows that public behaviour is at stake, even if such political terms were commonly used in discourses of cultivating a shared philosophical disposition (see also §3.4.3 above on Phil 3.20 and the living law discourse). The Epicurean communities in particular were seen as political communities in which a similar unity of mind (as in Phil 4.1: μιᾷ ψυχῇ; cf. 2.2: τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, and 1 Cor 1.10: τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ) was deemed essential, as this remarkable characterization by the Platonist Numenius emphasizes:

Thus the School of Epicurus is like some true republic (ἡ Ἐπικούρου διατριβὴ πολιτεία τινὶ ἀληθεῖ), perfectly free from sedition, with one mind in common and one consent (κοινὸν ἓνα νοῦν, μίαν γνώμην ἐχούσῃ); from which cause they were, and are, and seemingly will be zealous disciples (φιλακόλουθοι). (Numenius apud Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 14.5)<sup>164</sup>

This passage is an excellent example of how political metaphors were used in contexts of philosophical education. The purpose of the Epicureans was to create communities in which they cultivated one mind, or purpose, or disposition: they were political and moral-philosophical communities with ‘followers’

161 Arnold 2014, 168.

162 While συναθλέω may also refer to military action, the context of virtue increases the likelihood of the athletic connotation, as does the usage of the same metaphor in *Philippians* 3.14. The prefix *syn-* is not problematic in this athletic context, as is demonstrated by Dominika Kurek-Chomycz (2017).

163 Deming 2003, 54, n. 27 refers to Seneca, *Epistles* 32; Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4; Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.81, and Philo, *That the Worse Attacks the Better* 46.

164 Translation Gifford 1903.

or 'disciples' at the same time. This nexus of political-philosophical language is also found in *Philippians* 1.27. Thus, in this semantic web, it is most likely that *pistis* relates to cultivating public, moral action as well.

How then, we may ask, is the genitive *tou euangeliou* as attribute of *hē pistis* to be understood? Does this not offer a direct connection to the gospel, the message, the kerygma? Naturally, it does. The question remains, however, in what way these two are connected. If *pistis* is understood as 'the faith', 'the gospel' is used exegetically as a synonym: 'the faith as it is being taught in/as the good news'. If we opt for 'belief' in a more shallow, cognitive sense, then the gospel may function as the object of this belief: belief in the gospel (which may more naturally be expressed with a preposition) or the belief prompted by the gospel. Both these options, however, are not foregrounded by the direct context. The gospel has already been described by Paul in this sentence as 'the gospel of Christ', and the letter proceeds with the so-called hymn that is introduced by the words 'let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus' (Phil 2.5: *τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*). For this reason, it is not too farfetched to read *pistis* here as the virtue of faithfulness, perfectly exemplified by Christ. *Pistis* then refers to 'not only believing in Christ' (οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεῦειν: Phil 1.29), but also mimicking his suffering, humility, and other-regarding faithfulness.

That *pistis* is here referring to a virtue, to faithfulness, is confirmed from a different angle by comparing the only two occurrences of the verb *synathleō* predating the Pauline epistles. In one of these places, it goes together with another noun in the dative, and this dative can only be understood as pertaining to the thing being trained: the Ethiopians are said by Diodorus Siculus to have together trained their memory (*μνήμη συνηθλημένης*) to understand the figurative meaning of their symbols.<sup>165</sup> By picturing the Philippians' progress by means of the metaphor of athletic training (*συναθλοῦντες*), the logical complement in the dative also provides the thing they trained. Thus, faithfulness can similarly be understood as the direct object of the training: the virtue of faith.

Apart from the direct context, this usage of *pistis* as a virtue or action is confirmed by other passages from the undisputed Pauline epistles. In chapter 4, we already saw that the stability and endurance necessary to attain virtue

165 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 3.4.2. Another example of a dative with the verb *ἀθλέω*, which is a little more common, is Aeschines, *On the Embassy* 147: 'When he was a young man, before the war destroyed his property, he was so fortunate as to be an athlete (*ἀθλεῖν τῷ σώματι*); or: 'as to train his body'.

is also necessary to attain a lifestyle determined by *pistis* (§4.4.1). In the previous chapter, the connection between *pistis* and *energeia* (from the preposition *en* and *ergon*) was already discussed (§5.4.3). The frequent co-occurrence of *pistis* and *energeia* already points towards the idea that *pistis* was viewed as something that ‘works’ or ‘energizes’. More specifically, it is an action (*ergon*) enacted in a context of love (*agapē*). If we search for more instances in which *pistis* is clearly a virtue to be practised, we find at least two rather explicit passages.

At the very start of *1 Thessalonians*, Paul assures his addressees that he is ‘constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope (τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος) in our Lord Jesus Christ.’<sup>166</sup> The choice of the three substantives which function as object with the verb (‘work’, ‘labour’, ‘steadfastness’), all very similar in meaning, makes it sufficiently clear that all three modifying nouns are understood as actions and hence as virtues.<sup>167</sup> In particular the combination ‘work of faith’ in this passage (ἔργον πίστεως, cf. *2 Thes* 1.11) demonstrates ‘a stress on human effort (ἔργον) often-times overlooked in Paul.’<sup>168</sup> *Ergon* in itself is not a negative term in the Pauline letters (cf. *1 Cor* 3.13; *2 Cor* 9.8). While this has been noted by some, the focus of (mostly Lutheran) scholarship on the contrast between faith and works of the law in the context of justification has blinded many to what is rather obvious: Paul explicitly calls faith(fulness) an effort.<sup>169</sup>

Furthermore, in *Galatians* *pistis* is included in the list concerning ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (*Gal* 5.22–23) as opposed to ‘works of the flesh’ (*Gal* 5.19–21). It is well-known that these lists closely follow conventional Hellenistic catalogues of virtues and vices.<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, it is often claimed, most influentially by Hans Dieter Betz, that in speaking of ‘fruit’ Paul emphatically distances himself from both these Greek discourses and Jewish ethics to point out that virtue

166 *1 Thessalonians* 1.3. On the triad of faith, love, and hope in *1 Corinthians* 13.13, see §4.4.4 above.

167 Cf. Ulrichs 2007, 85: ‘Vielmehr ist der Zusammenhang der beiden Substantive enger zu verstehen, insofern die *nomina regentia* nicht nur kontingente Begleitumstände, sondern Erscheinungsweisen von Glaube, Liebe und Hoffnung wiedergeben. (...) die Genitive sind also am ehesten expegetisch zu verstehen. (...) Der Akzent liegt damit auf der zweiten Trias.’

168 Getty 1990, 279.

169 An exception is Friedrich 1981, 119: ‘Glauben ist nicht ein psychischer Vorgang, sondern schließt die Konsequenz des Handelns ein, so daß Paulus (*1 Thes* 1.3) vom ἔργον τῆς πίστεως und *Gal* 5.6 von der πίστις ἐνεργούμενη sprechen kann.’

170 Betz 1979, 281–282.



is not a human achievement but a divine gift.<sup>171</sup> The word fruit, *karpos*, however, is used to indicate virtue by pagan authors as well. Take Plutarch, for instance, who speaks of the fruit of character (*karpos ēthous*) that produces virtue (*aretē*).<sup>172</sup> In fact, from another work by Plutarch, we learn that the image of virtue as fruit can indicate either that it is the product of work and toil (ἀπ' ἔργων τε πολλῶν καὶ διὰ πόνων μεγάλων) or that it has grown spontaneously (ἀφ' αὐτῆς).<sup>173</sup> Paul's use of this metaphor in itself does not prove that there is an antithesis between 'works' and 'fruit' in these verses, at least not as obvious as the one between 'Sin' and 'Spirit' (cf. Gal 5.17). 'Achievement' and 'fruit' could easily function as synonyms. Whether *pistis*, like the other virtues summed up by Paul, is a human achievement or a divine gift is a question prompted by reformed theology, yet one not posed or answered in this passage. The command 'Live by the Spirit' (5.16: πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε) at the very least suggests that a certain kind of human effort is required.

If we broaden the scope for a moment to include all Pauline letters, including the disputed Pastoral ones, we find even more instances of *pistis* used as a virtue. In discussions about authorship of the Pastorals, the changing meaning of *pistis* plays a role, which is argued to take on 'the more objective sense of a common body of belief or a virtue, or even Christianity itself'.<sup>174</sup> As regards *pistis* as a virtue, however, the usage seems very much in line with the undisputed Pauline letters (as I argue in the current study), and the meaning of 'a common body of belief' or 'Christianity itself' is not always warranted, even in the Pastorals (as I argue elsewhere).<sup>175</sup>

In 1 *Timothy*, such a usage of *pistis* is evident in the expression 'fight the good fight of faith' (ἀγωνίζου τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς πίστεως) (1 Tim 6.12, see §6.4.2 on this text). In 2 *Timothy*, the addressee is called to 'shun youthful passions (νεωτερικὰς ἐπιθυμίας) and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace (δικαιοσύνην, πίστιν, ἀγάπην, εἰρήνην)'.<sup>176</sup> In particular, the antithesis with

171 See Betz 1979, 282.

172 Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 750E.

173 Plutarch, *Beasts Are Rational* 987A.

174 So Porter 1995, 111, with a reference to 1 *Timothy* 1.2, 5, 14, 19; 2.7, 15; 3.9; 4.1, 6, 12; 5.8, 12; 6.10, 11, 12, 21; 2 *Timothy* 1.5; 2.22; 3.8, 10; *Titus* 1.4, 13; 2.2; 3.15. And cf., for a similar assessment of the changing meaning of *pistis* in the Pastorals, Mutschler 2017, 606, who distinguishes this aspect as a third meaning: 'Besonders innovativ, besonders konsequent und besonders folgenreich ist Glaube als Rahmenbegriff und Grundwort für das Christliche. Der Übergang zu einer Traditionsreligion ist in den Pastoralbriefen deutlich erkennbar.' Cf. Schliesser 2017b, 24.

175 See Sierksma-Agteres 2019 for my interpretation of *pistis* as a virtue in the Pastorals (and its function in balancing hegemonic power play).

176 2 *Timothy* 2.22.

‘youthful passions’ leaves little doubt that the four words represent virtues that are to be attained by training higher adult faculties. We can also refer here to Paul’s—or ‘deutero-Paul’s’—preview of the conclusion of his life from the same letter:

I have fought the good fight (τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα ἡγήμισμαι), I have finished the race (τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα), I have kept my faithfulness (τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα). From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness. (2 *Timothy* 4.7–8)<sup>177</sup>

Again, the choice of words in this and many other translations suggests that faith is a monolithic whole to be ‘kept’ or ‘lost’. This is also affirmed by the reference to this text in the LSJ lexicon.<sup>178</sup> The verb *tēreō*, however, means in the first place ‘to watch over’, ‘to take care of’, which leaves room for development and growth. Whereas this verb is common in military contexts, in view of the athletic metaphor here, I would rather explain it as belonging to the frame of moral growth and competing in virtue.<sup>179</sup> Epictetus argues that ‘it is not the business of the philosopher (ἔργον τοῦ φιλοσόφου) to guard (τηρεῖν) these external matters—neither his paltry wine, nor his paltry oil, nor his paltry body—but what? His own governing principle (τὸ ἴδιον ἡγεμονικόν).’<sup>180</sup> This principle, the *hegemonikon*, needs to be *pistos*, trustworthy, in order to attain a level of wisdom and virtue.<sup>181</sup> It is such internal virtue that the author of 2 *Timothy* also indicates here with the word *pistis*.

Since, as we have shown, *pistis* obviously functions within the context of moral growth in both contemporary philosophical sources and in the Pauline corpus as a whole, we must be careful in opting for an interpretation that suggests it represents, in the words of Philip Towner, ‘the sum total of orthodox doctrine’.<sup>182</sup> As we have seen, even in the Pastoral Epistles, such a kerygmatic meaning is not always warranted, and in the context of this chapter, we have seen that the discourse of moral progress often offers a more illuminating explanatory context.

177 ‘I have kept *the* faith’, is a possible translation, and the likelier the later 2 *Timothy* is to be dated, yet to avoid anachronistic connotations I prefer ‘*my* faithfulness’.

178 LSJ s.v. τηρέω lists as the third meaning ‘observe or keep an engagement (...) “τὴν πίστιν” 2 Tim 4.7’.

179 See Morgan 2015, 322: ‘*tērein* is a strongly politico-military word’.

180 Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.10.16. See, on this verb in relation to the Stoic moral doctrine of *oikeiōsis*, Joosse 2011, 120.

181 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.22.25, on which see §5.3.6 above.

182 Towner 2015, 122.

#### 6.4.2 *May the Sharing of Your Pistis Become Effective (Phm 1.6): Faith as an Individual or Communal Virtue?*

The philosophical sources discussed in this chapter clearly show that *pistis/fides* functioned as a virtue that is in need of cultivation. As the previous subsection emphasized, there is much to say for reading instances of Pauline *pistis* as taking part in this same discourse. However, unlike in pagan philosophical sources, in the undisputed Pauline letters cultivation of *pistis* usually concerns the community as a whole. We might now ask whether this says something substantial about the manner in which *pistis* is configured in Paul's thought, or whether this is an incidental matter related to the number of addressees and Paul's role as a founder of faith-based communities. In other words, is the Pauline virtue of faith, in contrast to the Graeco-Roman philosophical virtue of faith, essentially a communal virtue?

In an extensive article on faith in *Romans*, Ben Dunson acknowledges both the individual and the communal aspects of *pistis*. On careful examination, however, Dunson appears to emphasize individual, in contrast to participatory, readings, such as in this statement:

Any claim made about the nature of faith in *Romans* or in Paul's thought as a whole, therefore, must give due heed to the voice of ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη, which proclaims a message of individual faith in Christ that results in justification. (Dunson 2011, 34)

Dunson bases his claim on the individual nature of 'faith that results in justification' primarily on *Romans* 10.5–13, a passage that according to Dunson 'enables the interpreter to read faith in *Romans* backwards' (p. 22). I would argue instead for a reading of this passage against the background of the discourse on benefaction and politics, in which the faith of whole nations is at stake, as I explain below (§7.4.1). Moreover, as we already saw, faith in the context of justification makes perfect sense against the background of Golden Age narratives, in which a righteous society, not individual justification, is foregrounded (see §3.4.1).

Even when instances of *pistis* language can be traced to the semantic domain of knowledge, persuasion, and virtue (the broader domain of my chapters 4 to 6), it is never attributed to each individual in Paul's communal audience—which could potentially have been phrased like 'the faith of every

one of you' (ἡ πίστις ἐνὸς ἐκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν).<sup>183</sup> Nor is it described as something in which some addressees might be more advanced than others or have a greater share than others, as my discussion of many 'suspicious' passages has already shown.<sup>184</sup> The first thing one observes when looking into this question is that it is first and foremost 'your faith', in plural, that concerns Paul. In contrast to the philosophical discourse of moral perfection, *pistis* as a firm conviction seems to be very much a communal trait in Paul's eyes.

Still, there are some more Pauline texts which may speak of the *pistis* of an individual. The pointed phrase 'from *pistis* to *pistis*' from the opening of *Romans* (Rom 1.17) is sometimes also connected with growth of individual faith. Nevertheless, as I already explained (see §3.4.4), the results of John W. Taylor's comparative linguistic approach are convincing: he questions an individual interpretation of this phrase and opts for a collective increase in obedience to the gospel and thereby an increase in God's bond of trust among the nations.<sup>185</sup> If we interpret this phrase in light of the preceding verse as 'from the bond of faithfulness with the Jews to the growing bond of faithfulness with the nations', growth and communality in *pistis* go hand in hand. Moreover, as we have seen in the text discussed there (in §3.4.4), growth is depicted in terms exceeding mere numbers. Paul is concerned not so much with the quantity of believers, but with the quality of their faith(fulness). Yet, also as regards qualitative growth in faith, the communality of this faith is never in question.

In a sense, the references to Abraham's faith or faithfulness in *Galatians* 3 and *Romans* 4 seems to represent an individualized account of *pistis*. After all, the *pistis* Abraham expressed takes the shape of the relationship between one person and God. Hence, Benjamin Schliesser describes the transition from *Romans* 3 to 4 as Paul walking 'from a description of faith as objective, divine event to a concretization and individualization through his portrayal of the patriarch's faith'.<sup>186</sup> Likewise, David Hay states that Paul's 'use of Abraham as a model of faith in the presence of temptation (Rom 4.19–21), implies a strong sense that faith concerns individuals as well as communities'.<sup>187</sup> Still, we must

183 As it is said of love in 2 *Thessalonians* 1.3: 'because your faith is growing abundantly (ὑπεραυξάνει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν), and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing (πλεονάζει ἡ ἀγάπη ἐνὸς ἐκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους)'.

184 Not even when he seems to make such a distinction: cf., above, §2.4.4 (on *Romans* 12.3), §5.4.3 (on 2 *Corinthians* 1–2), and §5.4.4 (on *Romans* 14–15).

185 Taylor 2004b.

186 Schliesser 2007, 393.

187 Hay 2006, 63.

keep in mind that the patriarch fulfils a particular role in Paul's account: Abraham is an example or paradigm. As I argued above (in §4.4.1), *Romans* 4 shows how righteousness is assigned not only to the individual, trusting, and faithful Abraham, but to all who, in his footsteps, are faithful in putting their faith in God, the circumcised descendants as well as the many uncircumcised nations (Rom 4.17–18). Furthermore, the promise in question pertains to exactly this matter of offspring.<sup>188</sup> Abraham is a patriarch who serves as a model for all his children.

Likewise, in *Galatians*, where the case of Abraham is treated more briefly, the emphasis is still on the collective result of the paradigmatic faith of an individual. The possibility of trusting God and thus entering into a bond of reciprocal trust and faithfulness, as evident in the story of Abraham, became an option for all: all those who live by faith in God and faithfulness to God (Gal 3.7 and 3.9: οἱ ἐκ πίστεως) are descendants of Abraham. This collective context of lineage and descent is rightly brought to the fore by Caroline Johnson Hodge, who translates the final verse thus: 'Those who descend from Abraham's faithfulness are blessed with the faithful Abraham.'<sup>189</sup> What is less fortunate in this translation is its suggestion that *hoi ek pisteōs* have a somewhat passive role as descendants, whereas this chapter has shown that *pistis* was very much a virtue, practised in Abraham's footsteps. *Pistis* fulfils the same role as we saw in the Graeco-Roman sources on faith in the context of justice and law (see chapter 3 above): if the citizens of a society are characterized by the virtues of trust and good faith, sponsored by just rulers and modelled by paradigms such as Saturn, Numa, or Augustus, justice can flourish. As a model's individual virtue, it opens up the collective possibility of *dikaiosynē* on a nation-wide scale (on *Romans* 4, see also §4.4.1 above and §7.4.4 below).

As six out of seven undisputed letters are addressed to communities, the one letter at our disposal that might provide some insight into the possibility of individual progress in faith of a living individual in Paul's days is the *Letter to Philemon*. Apart from this letter, we do not possess undisputed Pauline letters addressed to individuals, and even in this letter, the entire church is addressed

188 Cf. Morgan 2015, 483: 'We might envisage the covenant between God and Abram as paradigmatic of such individualism—but Abram's *pistis* involves his household as well as himself, and is established for the making of a great nation out of his descendants (Gen. 12.2, 15.1–6), so Abram is always the representative of his family and even, in a sense, of his descendants.'

189 Hodge 2007, 86. An important argument (set out in pp. 80–82) is that οἱ ἐκ phrases often indicate parental descent (a quick TLG search shows that together with geographical origin, these uses make up a large majority of all occurrences, pagan and Jewish alike).

and two more individuals are mentioned, together with the one who probably was its first recipient and namesake. In the thanksgiving section of *Philemon*, Paul first puts forth Philemon's love and *pistis* (1.5): 'because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus' (ἀκούων σου τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους). Whereas the NRSV takes this *pistis* to be directed only towards Christ following a chiasmic ABBA structure (or perhaps under influence of *Colossians* 1.4), it is also defensible to include the saints as the object of the *pistis* of Philemon (and Christ as the object of *agapē*): his good faith is then also directed towards Philemon's community members.<sup>190</sup> Thomas Schumacher sees in this text proof that one and the same case of *pistis* can carry both the usage of human-divine and interhuman faith.<sup>191</sup>

The next sentence (Phm 1.6) is even more difficult to interpret. Paul encourages Philemon to put faith into action: 'I pray that *hē koinōnia tēs pisteōs sou* may become effective (ὅπως ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς σου ἐνεργῆς γένηται)'. The difficulty in interpreting this verse lies in the precise meaning of the word group *hē koinōnia tēs pisteōs sou*. Some exegetes take *sou* to configure only *tēs pisteōs* instead of the entire word group, resulting in translations like 'the sharing of your faith', 'the participation in your faith', or 'the generosity based on your faith'.<sup>192</sup> The other option takes *sou* as referring to the entire word group, resulting in translations like 'your fellowship characterized by faith', 'your partnership with us in faith', or 'your participation in our relationship of faith'.<sup>193</sup> Then, there seems to be an undertone of critique, questioning whether Philemon's *pistis* is effective enough as a partaker in the *pistis* community. This might be a counterproductive tactic, however, in an otherwise optimistic thanksgiving section. In view of the praise of Philemon's *pistis* in

190 *Colossians* 1.4 might be cited as part of the argument that *pistis* is only directed towards Christ and love only towards the holy ones. Regardless of the question of authorship, however, it is not a very relevant parallel since the structure here is obviously tripartite, including the reference to hope in the remainder of the sentence.

191 Schumacher 2012, 225 and 2017, 323–325.

192 See i.a. Callahan 1997, 28 ('the liberality of your faith'); Bird 2009, 136 ('the sharing of your faith'). For more examples, see Georg 1994, 88, n. 33. The unfortunate modern connotation of the translation 'the sharing of your faith', also chosen in the NRSV, and even more so of the KJV translation, 'the communication of thy faith', is that it seems to refer to evangelism to outsiders, whereas the topic here clearly is Philemon's attitude towards insiders, including, according to Paul, Onesimus.

193 Cf. i.a. Cousar 2009, 101–102 (the commentary (at 102) reads 'Philemon's partnership (*koinōnia*) in the faith', whereas the translation (at 101) has 'the partnership of your faith'). For more examples, see Georg 1994, 88, n. 34.

the preceding verse, I would somewhat tentatively side with the first option here: ‘the generosity based on your faithfulness’. In that case, Paul’s argument is a more subtle one, namely that, since Philemon is sharing so generously with the entire community out of his faithfulness, this generosity ought to be extended towards his brother Onesimus too, who, like Paul, belongs to the Christ-community (cf. the repetition of *koinos* language in 1.17).<sup>194</sup> Philemon’s sharing of faithfulness refers to its intended inclusiveness: it extends to Onesimus.<sup>195</sup> Following this interpretation, it is Philemon’s individual faith that needs to be practised, to put to effect, in the context of and to the benefit of the community as a whole.

Finally, we can have a look beyond the undisputed Pauline corpus at the Pastorals, letters that were at least formally addressed to individuals—although this may have been a literary device and, regardless, they may have functioned as community instructions at an early point. In these letters, we find more evidence of an individualized account of faith. The instruction to Timothy is of particular interest, because it emphasizes a continued training in life and learning. Timothy is in the first place responsible for his personal training. This training is pictured as the opposite of ‘love of money’ (*philarguria*), in terms of faith and in terms of the recurring theme of ‘contesting in a contest’ (see the previous subsection):

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness (δικαιοσύνην, εὐσέβειαν, πίστιν, ἀγάπην, ὑπομονήν, πραῦτητα). Fight the good fight of faith (ἀγωνίζου τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς πίστεως); take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6.11–12)

194 Strangely enough, Panikulam Georg (1994, 88) justifies his choice for the second option by referring to the same preceding verse. Yet showing love and faith ‘towards all the saints (εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους)’ (verse 5) seems to me to be quite a different idea from participating in a faith-community (verse 6, option 2) and similar to allowing other saints to participate in your faith or to being generous based on your faith (verse 6, option 1).

195 Cf. Wolter 2017, 356 writing on the manner in which faith serves as an equalizer both as regards Israel and the nations (in *Romans* and *Galatians*) and as regards ‘anderen alltagsweltlichen Statuszuschreibungen wie die Unterschiede zwischen Sklaven und Freien oder zwischen Männern und Frauen (...). Ethisch am folgenreichsten tritt uns diese gleichmacherische Bedeutung des Glaubens im kleinen *Philemonbrief* entgegen, der in dieser Hinsicht dem Römerbrief ausgesprochen nahe steht: In diesem Brief ist es die *κοινωνία τῆς πίστεως*, die gemeinsame Teilhabe am Glauben, die den Herrn mit seinem Sklaven verbindet und die von ihm verlangt, in seinem eigenen Sklaven den “Bruder” zu sehen.’ Cf., for a more extensive discussion, Wolter 2010.

The second instance of ‘faith’ the author speaks of here is often understood as the sum total of Christian teachings, as a finalized, dogmatic whole, indicated by the definite article ‘the’ in translations. We saw in the previous subsection how this semantic development of *pistis* is not warranted by Paul’s usage and even in the Pastorals these translations may prove anachronistic. Viewed in the Graeco-Roman context and with the catalogue of virtues from the first sentence in mind, the *pistis* spoken of should rather be understood as the act of faithful living: a virtue that requires continuous exercise.

Notwithstanding the focus on Timothy as an individual, his ‘fight of faith’ must also be seen in light of his role as a teacher. For, earlier in the same letter, he is admonished to transmit his teachings through the example of practising this virtue of faith:

These are the things you must insist on and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example (τύπος γίνου τῶν πιστῶν) in speech and conduct, in love, in *pistis*, in purity. (...) Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them (ταῦτα μελέτα, ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι), so that all may see your progress (σου ἡ προκοπή). Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things (ἔπεχε σεαυτῷ καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ· ἐπίμενε αὐτοῖς), for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4.11–12,15–16)

The teachings of Christ are literally depicted as ‘tradition’: they ought to be transmitted in an educational setting. It is evident from this passage that this education does not so much consist of a transfer of knowledge as of the learning of the ideal disposition: the vocabulary of practice, cultivation, and persistence is reminiscent of the philosophical sources we discussed. In anticipation of the next section, we may point to the importance attached to being a good model or exemplar (τύπος): Timothy is supposed to set an example for the *pistoi* in—inter alia—*pistis*. Moreover, in this he succeeds Paul himself, who introduced his own role earlier in the same letter as ‘a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth’ (1 Tim 2.7: διδάσκαλος ἐθνῶν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀληθείᾳ). A virtue is in that sense always a social virtue, meant to inspire the same habitus in others. The question for the next subsection is whether this discourse of imitation in *pistis* can already be traced in the earlier Pauline tradition, to which the undisputed letters attest.

To come back to the initial question, the case of Philemon shows that, on the one hand, the quality of *pistis* can very well be attributed to an individual. Faith is not a communal quality *per se*. In this regard there is no radical difference between Pauline and pagan moral instruction. On the other hand, the



only use of *pistis* vocabulary we have in an individualized context concerns a usage in close connection to its practice within the community (Phm 1.6). Faith is never thought of as something pertaining only or exclusively to an individual in the scarce evidence we have. Paul's (or 1 *Timothy's* author's) aim was to foster the virtue of faithfulness in communities and in individuals as a means to foster faithfulness in communities.<sup>196</sup> Whether this usage is due to Paul's understanding of *pistis* or to the circumstance of Paul's mission of building communities and writing letters with a plural audience is an unanswerable question. We cannot and perhaps should not try to separate semantics from pragmatics here.

#### 6.4.3 *An Example to All the Pisteuontes (1 Thes 1.7): Interhuman Imitation in and through Faith*

Whereas it hardly bears repeating that Paul partakes in a discourse of imitation (see §6.2.2 above), and while the importance of *pistis* vocabulary to the Pauline gospel may be evident, the question remains: can we also find instances of *pistis* language either as quality to be imitated or as attitude facilitating such imitation? In what follows, I will briefly refer to a number of passages to support my thesis that we indeed can find both, without aiming to offer a comprehensive exegesis of each text. Although a nice phrase like 'imitate my *pistis* in Christ, as I imitate his *pistis* in God' is lacking in the extant Pauline letters, I will show that *pistis* plays a part in several interhuman relationships of imitation (this subsection), as well as in the Christ-follower's relationship to Christ (§6.4.4).

Even though it formally lies beyond the scope of this research, it is telling that the *Letter to the Hebrews* echoes precisely this focus on the importance of living examples of faith(fulness): 'Remember (μνημονεύετε) your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life (ὧν ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἔκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς), and imitate their faith (μιμῆσθε τὴν πίστιν)' (Hebr 13.7). *Pistis* is here the grammatical and actual object of imitation. Leaders are also to be observed for the outcome of their conduct, and perhaps since 'outcome' can also refer to death, even for their literal departure

196 Cf. for this communal configuration of *pistis/fides* Morgan 2015, 483: 'characteristically, it seems, divinities in this period are presented as offering *pistis/fides* to whole communities or to all people collectively. The same is true for the writings of the New Testament. (...) insofar as they all have equivalent relationships with the divine, and by that token belong to a particular community, and insofar as *pistis/fides* helps to form and define communities and those who worship in them, divine-human *pistis/fides* should probably be seen as more strongly communal (on the human side) than individualistic.'

from life. In both cases, the ones who preached God's message should also practise it, to offer concrete models for imitation.

In the Pastorals, there is also an evident example of the type of imitation which includes both the faith of the teacher and the disciple's faith in the teaching:

Now you have observed my teaching (παρηκολούθησάς μου τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ), my conduct, my aim in life, my faithfulness (τῇ πίστει), my patience, my love, my steadfastness, (...) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of (ἐν οἷς ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστώθης), knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you, for salvation through faith in/faithfulness that is in Christ Jesus (εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). (2 *Timothy* 3.10,14)<sup>197</sup>

This passage is noteworthy, if only for the use of the verb *pistoō* (πιστόω), which is unique in the whole of the New Testament. In all extant literature, the active sense, 'to make trustworthy', is rare; the more common middle voice signifies the intransitive 'to be trustworthy' or 'to exchange good faith'. In the passive form used here and within this context, the logical choice for ἐπιστώθης is the 'softer' meaning of 'to be persuaded' (LSJ 2.2), rather than 'to be made trustworthy' (for instance by swearing). The faith(fulness) of the author, which the addressee should follow closely (παρακολουθέω) in order to imitate it, is creatively connected with the faith in his teachings—'knowing from whom you learned it'. This shows that at least in the early Christian tradition it was not uncommon to speak of imitation of another's dispositional *pistis* parallel to speaking of *pistis* as a relational attitude, an attitude of being persuaded by another's teaching.

The aim of this inter-human imitation with the inclusion of the study of scripture is again phrased in terms of *pistis*. It concerns 'salvation through faith that is placed in Christ Jesus' or 'salvation through the faithfulness that is in Christ Jesus'. As ἐν is not the most obvious choice to indicate a direction of trust or faith, the sense of 'by' or 'through' as a marker of agency or cause seems the most fitting interpretation: 'through the faithfulness (we pos-

197 I adapted the NRSV and followed the NIV instead in translating ἐπιστώθης so as to better represent the passive form of the verb. I also added a comma so that the latter phrase concerns the entire sentence. Cf. for another 'catalogue of virtue' including *pistis* in the same letter 2 *Timothy* 2.22, quoted above (in §6.4.1).

sess/that becomes ours) through Christ Jesus'.<sup>198</sup> In any event, from this short passage it is possible to infer that 'horizontal imitation' and 'vertical salvation' both involve *pistis*. Moreover, there is no hint of any awkward juxtaposition, such as I described in the introduction, to be found in this phrase.

It is now worth asking whether there are any early traces of this type of imitation of the virtue of *pistis* of other Christ-followers, or of Christ, or of *pistis* as an attitude which leads to imitation, in the undisputed Pauline letters. As for the imitation of human examples, it is noteworthy that here, *pistis* vocabulary usually pertains to imitation of faith or faithfulness as a dispositional quality, as *imitandum*. Yet there are also examples of faith as the attitude enabling a relationship of imitation.

Like Philo, Paul obviously employs Abraham as a prototype, as the father of all the faithful: circumcised and uncircumcised ('with and without foreskin') follow in the footsteps of this narrative and historical *exemplum* of *pistis* (Rom 4.11–12). The presentation of Abraham as 'father' fits the general Roman pattern of mimicking the civic virtue of the great ancestors. Still, imitation of the faith of such a forefather and scriptural example is of course rather abstract.

Apart from this abstract or literary usage, it is also possible to speak of a concrete mimetic chain of individuals in the Pauline network of communities in analogy to the master-student relationships I discussed in Hellenistic philosophy. As we saw in chapter 4, Paul and his companions are given the position of teachers or even 'father/brothers' sponsoring their pupils' faith(fullness) and to fulfil this position adequately, such teachers must be trustworthy (*pistos*) themselves (see §4.4.2 above). The need of being found *pistos* is not only a familiar cultural maxim; it is important to Paul in the context of being worthy of imitation.<sup>199</sup>

Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me (μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε). For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord (τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν καὶ πιστὸν ἐν κυρίῳ), to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus (ὅς ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσει τὰς ὁδοὺς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), as I teach them everywhere in every church (καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδάσκω).  
(1 *Corinthians* 4.15–17)

198 See BDAG, s.v. ἐν, 6–7. Cf. as parallel expressions 1 *Timothy* 1.14 (μετὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) and *Romans* 3.24 (διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).

199 Paul refers to the gnomic maxim that household stewards need to be found trustworthy: 1 *Corinthians* 4.2. On Paul's use of maxims see Ramsaran 1996, on this specific maxim at p. 35.

Since Paul's teachings are literally called 'ways' that can be refreshed by another's presence, both the practical nature of these teachings and the transferral by means of stepwise imitation are made apparent. From this passage, we learn that being trustworthy (*pistos*) towards the one who teaches you 'the ways in Christ Jesus' is a condition for being a 'shackle' in a mimetic chain, for this also makes one in turn trustworthy as a teacher to others. In contrast to Abraham, here it is not entirely sure if *pistos* is also the quality the addressees ought to imitate, or if it is only the relational attitude enabling imitation. To stick with the metaphor, *pistos* is the oil to lubricate the chain, yet it may also be an essential part of what links the shackles.

If we analyse this text according to this mimetic chain model, no less than four 'shackles' can be distinguished: Christ, Paul, Timothy, and the addressed community. Teresa Morgan refers to this ongoing process with a hierarchy of actors on different levels as a 'cascade of *pistis*': 'If we focus more narrowly on the way Paul sees himself as entrusted by God with his mission, we can also see *pistos*, in the sense of 'trustworthiness', (...) as 'cascading' from God to his apostle, from his apostle to those to whom he preaches, and from communities of converts to others who are inspired by them.'<sup>200</sup> This is a powerful image that emphasizes the overflow and spread of authority and trustworthiness down the chain. Water generally does not flow upwards, though, and it is specific to the metaphor of the mimetic chain that *pistos* moves in both directions. Apart from '*pistos* as trustworthiness', which moves downward, '*pistos* as trust' moves in the opposite direction. The faith of Paul's addressees in Timothy mimics Timothy's faith in Paul and Paul's faith in Christ, giving the addressees an active role from the start.

The importance of the addressees' faith is particularly evident from the letter to the community in Thessaloniki. Here, we find the language of imitation more than once in direct context of *pistos* vocabulary. Moreover, in this letter, it becomes clear that imitation not only functions in top-down structures headed by Paul, but, much more like a network, the collective faith(fulness) of his addressees becomes the example to other Christ-communities.

---

200 Morgan 2015, 217; cf. also 217–220, 255, 278, 301–302, 355, 504. And see also Morgan 2017b, 169: 'The cascade of *pistos* mirrors the structure of authority, flowing from God, through Christ, the spirit, apostles and their co-workers to community members, in the new divine-human relationship created by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As such, it stands at the heart not only of Paul's theology but also of his ethics and ecclesiology.'

*1 Thessalonians* is structurally a somewhat puzzling epistle, for it is not quite clear where the formal thanksgiving section ends.<sup>201</sup> Paul continues until the end of what is now chapter 3 to express his thanks to God for their sake (cf. 1 Thes 2.13; 1 Thes 3.9), while at the same time describing the events that led up to the writing of this letter. In two passages, one from the thanksgiving section and one from what we may call the extended thanksgiving section, the Thessalonians are said to follow a repeated pattern with these four elements: persuasion, transformation, imitation, and representation.<sup>202</sup> The contents of these sections, I would argue, are illuminated by the specific discourse of ethics and imitation of God that forms the backbone of this chapter.<sup>203</sup>

In a narrower sense, at least, *1 Thessalonians* 1.2–10 can be delineated as the primary formal thanksgiving section that contains multiple references to the contents that follow.<sup>204</sup> In this section, as we have already seen (§6.4.1), Paul begins by praising the Thessalonians' 'work of faith(fulness)', fully acknowledging the exercise it involves. I compared this focus on ethical practice and training to the process of acquiring a philosophical disposition. Paul then continues with describing various mimetic relationships:

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord (ὁμοιωθεὶς ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου), for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia (ὥστε γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ). For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place where your faith in God has become known (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν), so that we have no need to speak (λαλεῖν) about it. (*1 Thessalonians* 1.6–8)

201 According to Paul Schubert (1935, 17–27), *1 Thessalonians* 1.2–3.13 is one genuine unified thanksgiving section and in that sense, 'the thanksgiving is the letter', for '[i]t contains all the primary information that Paul wished to convey' (at 26). Cf. Jack T. Sanders (1962, 355–356), who speaks of a second thanksgiving section starting at 2.13.

202 In the redundancy of a 'threefold thanksgiving', some find ground for supposing interpolation (of 1 Thes 2.13–16) or conflation of multiple letters. For the thesis that 1 and 2 *Thessalonians* consist of four original separate letters, see Schmithals 1972, 123–218. For the interpolation theory, see e.g. Pearson 1971. Still, before jumping to such conclusions, we should, in the words of Jan Lambrecht, who wrote a structural analysis of the letter (2000), grant Paul some 'epistolary liberty' (at 147) and not end up in 'farfetched and strained genre hunting' (at 154).

203 David W. Pao (2010, esp. at 125) argues that a typical Pauline thanksgiving section serves as a reminder to act faithfully (ethics) since God is faithful (theology).

204 Cf. Starr 2013, 521–523.

After praising the Thessalonians' reception of the 'word', Paul speaks of Christ, himself, and the addressees as being successive models for imitation. Besides the chain of teachers and students, this text refers to a less tangible way of imitating: imitation is linked to the missional project. The Thessalonians in their turn became an example (*typos*) to 'the believers': they represent Paul and Christ to others on a more horizontal level.<sup>205</sup>

Is this an example of interhuman imitation in the virtue of *pistis*? The participle *pisteuontes* might simply be an unmarked designation, yet one could also argue that it carries the more specific meaning of 'those who have placed their trust in God, in Christ and/or in his followers' (I argue for a more specific meaning of *pistis* designations in chapter 8). As the final quoted sentence confirms, it is indeed their trust in or trustworthiness vis-à-vis God (ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν) that is deemed exemplary, so that it speaks louder than words. More specifically, this *pistis* is described as consisting of the actions of welcoming Paul, turning from idols, serving God, and waiting for his son (1 Thes 1.9–10).<sup>206</sup> Paul's persuasive message is what started the Thessalonians' moral transformation, and in turn their imitation of Paul and Christ in faithfulness to God is what furthers Paul's persuasive message, it even makes the initial message redundant.<sup>207</sup> According to Paul, 'imitation in faith' is more effective than persuasion with words. This seems to be the same missionary effect of faithfulness that is referred to in the thanksgiving section of *Romans*, when Paul emphasizes that 'your faith is proclaimed throughout the world' (Rom 1.8, on which see also §7.4.1). We can hence justly speak of a mimetic multiplication of faith.<sup>208</sup>

This pattern of persuasion, transformation, imitation, and representation recurs in this letter:

205 For horizontal imitation of 'normal' Christ-followers, cf. *Philippians* 3.17: 'Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me (συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε), and observe those who live according to the example you have in us (καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς).'

206 Schumacher argues (in Schumacher 2012, at 302) that the attribute ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν shows that in this early letter, *pistis* is in need of further specification as a religious term. Instead, I would read verse 9 as a further explication of this *pistis*: 'how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God', wherefore the attribute is added not to explicate that Paul means religious faith versus any other type of non-religious faith but loyalty to a particular God, the only true divinity, as opposed to loyalty to idols.

207 Cf. Getty 1990, 282: 'Wherever Paul preached the gospel, news of the success and strength of the Thessalonians' faith augmented his credibility.'

208 This connection here is affirmed by Jakob Spaeth (2017, 394): 'Im Ersten Thessalonicherbrief wird darüber hinaus erkennbar, dass Paulus die Nachahmung eng an die Thematik des Glaubens bindet.'

We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers (ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators (ὕμεις γὰρ μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε) in Christ Jesus of the churches of God that are in Judea. (1 *Thessalonians* 2.13–14)<sup>209</sup>

Here, too, the act of becoming imitators follows directly from accepting Paul's message as the word of God, i.e. from persuasion. Even more explicitly, the element of transformation is present, as this word is said to be active in them as 'believers' or 'faith-full people'. As I argued in the previous chapter regarding this and other texts, in the Pauline frame persuasion leads to active moral transformation. *Pistis* describes this energetic kind of faithfulness, expressed in loving action. This process of persuasion and transformation is subsequently linked to the Thessalonians' role as *mimētai*, imitators. It is by imitation 'in Christ Jesus' of other churches, that this transformation is effectuated. This time, the representative role is performed by another set of congregations, instead of by the Thessalonians themselves, like in the previous text. Yet again, the persuasion by Paul is aided by horizontal imitation of other representatives of Christ.

The importance of interhuman imitation, imitation of Paul but also of others, is confirmed explicitly in *Philippians*, where Paul states: 'Join in imitating me (συμμιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε), and observe those who live according to the example you have in us (καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς)' (Phil 3.17). Paul's audience is again described as *mimētai*, or more precisely as *summimētai* 'co-imitators'. In the immediate context, *pistis Christou*, the faith(fulness) of Christ, is introduced, as evidenced by his suffering and death in which Paul wants to participate (κοινωνία) or become equal to (συμμορφιζόμενος) (Phil 3.9–10). The Philippians are called to pay attention to others who take Paul as their *typos*, their example.<sup>210</sup>

Although it is one thing to observe this connection between faith and interhuman imitation, I have perhaps not yet sufficiently established whether this

209 In contrast to i.a. the NRSV, which has 'of the churches of God in Christ Jesus', I take ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ to refer to the verb, to the process of imitation. This process is often expressed in close connection to Christ as the remainder of this section will show.

210 On the motive of imitation in *Philippians* 2, see Fowl 1998, 149: 'Practical reasoning is the activity of noting similarities and differences between an exemplar and the particular context in which one tries to live in a manner appropriate to that exemplar. What one strives for is nonidentical repetition based on analogies one draws between the exemplar and the context in which one finds oneself.'

imitation is really similar to Graeco-Roman philosophical *mimēsis*, that is, active personal imitation of a teacher and ultimately of the divine. In my review of scholarly reflection on the theme of this chapter (§6.2), I already discussed the influential approach by Wilhelm Michaelis in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, who distinguished three different meanings of *mimēsis* vocabulary: (1) simple comparison, (2) actively following an example, and (3) submitting to authority.<sup>211</sup> When it comes to the first text I discussed from 1 *Thessalonians*, he seems to be doubleminded, placing it first under the heading of ‘simple comparison’, and stating later on that ‘the main stress falls on the element of obedience’.<sup>212</sup> In both cases, it is clear that Michaelis denies that Paul intends to speak of the Thessalonians’ conscious imitation of his example. Fiori, who argues against Michaelis’s focus on authority, agrees with Michaelis’s first classification of this text as well as 1 *Thessalonians* 2.14 as ‘simple comparison’:

Michaelis rightly suggests that 1 Thes 2.14 and even 1 Thes 1.6 represent the use of imitation in a ‘simple comparison’. No deliberate imitation is meant but the troubled condition of the Macedonian community is like the persecuted church in Judea and also like the suffering Paul and Christ. In this respect the Thessalonians themselves become an example (*typos*) for other churches in Macedon and Achaea (1.7). (Fiore 1986, 184–185)

It is obviously true that the Thessalonians are said to share with Paul, with Christ, and with the other churches suffering and persecution, conditions that cannot actually be imitated by choice. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the imitation in question is simple comparison. Michaelis and Fiori fail to take the active role of *pistis* in both contexts into account. By accepting Paul’s message (persuasion) and living by it (transformation), the Thessalonians did not happen to become imitators; they consciously chose to become imitators.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>211</sup> Michaelis 1968, 661–678.

<sup>212</sup> Michaelis 1968, 672–673.

<sup>213</sup> Here I do not agree with Harrison 2013, 249 and his ‘many scholars’: ‘Paul’s use of the passive ἐγενήθητε in verse 6, as many scholars have observed, points to God’s agency in producing a Christ-centred imitation in the lives of the believers.’ On the ‘imaginary linguistic phenomenon’ of the *passivum divinum*, see Smit & Renssen 2014.



A similar argument, that Paul means ethical imitation, is advanced by Abraham Malherbe on the basis of the structure and genre of *1 Thessalonians*.<sup>214</sup> Malherbe notes that *1 Thessalonians* is different from other Pauline letters that consist of a theological and then an ethical part, since the first section is biographical rather than theological. Malherbe attributes this to the intertwining of Paul's kerygmatic preaching and ethical admonitions: Paul is their personal paradigm, and 'recollecting that earlier association has the philophrontic epistolary function of preparing Paul's readers for the directions in the second part of the letter.'<sup>215</sup> Thus, the mimetic relationship is the basis for Paul's advice on the Thessalonians' ethical progress, and in that sense, the first part of the letter prepares for the second, especially paraenetic part. Furthermore, Malherbe points to parallel philosophical paraenetic letter-essays by Hellenistic moralists based on his analysis of formal functions:

*1 Thessalonians* 1–3 thus exhibits the characteristics of a paraenetic letter. The description of the readers as μιμηταί, the theme of remembrance of what is already known, expressed by οἶδατε and μνημονεύετε, the description of Paul himself in antithetical style, the theme of philophronesis, all contribute to this conclusion. (Malherbe 1992, 292)

Confronted with these and similar analyses, Andrew Pitts asks whether these forms are typical for philosophical letter writing or whether they can also be understood in the private letter tradition as recorded in papyri.<sup>216</sup> In epistolary handbooks used in education, these two genres are carefully distinguished, Pitts emphasizes, and form and content were supposed to coincide.<sup>217</sup> Whereas Pitts, in an effort to account for the differences with 'normal' epistolary paraenesis, grants that Paul may have creatively dealt with the very particular circumstances, he refrains from allowing him an equal amount of creative licence in adapting philosophical paraenesis to his own needs.

My own approach takes as its starting point not so much similarity in formal characteristics as participation in shared discourses. In this regard, partaking

214 And cf. the outcome of the 'Aristotelean rhetorical analysis' of the letter by Thomas Olbricht, who characterizes the first half of the letter in terms of rhetorical *ēthos*, whereby 2.1–3.6 is reserved for establishing Paul's own virtue: 'Confidence in, and the credibility of, God, God's messengers, and the members of the community are imperative if Paul's program is to succeed' (Olbricht 1990, 229).

215 Malherbe 2012, 3.

216 Pitts 2010.

217 Pitts 2010, 280–281.

in a shared genre would be an important cue, yet not a condition *sine qua non*. The overlapping themes and the shared usage of *pistis* in both *corpora* suggest that regardless of the specific generic conventions, Paul was indeed informed by the philosophical discourse on moral imitation.

#### 6.4.4 *Living in the Pistis (2 Cor 13.5): Imitation of Christ through and in Faith*

The question we now turn to is how Christ functions in Paul's mimetic chain. When Paul speaks of his and his addressees' faith in relation to Christ, most of the time, this faith is not the content or *imitandum* but the means by which the imitation takes place.<sup>218</sup> First of all, Paul repeatedly expresses the content of faith in terms of imitation of Christ's death and resurrection. 'But if we have died with Christ, we believe that (πιστεύομεν ὅτι) we will also live with him' (Rom 6.8).<sup>219</sup> 'For since we believe that (πιστεύομεν ὅτι) Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died' (1 Thes 4.14).<sup>220</sup> These short credos imply not merely a cognitive assent to 'articles of faith' or an assessment of the historicity of the resurrection,<sup>221</sup> as the form 'believe that' may suggest, but a conviction or trust that radically alters their mode of life, as it is now linked to Christ's. Whereas assent can be merely on the lips, faith in Christ's resurrection has to take hold in the heart so that a person can be made righteous.<sup>222</sup> Even more than a faith in Christ's resurrection *per se*, it is a faith that the one that resurrected Christ is able to bring his followers to righteousness, for this is credited 'to those who trust upon the one that raised Jesus our lord from the dead' (Rom 4.24: τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν). Due to the

218 To avoid confusion, by 'content' I mean that which is to be imitated, namely the faithful life, not cognitive beliefs as in the Augustinian/Thomistic *fides quae*.

219 Cf. for an ethical interpretation of this text Morgan 2020, 154.

220 Cf. *Colossians* 2.12 (on which see also §5.4.3 above): 'when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God (καὶ συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ), who raised him from the dead.'

221 Cf. Wolter 2017, 360: 'Das Bemerkenswerte an diesem Text ist vielmehr, dass der Glaube nach paulinischem Verständnis hier so etwas wie ein Urteil ist, das der Auferstehung Jesu genau dieselbe historische Dignität zuschreibt wie dem Tod Jesu bzw. die Auferstehung Jesu für genauso "real" hält wie seinen Tod.'

222 *Romans* 10.9–10a: 'if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead (καὶ πιστεύσης ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν), you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified (καρδίᾳ γὰρ πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην)'. See on this passage §7.4.1 *infra*. For an ethical interpretation of justice as in line with Paul's Judaism, see VanLandingham 2006, and for convergence with pagan discourse, see §3.4.2 above.

preposition, *pistis* is used here as a relational attitude towards God, yet one that implies an internal change, an assimilation to Christ of the inner person. *Pistis* language connects the attitude of trust with the virtue of faithfulness, in imitation of the prime example of this faithfulness, Christ, who has already ‘finished the race’.

The imitation is expressed even more strongly as assimilation in the expression ‘in him we might become the righteousness of God’ (2 Cor 5.21: ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ). Paul’s aim is to ‘give birth to his children’ as people in whom Christ is formed.<sup>223</sup> This formation of Christ in his followers closely parallels pagan *homoiōsis* language.<sup>224</sup> The same family pattern we saw in relation to ‘father’ Abraham is also adapted to fit the scheme of divine imitation: the followers of Christ are to be conformed to the image of God’s son (Rom 8.29: συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ), the firstborn of many brothers (πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς). Hence, God is the father, yet Christ the model.

However, if the model after which they are formed is not resurrected, Paul reasons in the final section of *1 Corinthians*, this *pistis* is ‘in vain’ (*κενή*) or ‘futile’ (*ματαιά*) and the act of trust is ‘pointless’ (*εἰκῆ*).<sup>225</sup> Resurrection in these statements appears to be conceived of as a vindication, an acknowledgement of achieved perfection of the model, yet also as a ‘being made alive’ and thus capable of taking up his followers in the same perfection and new life. Since in this argument *pistis* is connected to ‘the message’, to ‘the proclamation’, and to Christ being resurrected, it is often deemed highly cognitive here, in the sense of ‘accepting as true’.<sup>226</sup> Yet the reason why faith is in vain without Christ being resurrected makes more sense if Christ is understood as both the immanent deity in contact with the transcendent God and the model after which his

223 See *Galatians* 4.19: ‘My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you (οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω μέχρις οὗ μορφωθῆ Χριστός ἐν ὑμῖν).’

224 Cf., for a similar conclusion through the lens of Platonist and Stoic physics as compared to Paul’s, Stowers 2017, 248: ‘Jesus Christ, in contrast to the angels and gods, is a perfectly obedient and humble (before God) character remade with a perfect material to whom Paul’s Gentile’s [*sic*] “in Christ” assimilate in character and in substance.’

225 See *1 Corinthians* 15.2: ‘through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain (εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε); *1 Corinthians* 15.14: ‘and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain (*κενή καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν*); *1 Corinthians* 15.17: ‘If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile (*ματαιά ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν*) and you are still in your sins.’ On this passage, see also §7.4.1 below.

226 E.g. Hay 2006, 57–58. While Hay views this text as a fundamental example of ‘[t]he “believe to be true” dimension of faith’ (at 57), Hay grants that even here, the ““existential” or trusting side of faith also appears’ (at 58).

followers are 'shaped' into perfect faithfulness. The resurrection is proof of Christ's own perfect faithfulness: proof of his continuing connection to God and proof that his followers can follow his example (including his resurrection).<sup>227</sup> This is reminiscent of the concern of philosophical seekers, hoping to find a teacher whose life and death both express their convictions. It is also in accordance with the Middle-Platonic discourse on an immanent, intermediate divinity who may be emulated and upholds the connection to the ultimate divine. (Still, the idea of 'imitation in resurrection' would cause some pagan eyebrows to be raised.)

*Pistis* seems to be more of an attitude than a quality in the instances discussed so far, for it is either explicitly directed to Christ and his resurrection as its object or implicitly linked to his perfection, such that without this link it is useless. Conversely, a Stoic like Epictetus would never consider one's faithful disposition as useless, for it is not dependent on anything external for its value, including its model. Nevertheless, the importance of the model is very much in accordance with Platonist ontology, according to which Form/model/original and particular/image/copy exist in a mimetic relationship, the copy being dependent for its very being on the original in which it participates.<sup>228</sup> To Paul, partial assimilation, becoming a bit more virtuous in this life, is ultimately in vain. The model can only make the copy fully and permanently righteous by conquering the impermanence of life, by conquering death. Therefore, the copy can only make his or her virtue of faithfulness permanent by the relational attitude of faith in the resurrected Christ. Hence, the attitude of faith and the virtue of faith cannot be separated.

An even stronger connection between *pistis* and this Christ-formed life can be found in Pauline phraseology that has led to some scholars labelling Paul a mystic and has in more general terms been understood as expressing 'participation in Christ' or 'union with Christ': Paul repeatedly speaks of living 'in Christ', 'in the Lord', or 'in him' and, conversely, though less often, of Christ living in him.<sup>229</sup> In many of these phrases, that *pistis* is used in paradigmatic

227 Ronald Cox reads Paul's thought on Christ's role as a 'cosmological agent' in *1 Corinthians* 8.6 in light of the 'move made by Greek-speaking Jewish sapiential writers, who themselves appear to have been influenced to some extent by Middle Platonism' (Cox 2009, 159).

228 See e.g. Miller 2003, 61.

229 Early 'mystical' interpretations were offered by Adolf Deissmann and Albert Schweitzer: for an overview, see Campbell 2012, 31–64. For an overview of present-day perspectives, see Thate, Vanhoozer & Campbell 2014. An exploration of the different emphases of the expressions 'in Christ', 'in the Lord', etc. and their relationship to Pauline mysticism, cf. Du Toit 2000.

relation to and even as near equivalent of Christ, often preceded by the same preposition (ἐν). I would argue that these *en pistei* expressions fit well within the discourse of moral imitation and ‘becoming like God’ and that the *pistis* in question is best understood as a virtue perfected by Christ.<sup>230</sup>

In 2 *Corinthians* we read the exhortation, ‘Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith (εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει). Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you (ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν)?—unless, indeed, you fail to pass the test!’ (2 Cor 13.5). Here, ‘living in *pistis*’ stands in paradigmatic relation to ‘Christ’s being in someone’. The context is, as we saw in §5.4.4, one of moral progress: if you participate in *pistis*, then you are not *adokimos*, ‘unfit’, but do what is good (2 Cor 13.7: τὸ καλὸν ποιῆτε). Paul’s aim is towards the perfection of his followers (2 Cor 13.9: τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν). Doing good thus equals being ‘in the faith’: here, the virtue of faith is foregrounded, as it is modelled after Christ. Similarly, in *Galatians* 2.20, Paul states that ‘it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in/of the Son of God (ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ).’ This last instance of *pistis* is one of the *pistis Christou* formulations, to which I shall return in the next paragraph, yet for now it suffices to point out that ‘living in *pistis*’ is again used to explicate the phenomenon of Christ living in his followers.

Hellenistic-Jewish notions of the divine wisdom indwelling in human beings highlight a relevant context for this vocabulary. Yet, the parallel with Seneca’s ‘intervening’ God is perhaps even more adequate, since it shares the same reciprocity inherent to these Pauline expressions.<sup>231</sup> Seneca’s God

230 Teresa Morgan has argued that both refer to the relationship between God, Christ, and the faithful (her earlier description in 2015, 304), and more specifically, that ‘God puts the faithful into Christ’s hands’ (*en Christō*) as ‘one expression of a pre-existing *pistis* between God and Christ which makes possible the reconciliation of God with humanity; the ongoing right relationship between God, Christ, and the faithful in the present time; and the eventual salvation of the faithful’ (2020, 108). This ‘relational’ reading of *en pistei* is part of her wider thesis in this more recent work that Paul’s *en Christō* language is not so much ‘mystic’ or ‘participational’, but rather ‘instrumental’ (what God has done ‘through Christ’) or ‘encheiristic’ (the life of the faithful ‘in Christ’s hands’). The latter, ‘encheiristic’ reading does not diverge too far from my perhaps somewhat more ‘ethical-participational’ interpretation here: for Morgan, this includes living ‘in an all-absorbing relationship with God and Christ, which is defined entirely by God and Christ’ (at 241). Moreover, she includes a discussion of *homoiōsis* language (148–155) and concludes (at 155) that ‘living ethically in one’s lifetime (...) fits well with descriptions we have seen elsewhere of what it means to live in Christ’s hands’.

231 Cf. *Wisdom* 7.27: ‘Although she is one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things, and in every generation she passes into holy souls (εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνουσα) and makes them friends of God and prophets.’

comes not only near, but inside people in the form of divine seeds that, if cultivated, spring up in the likeness of their source. Accordingly, in Paul, the Christ-follower being in Christ is simultaneously Christ dwelling in the believer, which effects this 'belief' to be more than an outward-facing, trusting attitude. *Pistis*, in these instances, also seems to stand for Christ's faithful disposition that is appropriated in the lives of his followers: it springs up in Christ's likeness.

Moreover, acting according to faith is acting like God as well as acting like Christ, as is evident from the admonition to 'welcome him who is weak according to faith' (Rom 14.1: τὸν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει προσλαμβάνεσθε), with the rationale that 'God has welcomed him' (14.3), a theme upon which a variation is later made to 'welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you' (Rom 15.7: προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς). 'In faith' or 'according to faith' is here shorthand for the attitude towards Christ that simultaneously appropriates his divinely faithful, welcoming behaviour.<sup>232</sup>

There is an interesting text in 2 *Timothy*, one of the (probably deutero-Pauline) Pastoral Epistles, that supports the possibility of *pistis* being a dispositional quality, referring to Christ's faithfulness. This text draws an analogy between Christ and the human imitator. Introduced by a technical introduction peculiar to the Pastorals, 'this teaching is trustworthy' (2 Tim 2.11: πιστὸς ὁ λόγος), the conditions are put forward that if the human 'we' is like Christ in his death and enduring, so will this 'we' also be like him in his life and reigning. But it becomes interesting if the 'we' deviates from the pattern of imitation: in case of a denial, this is again mirrored by a denial of Christ. Yet, if 'we' are being unfaithful (εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν), the pattern is interrupted: 'he remains faithful (ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει)—for he cannot deny himself' (2 Tim 2.13).<sup>233</sup> This demonstrates that for one, also in the days in which the Pastorals were written, the language of imitation was still prevalent. What is more, the consequences of each one's role in this imitation were being duly considered: as a model, Christ could interact with his imitators, but not to the point of abnegating his own virtue. Finally, we learn that, according to the author, who is probably reflecting on a wider known teaching, Christ is *pistos*, so much so that it is

232 Cf. §5.4.5 in the previous chapter on the interpretation of this passage and more specifically on possible meanings of τῇ πίστει. This connection to Christ is missed by Schumacher, who here distinguishes sharply between interhuman and divine-human *pistis* and states 'dass πίστις im Sinne von "Glaube an Christus" in den folgenden Versen keine besondere Rolle spielt' (2009, 491).

233 Cf., for a similar logic, 2 *Thessalonians* 3.2–3: 'for not all have faith (οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις); but the Lord is faithful (πιστὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος).'

an undeniable, inseparable part of his disposition.<sup>234</sup> And this faithfulness of Christ is thought of in a context where a relationship of imitation is the topic under consideration.

To sum up, then, we have seen that in the position of the Christ-follower, *pistis* can refer to both the attitude of faith (trust, belief, conviction, commitment) directed at Christ and the quality of faithfulness (trustworthiness, loyalty) modelled after Christ. Furthermore, through the lens of the motive of imitation, these are not mutually exclusive, as the attitude is the starting point for a relationship in which imitation and participation come to fruition.

Now the question left in the minds of those at home in the *pistis Christou* debate is, did Paul also think of Christ as having an attitude of faith in God? Based solely on the starting point of ‘sustained ambiguity’, there is no reason to separate his faith from his faithfulness. Furthermore, there is even some textual evidence to suggest that Christ was indeed thought of as having beliefs and that his followers imitated these beliefs as well. In an insightful article titled ‘2 Corinthians and the Πίστις Χριστού Debate’ (purposefully different from all the ‘neglected evidence’ variants), Kenneth Schenck draws attention to Paul’s citation from the *Psalms* (see on this section also §2.4.3 and §4.4.3 above):<sup>235</sup>

But just as we have the same spirit of faith (τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως) that is in accordance with scripture—‘I believed, and so I spoke (Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα)’—we also believe (πιστεύομεν), and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus. (2 *Corinthians* 4.13–14a)

Schenck argues that if we try to capture the logic behind Paul’s reasoning, it makes most sense if we take Paul as having understood this quote to be voiced by Christ and not, as is often assumed, by the Psalmist: Paul’s own belief is

234 Cf. Smith 2015, 177: ‘For the inalienably faithful Jesus, being faithless would amount to a denial of self.’ Cf. Paul’s questions in *Romans*: ‘What if some were unfaithful (εἰ ἡπίστησάν τινες)? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God (μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ)?’ (Rom 3.3). These questions, however, seem to come up from a covenantal, rather than mimetic setting, since it is Israel which is here portrayed as having betrayed God’s trust, manifested in entrusting the divine oracles (Rom 3.2).

235 See Schenck 2008, 525: ‘Although I resist the “neglected evidence” title, my ultimate interest in the current study is what 2 Cor 4.13 might contribute to this discussion.’

thus an imitation of Christ's belief that God would resurrect him.<sup>236</sup> Schenck hence repeatedly speaks of 'Jesus's faith as exemplary for human faith', even though he never explores the wider context of the imitation motive in Paul, let alone his cultural surroundings.<sup>237</sup> As is, I hope, sufficiently clear by now, from the Hellenistic-Roman background of practising philosophy, imitation of a master in character, mind, faith, and even speech was indeed considered indispensable.

#### 6.4.5 *Pistis Christou: Faithfulness to God Mediated by Faith in Christ, Modelled after Christ's Faith*

Now that we have seen how Paul envisions a chain of imitations in and by *pistis* leading up to Christ as the ultimate model, we may ask how his idea of God fits into this evolving scene of student-master-sage imitation. We have already seen how God is explicitly viewed by Paul as the object of human faith (1 Thes 1.8: ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεόν). Is God also considered a moral paradigm, particularly regarding *pistis*, in the Pauline literature?

In contrast to many of our philosophical references on *homoiōsis theōi*, Paul does not mention God as the object of imitation. Paul never comes so close as to conceptualize an actual 'assimilation to God'. Compared with the author of 2 *Peter* (see 2 Pet 1.4: θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως), and particularly in light of later Byzantine thought on deification and *theōsis*, Paul is careful to limit his *mimēsis* language to Christ.<sup>238</sup> In this sense, by distinguishing Christ-in-the-cosmos from God-in-the-heavens, his thought is more in line with the Platonic than with the Stoic participants in this discourse. We already observed in chapter 4, though, that God is regularly praised for being *pistos* and that all four of these cases concern the stability or perfection of the faith-

236 Schenck 2008, 527–529. Schenck substantiates this argument i.a. by referring to the early Christian practice of reading the *Psalms* 'as if Christ were uttering them' (at 529, referring to Hays 1993). Schenck does not seem aware that the same case had already been made, though not so much in context of the *pistis Christou* discussion, by Thomas Stegman (2005, 146–168), namely the case 'that Paul has this entire story in mind as he cites LXX *Psalms* 114–115 in 2 Cor 4.13 (...) precisely because it serves as an apt expression of the story of Jesus' (at 156–157).

237 Cited from Schenck 2008, 526. The motive of imitation of Christ's character in Paul, particularly in 2 *Corinthians*, is amply treated in Stegman 2005, though Stegman leaves out non-biblical contemporary sources on moral imitation as well.

238 See also the conclusion of Boris Maslov (2012, 468), who attributes Gregory of Nazianzus's concept of *theōsis* not to early Platonic *homoiōsis theōi* but to the fourth-century adoption of Stoic *oikeiōsis pros theon* by Neoplatonists. For discussions of *theōsis* or *Christōsis* in Pauline thought, see i.a. Finlan 2008; Blackwell 2011; Litwa 2012; Rabens 2016b.



ful.<sup>239</sup> In each case, the stable faithfulness of God, expressed by the adjective *pistos*, functions not so much as the model, but rather as guarantee for the stability, trustworthiness, and ultimate perfection of the Christ-community. Although Paul's addressees can be considered 'students of God' or 'taught by God' (θεοδιδασκτοί),<sup>240</sup> which suggests a certain immediacy and a lack of intermediate human teachers in their moral education, imitation of God *per se* or of God's *pistos* is not part of Paul's (extant) vocabulary.<sup>241</sup>

In God's place, we encounter Christ as a mediating intermediary in contexts of imitation, comparable to the sage in Stoicism, the *deus mortalis* in Epicureanism, and the 'God in the heavens' in Middle Platonism. As I argued above (§6.3.4), all philosophical traditions recognized the need for some kind of human example, if only, as in Platonism, to recall the soul's own prenatal glimpse of the virtues themselves. Paul, too, acknowledges this need when he quotes from the book of *Isaiah* that humanity has no access to the 'mind of the Lord'; yet, he continues, 'we have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2.16).<sup>242</sup> Instead of taking one's refuge in 'images resembling mortal human beings' (Rom 1.23), Christ is the proper 'image of God' (2 Cor 4.4) to which his followers will be conformed (2 Cor 3.18; Rom 8.29). This distinction between imitation of illusory and true images perfectly fits the Platonic scheme.

In Paul's line of thought, however, the assimilation to the divine first requires a descent. Mirroring the descent of God (or even of personified Fides) to earth and into human minds in our Graeco-Roman sources, Christ is Paul's image of God that came to the earth so that humans may share in his divine mind (cf. Phil 2.5–11). In his comprehensive study into language of 'image of God' and 'being made like God', George van Kooten concludes that 'as Christ is the image of God, and man, by becoming of the same form as Christ participates in this image, the *homoiōsis Christōi* is the intermediary stage in

239 1 Corinthians 1.9, 10.13; 2 Corinthians 1.18; 1 Thessalonians 5.24. See §4.4.2 above.

240 See 1 Thessalonians 4.9: 'Now concerning love of the brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God (ὁμοίως θεοδιδασκτοί ἐστε) to love one another.' Cf. §3.3.6 above.

241 The variant reading of *Galatians* 2.20, 'the life I now live in the flesh I live by/through the faith of God and Christ', comes close to offering a participation in God's *pistos* as well. Still, the preceding sentence does not speak of 'God living in me' but only Christ, and more political interpretations may then come into play (becoming part of God's offer and realm of *pistos*, by participating in the life of his Son). Cf. Schumacher 2017, 334–335 on this reading of *Galatians* 2.20 and chapter 7 below on this semantic domain.

242 Cf. LXX *Isaiah* 40.13: τίς ἐγνώ νοῦν Κυρίου, καὶ τίς αὐτοῦ σύμβουλος ἐγένετο, ὃς συμβιβᾷ αὐτόν.

the process of assimilation to God.<sup>243</sup> To allow for such an assimilation, the pre-existent Christ first needed to take on the ‘likeness of man’ (Phil 2.7: ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος).<sup>244</sup> This seems to be a move that is unparalleled in the pagan discourse of *homoiosis*, especially in its drastic form of slavery and suffering (cf. Phil 2.7–8), a *kenōsis* that is mirrored by Paul, who presents his own efforts as libation upon the offering of the Philippians’ faith (Phil 2.17, on which cf. §2.4.2 above). Imitation of Christ’s suffering thus seems to coincide with imitation of Christ’s faithfulness (cf. Phil 1.29: οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν).

It is from this role of Christ as intermediary in imitation, as image of God’s faithfulness to humanity and model for human faith in and faithfulness to God at the same time, that the sustained ambiguity of the *pistis Christou* phrases may be brought to the fore. It will be the purpose of these final paragraphs to briefly discuss how, in all four passages in which the seven *pistis Christou* phrases are used, the discourse of imitation is present.

First, in *Philippians* Paul refers to his own righteousness as ‘one that comes through *pistis* in/of Christ (τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ), the righteousness from God based on *pistis* (τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει)’ (Phil 3.9). He continues by expressing his wish to ‘know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death (συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ), if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead’ (Phil 3.10–11). We already saw that Paul often expresses belief in this mimetic pattern of sharing in Christ’s life and death and that he expects this attitude of faith to alter his life and become Christ-like as a performative,

243 Van Kooten 2008, 213. Cf. his entire section 2.2, ‘The “image of God” and “being made like God”: the traditions of *homoiosis theōi* in Greek philosophy from Plato to Plotinus,’ 124–181. Cf. for a different view Heath (2013), who views Paul’s language and thought as ‘philosophically naïve,’ not voicing the *homoiosis theōi* motive (at 243): ‘Paul never uses the language of ὁμοίωσις θεῶ; he does regard Christians as transformed into co-formation with the son of God (Rom 8.29, cf. Rom 12.1–2; 2 Cor 3.18), and thus in this as in other cases coined for the Christian tradition language and concepts so resonant with the Platonic that Christians of subsequent centuries would read them through Platonizing spectacles and reformulate them in expressly Platonizing terms, altering the nuances of both Plato and Paul and producing Platonic Christianity. This subsequent history of tradition, however, must be distinguished from the more philosophically naïve language and thought of Paul himself.’ Cf. on Paul’s participation in philosophical discourses §1.4 above.

244 Cf. *Romans* 8.3 ‘by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh’ (ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας). See Eastman 2008, 434–448, on Christ first mimicking Adam/humanity in *Philippians*. Cf. Van Kooten 2008, 216: ‘By emphasizing the descent of the heavenly man, his incarnation, and assimilation to man, Paul seems to enhance man’s ability to become of the same form as him.’

mimetic act. Attitude, faith in Christ, and quality, a ‘Christ-like’ faithful disposition, thus come together in the act of imitation.<sup>245</sup> Even more explicitly, the topos of imitation is confirmed a few sentences further, where we find Paul’s call for imitation: ‘Join in imitating me (Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε), and observe those who live according to the example you have in us (καθώς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς)’ (Phil 3.17, see §6.4.3).

Then there are two *pistis Christou* occurrences in *Galatians* (2.16 and 3.22). With the first, the imitation motive is evident in this section of the letter (2.15–21) from the identification of Paul with Christ’s crucifixion, being literally ‘co-crucified (συνεσταύρωμαι), and subsequent life: ‘and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by *pistis* in/of the Son of God (ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ),<sup>246</sup> who loved me and gave himself for me’ (Gal 2.20). The ambiguity of *pistis* here can hardly be missed: if Christ lives in ‘me’, then ‘my’ *pistis* is an imitation of his *pistis*. Paul’s disposition is participating in Christ’s own, characterized by *pistis* and self-giving love. At the same time, it is Christ’s faithfulness (2.16: διὰ πίστειος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and Paul’s trust in Christ—‘we have come to trust in Christ Jesus (2.16: εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν)’—that paves the way for this process of imitation.<sup>247</sup> Christ’s faithfulness is the model that prompts imitation, starting on the side of his followers with an act of commitment to Christ expressed by the ingressive aorist.

A little further in the same letter, we read that ‘what was promised through *pistis* in/of Jesus Christ might be given to those who trust’ (Gal 3.22). In the following sentence, Paul states that—not unlike Italicus’s dramatic return of Fides to the oppressed people on a ‘defiled earth’ (*pollutas (...)* *terras*)<sup>248</sup>—*Pistis* also needs to return to ‘all that is under the power of sin (τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν), in order for this transference of faith(fulness) to be effective, and ‘she’ returns simultaneously with Christ’s coming (3.22–25). It is indeed significant that Paul ‘interchanges “*pistis*” and “Christ” as though the

245 Cf. Hays 1983, 249: ‘as we respond in faith, we participate in an ongoing re-enactment of Christ’s faithfulness.’

246 There is a well-attested variant here (i.a. in papyrus 46 from around 200, Vaticanus, and the original Claromontanus) that reads θεου και Χριστου instead of υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. In that case, the imitation/participation extends to God as well.

247 This and other verbal variants of ‘faith in Christ’ renders the ‘subjective genitive’ argument that Paul never speaks of faith in Christ, only of faith in God, hollow. Cf. for instance Eisenbaum 2009, 189–195 on *pistis Christou*, at 195: ‘The point is that, technically speaking, the Greek equivalent of the phrase “faith in Christ” never occurs in the undisputed Pauline letters.’ Technically, of course, she is right.

248 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.495.

two are synonyms'.<sup>249</sup> The consequences for the believers are further explicated as 'in Christ you are all children of God through faith' (πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) and you have 'clothed yourselves with Christ' (Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε) (Gal 3.26–27). Both metaphors are perfectly at home in a mimetic setting. As children, you ideally mirror your parents', not your disciplinarian's, virtue. But even more so, by putting on other people's clothes, you impersonate their character. Similarly, in *Romans*, the addressees are urged to 'put on Jesus Christ' (13.14: ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν) which is then explicated as leading a life free of drunkenness, promiscuity, quarrelling, and other vices. The transformative power of *pistis Christou* serves as an equalizer in status and in ethical lifestyle.

The connection between putting on new clothes and *homoiōsis theōi* is confirmed in the (deutero-)Pauline tradition: in *Ephesians* we read how the new life consists of being taught in Jesus (4.21: ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε) and 'cloth[ing] yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God (ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα) in true righteousness and holiness (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας)'. The reference to the virtues of 'true' righteousness and holiness may very well be a play on Plato's famous *homoiōsis* passage in the *Theaetetus*.<sup>250</sup> At any rate, this understanding within the wider 'Pauline school' demonstrates that *pistis Christou*, imitating Christ by means of and in his *pistis*, was seen as an intermediary step in 'becoming like God', even if for Paul, talk of being 'modelled after God' would perhaps be a bridge too far.

The fourth passage in which two *pistis Christou* variants are used (Rom 3.22, 3.26) has been discussed in chapter 3 (esp. §3.4.3 on Christ as 'living law'). In this letter as a whole, the theme of imitation is less evident. Nevertheless, we have seen some examples of 'putting on' Christ and perhaps of 'believing' like Christ in later sections of the letter (see §6.4.4). Perhaps the absence in *Romans* of specific interhuman imitation may be attributed to the addressees' unfamiliarity with Paul: the admonition to imitate the apostle would be a less appropriate topic.<sup>251</sup> In the passage at hand, Paul explains that the 'demonstration of God's justice/righteousness' exists for two purposes: to show himself

249 See Hodge 2007, 90, who argues in favour of Christ's faithfulness, understood as 'Christ's obedient death and resurrection, which have offered to gentiles the opportunity to be made right with the God of Israel.'

250 Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b: 'to become like God is to become righteous and holy with wisdom' (ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι). This connection to Platonic *homoiōsis* language is missed by Volker Rabens (2014b, 323), who only refers to the Septuagint.

251 So e.g. Dodd 1999, 23; Getty 1990, 278.

as being just and to make ‘those out of *pistis Christou*’ just (Rom 3.26: εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιούντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ). Put in imitation language, God is the ultimate example of righteousness and cause of transforming people into exemplars of this same righteousness.<sup>252</sup> Justice thus functions (not unlike faithfulness) as a quality and action of God which is supposed to be mirrored by humans.

In fact, both terms are used in parallel in the immediate context:

What if some were unfaithful (εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες)? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God (μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ); (...) But if our injustice serves to confirm the justice of God (εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν), what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (*Romans* 3.3,5)

I will come back to the usage of *apistia* in this passage (in §8.4.1 below), but for now, it is good to note the usage of *pistis* and *dikaioynē* together as qualities of God in relationship with humans. The parallelism in this passage is evident: God’s virtues, qualities, or actions of justice and faithfulness (both subjective genitives) as well as his truthfulness (3.7) are not matched by his people. This, however, as Paul’s argument goes, does not make God unjust, unfaithful, or untruthful; in the words of Richard Hays, who also emphasizes this parallelism, ‘the righteousness God consists in his persistence in keeping his covenant intact in spite of unfaithfulness.’<sup>253</sup> Paul continues this argument for the justice of God by stating that this justice is now again confirmed in the present age through Jesus’s faithfulness. Even more, this type of righteousness and faithfulness in a covenantal relationship can now be mirrored by ‘the one who lives out of Jesus’s faithfulness’ (Rom 3.26: τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ). Paul’s teaching that this ‘one’ includes Jews and Greeks alike is thus no threat to God’s justice in the world, as his opponents may argue, but a confirmation of this justice. As Paul explicates (in my rather interpretative translation): ‘the justice of God (δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ) made evident through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) for all those who join in this faithfulness (εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας), for there is no distinction’ (Rom 3.22).<sup>254</sup>

If we take the idea of imitation seriously in this passage, there is no room for the ‘redundancy-argument’ made by subjective-genitive proponents, which

252 On the diverse possibilities of interpreting καὶ (copulative, concessive, instrumental, or explicative) see Longenecker 2016, 437.

253 Hays 1980, 111.

254 On the meaning of the participle including the sense of ‘being faithful’, see §8.4 below.

entails that both terms in this sentence must mean different things, for else Paul would have been more concise. In light of the discourse presented in this chapter, Christ's *pistis* and 'all the *pisteuontes*' stand in a relationship of model to particular. Considering the justice, faithfulness, and truthfulness of God, which are at stake in this section of the letter, both *pistis* terms refer to the human side of the partnership or covenant, and this response may be rendered as 'faith' but perhaps somewhat more accurately as 'faithfulness'.

In the end (to be sure), I do not mean to imply that moral imitation is a sufficient context for any one of these four passages or even these phrases. Evidently the semantic domain of law and justice plays an important part as well, as I already pointed out in chapter 3. In fact, we have already seen how the discourse of the return of justice is closely connected to the discourse of moral imitation *via* the discourse of the 'living law', so these domains and discourses are by no means mutually exclusive (see §3.4.3). My aim here, however, is to offer a specific reading, making use of a related and partly overlapping semantic domain, which connects the *pistis Christou* phrases in a manner relevant to the philosophical practice and intellectual topos of imitation of each other, teachers, sages, gods, and, ultimately, God.

## 6.5 Conclusion

To sum up, we have seen how the theme and practice of moral imitation pervaded the familial, educational, and public spheres of the Roman Empire in the days of Paul. In the more specific context of philosophical schools, real-life imitation between students and masters was considered of paramount importance. Most importantly, in both contexts *pistis* is used either as referring to a dispositional quality to model one's character on or as an attitude towards a model. Within philosophical circles, 'becoming like God' was a widely used ethical aim, to which all traditions in one way or another invoked the help of lesser divine or higher human intermediaries. One could even imitate the divine in being *pistos* or having *fides*.

In the letters of Paul, we first saw how the communities he addressed were admonished to actively engage in training virtue, including the virtue of faith (which is not (yet) used in the sense of a unified kerygmatic complex). Next, I distinguished between the layers of interhuman imitation, human imitation of Christ, and imitation of God. Whereas in interhuman relations, faith is not typically used as an attitude towards an example, in reference to Christ, *pistis* language seems to form the basis for a relationship of imitation and identification, including imitation of his faith in resurrection and his faithfulness

towards God. Finally, I argued that God's own trustworthiness has everything to do with the human movement towards trustworthiness and perfection. At the same time, in Paul's letters imitation of God takes place through the intermediate model of Christ, who actively and perfectly played the human part so that we are enabled to enact his. In presenting Christ as the necessary and ultimate model, Paul follows the path set out by the Platonic tradition (including Philo), which explicitly separates the highest level of transcendence from inner-cosmic divine models.

In the immediate context of the *pistis Christou* formulations, there are ample clues to support my claim that the Graeco-Roman ideal of imitation and assimilation sets the stage for understanding the ambiguity in these phrases. According to Paul's mimetic logic, Christ's faithfulness to God (and perhaps his faithfulness to the cosmos) becomes the faithfulness of Christ's followers through their faith in him. The discourse set out in this chapter gives rise to an understanding of Pauline *pistis* as a fundamental disposition, focused on Christ—a disposition that was cultivated by continuous practice, that was conveyed by a process of imitation, mediated by Christ and Christ-teachers, ultimately focused on God.

**PART 3**

*A Pistis Society*







# Pistis, Charis, and Dynamis: Faith as Transjuridical and Transethnic Bond of Trust

## 7.1 On the Crossroads of Faith and Grace, Imperialism and Benefaction, and Old and New Perspectives

Modern day sociologists and ancient Roman philosophers would agree that when it comes to what holds a society together, trust or good faith, in different configurations, is essential. In sociological studies, the catchword to describe such ties is ‘social capital’, by which is meant, ‘connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.’<sup>1</sup> Social capital is further described as existing in different shapes: *bonding* or exclusive social capital (ties with member of one’s own group, e.g. family, class or ethnicity) and *bridging* or inclusive social capital (ties across groups).<sup>2</sup> Whereas in both dimensions, trust is fundamental, it flourishes more naturally in the first and is relatively precarious in the second, because of the weaker connection. Still, bridging capital is valuable as it ‘can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves.’<sup>3</sup>

How does this analysis fit ancient Roman thought about what helps shape society? If, for the purpose of a general overview, we limit ourselves in this introduction to some statements by present-day classicists, what stands out is the general importance attributed to *pistis/fides* and the nature of this ‘good faith’ as ‘always reciprocal’. ‘*Fides* is omnipresent in Rome. She is the living source of social, political, and moral life,’ according to Pierre Grimal.<sup>4</sup> Viktor Pöschl describes political value in general terms, yet starts off with *fides*,

1 This is the definition given in one of the pioneering works: Putnam 2000, 19. Cf. Van Staveren & Knorringa 2007, 5: ‘trust may be more appropriately regarded as an outcome of social capital rather than a determinant of it.’

2 Cf. e.g. Putnam 2000, 22–23; Van Staveren & Knorringa 2007, 15–17 (here, these shapes are explicitly pictured as a matrix as rather than as separate categories). Others added the category of linking social capital, which pertains to ties between different groups of varying hierarchical standing.

3 Putnam 2000, 23.

4 Grimal 1974, 154: ‘La *Fides* est omniprésente à Rome. Elle est la source vive de la vie sociale, politique, morale.’

because of its central importance:

I will start with *fides* and place it in the middle of our discussion, because it is the concept that is at the center of the political, social, and legal order of Rome. (...) Almost all other Roman values are closely linked to *fides*. It is the most important key to the Roman value system. (Pöschl 1980, 3)<sup>5</sup>

These examples emphasize the centrality of the value and virtue of good faith in ancient Rome, which is of course highly relevant when it comes time to discuss that other corpus of literature written from within Rome's territory, the letters of Paul. Of even greater interest, though, is the manner in which this social glue called *pistis/fides* was thought to shape relationships.

There is one term which keeps popping up in this regard, namely reciprocity. Here are a few examples from different types of scholarly literature:

The Roman system of law is based on pre-legal, ethical values, whose essence is reciprocity (*fides*, 'trust' and 'trustworthiness'; *pietas*, love of parents and children: 'generational pact'; *gratia*, 'grace' and 'gratitude'). Such 'principles of Roman law' stand in-between ethics and religion, wherefore they have a religious and a philosophical aspect. (Von Albrecht 2009, 27)<sup>6</sup>

*Fides* relationships are always reciprocal. However, the texts speak much less of the 'loyalty' demanded of the client than of that expected of the boss. (Freyburger 1986, 152)<sup>7</sup>

*Fides*—and this again is typical of Roman thinking—is not so much the faithfulness of the conquered subjects to their masters, but the fidu-

---

5 'Ich beginne mit der *fides* und stelle sie in die Mitte unserer Betrachtung, weil sie der Begriff ist, der im Zentrum der politischen, sozialen und rechtlichen Ordnung Roms steht. (...) Mit der *fides* sind fast alle anderen römischen Wertbegriffe eng verknüpft. Sie ist der wichtigste Schlüssel zum römischen Wertsystem.'

6 'Das Recht basiert in Rom auf vorjuristischen, ethischen Wertvorstellungen, zu deren Wesen die Wechselseitigkeit gehört (*fides* "Vertrauen" und "Verlässlichkeit"; *pietas* "Eltern-" und "Kindesliebe": Generationenpakt; *gratia* "Gnade" und "Dankbarkeit"). Solche "Prinzipien des römischen Rechts" stehen zwischen Ethik und Religion, haben also einen religiösen und einen philosophischen Aspekt.'

7 'Les relations de *fides* sont toujours réciproques. Toutefois, les textes parlent beaucoup moins de al "loyauté" exigible du client que de celle qu'on attend du patron.'

ciary obligation of the powerful to all those entrusted to them. It was a cardinal, shared Roman value and an essential concept for Rome's *imperium*. (Galinsky 1998, 61)

In the wake of my argument in the previous chapter concerning the ambiguity of *pistis* as both relational attitude and dispositional quality, both faith/trust and faithfulness/trustworthiness, it is good to reiterate here that the Roman social concept of *fides* knows a similar duplicity or inherent reciprocity. *Fides* can designate the social obligations of both parties, and thus its semantic scope easily accommodates the reciprocity of a public relationship.

These examples were not a random choice to demonstrate this point, however. Apart from thematizing the inherent reciprocity of *fides*, the first acknowledges its *Sitz-im-Leben* as in-between religion and philosophy, an important cornerstone of this research project. But more importantly, the second locates *fides*'s reciprocity within relationships of (domestic) patronage, whereas the third discusses the same concept's reciprocity in terms of Roman (foreign) imperialism. In the combination of these two Graeco-Roman discourses—benefaction or patronage in the context of civic life on the one hand and benefaction or patronage in the context of foreign policy on the other—lies this chapter's contribution to existing discussions of Pauline faith.

As the next section (§7.2) discusses in more detail, even though amidst the majority of more traditional commentaries and Jewish perspectives there are some pioneering studies into the Graeco-Roman context of faith and grace language in Paul, studies tend to focus on either the one or the other. For the meaning of Pauline faith, they refer to Roman law or imperialism, while Pauline grace is more often situated within Graeco-Roman thought on benefaction and patronage. The first type considers Paul's language of faith a response to the use of this term in Graeco-Roman imperialistic ideology (see esp. §§7.2.2–3), while the second type understands Paul's language of grace in interaction with Graeco-Roman culture of benefaction (see §7.2.4). It is in interrelatedness of these frames, and in the interrelatedness of grace and faith, that this chapter seeks an answer.

These two frames or discourses are very much in line. Both in the sphere of Roman internal cohesion and in the sphere of Roman external relations the pattern of patronage offered an ideal model for social relationships. Both in personal patronage and in international patronage there is a reciprocal relationship between a superior and inferior party, often expressed by the equally reciprocal concepts of *pistis/fides* (both 'faithfulness'/'protection' and 'loyalty'/'allegiance') and *charis/gratia* (both 'grace'/'gift' and 'thankfulness'/'gratitude'). This reciprocity is not always reflected in the theological

reflex to ascribe grace to God and faith to humans. Even more importantly, the combination of *pistis* and *charis* vocabulary that is rather common in the Pauline letters is found precisely in this broader Roman discourse, while it is almost absent from the Septuagint, the usual source for understanding Paul's language. This fact is an important clue that points in the direction of Paul participating in the Graeco-Roman semantic domain and discourse of benefaction and imperialism.

Is the Graeco-Roman usage of faith in this semantic domain not the most remote from the Pauline and Christian usage of faith? This is, for instance, suggested by Pierre Boyancé in the article 'Les Romains, peuple de la *fides*'. If we were to ask Aeneas why the Romans received their empire from the gods, Boyancé suggests that Aeneas would have responded that it was their *fides*. He immediately adds, however,

By this [*fides*] we do not mean what the Christian understands by faith (...). It is not an adherence of the mind and the heart to a revealed truth. It is rather a matter of conduct whereby a permanent disposition of the will is expressed, the fidelity to its obligations and especially to its commitments. (Boyancé 1964, 419)<sup>8</sup>

This immense rift between the Roman and Christian concept of faith, a rift that is here simply assumed to exist, is one I hope this chapter will help to overcome by reading Pauline faith precisely in light of this Roman 'fidelity to one's commitments' as expressed in the discourses of benefaction and imperialism.

By combining these two scholarly interpretative frames, *pistis* emerges as a social virtue which is not only reciprocal, but also transjuridical and transethnic by configuration. In section 7.3, where Graeco-Roman sources will be analysed, *pistis/fides* emerges as an idealized, civic-religious Roman virtue that creates bridging social capital which transcends juridical and ethnic ties. In the context of benefaction, faith was thought of as interior, wholehearted commitment versus exterior ostentatious returns. In the context of imperialism, it denoted the required response to enter a bond of trust with Roman leadership, bridging ethnic particularities. Following these characteristics, I am able to conjoin the 'old' and 'new' perspective on Paul, as will become evident in

---

8 'N'entendons pas par là ce que le Chrétien entend par la foi (...) Il ne s'agit pas d'une adhésion de l'esprit et du cœur à une vérité révélée. Il s'agit bien plutôt d'une conduite exprimant une disposition permanente de la volonté, la fidélité à ses obligations et spécialement à ses engagements.'

section 7.4. The crux lies in the concept of faith as a reciprocal relationship of trust and loyalty between God and humanity which transcends at the same time what is demanded by law and what is demanded by ethnic custom.

Is this perception of *pistis* new? The idea that faith in the New Testament is not so much a matter of belief as it is a matter of allegiance and loyalty was put forward by Matthew Bates in his book, accessible to a popular audience, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone* (2017). ‘Religion, embedded in the ethnic cultures, was a matter not of belief but of loyalty’, he states, and it is along these lines that he also interprets the usage of *pistis* in the New Testament.<sup>9</sup> Whereas I am sympathetic to the overall aim of overcoming traditional, limiting understandings of faith as mere intellectual assent or the opposite of works, the overall setup of my research is to make room for a plurality of senses, for a polysemous understanding of *pistis*, as evidenced by its participation in diverse semantic domains and discourses. Moreover, even within the semantic domain discussed in this chapter, *pistis* is more than allegiance. Allegiance is only the human response to God’s benefaction, the human side of a bond of trust. When Paul says he is proclaiming *pistis* as ‘good news’, it is not so much the human response of allegiance as the whole relationship of mutual good faith which is designated by *pistis*. This reciprocity, inherent to *pistis*, must remain in view. The renewed possibility to engage in a reciprocal bond of trust with God through Christ, a bond that by its nature makes the human side righteous—this is what constitutes the ‘good news’ for Paul.

## 7.2 Pauline Faith and Grace as Responses to Graeco-Roman Imperialism and Benefaction

When it comes to this societal and political semantic domain of *pistis/fides*, there are three relevant scholarly approaches that pay explicit attention to how we ought to understand Pauline *pistis* against the background of Graeco-Roman source material. The first two are quite specific. One reads Paul’s *pistis* language, particularly in *Galatians*, as reflecting the testamentary provision of *fidei commissum* in Roman law. Another relates to the Roman and Greek understanding of *deditio in fidem*, surrender into the good faith of an enemy power, and its possible analogue or contrast in the Pauline phrase ‘obedience of faith’. A third involves the more general role of *fides* in Roman imperialism and, related herewith, the anti-imperial potential of Pauline *pistis*. In this

<sup>9</sup> Bates 2017, 101.

chapter, these debates will be taken up, yet they will not be dealt with in isolation. The semantics of *pistis/fides* in this area show that the manner in which Rome presented itself towards its provinces, dependent territories, and foreign states is strongly related to a larger Graeco-Roman discourse on the nature of grace and benefaction. Therefore, it only makes sense to look at the larger picture of imperialism and benefaction and determine what role faith plays in this discourse.

Strangely, while there is a lively scholarly debate on whether and how to understand Pauline grace against the background of Graeco-Roman benefaction, this debate seems completely uninterested in Pauline faith in this same context. This is even more remarkable seeing that the combination of faith and grace points to this Graeco-Roman context, since the combination of both terms is as good as absent from (Hellenistic-)Jewish material. The aim of this chapter lies in connecting the dots: by looking at faith in the context of both foreign policy and social cohesion, both imperialism and benefaction, its dual meaning as both asymmetrical allegiance and reciprocal trust stands out. Moreover, it will be shown that Pauline critique of works of law is analogous to philosophical critique of ostentatious reciprocity in interhuman and in divine-human relationships of benefaction.

In this section (§7.2), I will first take up the three specific scholarly discussions on faith in the context of Roman law, diplomacy, and imperialism and thereafter sketch some outlines of how Paul is thought to interact (or not) with Graeco-Roman benefaction.

### 7.2.1 *Fidei Commissum: Faith as Juridical Escape or Trans-juridical Virtue?*

In an innovative yet seldom cited contribution, Greer Taylor (1966) suggested that we ought to interpret Paul's use of *pistis* and cognates in *Galatians* against the technical construct of *fidei commissum* in Roman private law.<sup>10</sup> This provision ensures that it is possible for testators to include in their last will two successive heirs and/or foreign beneficiaries. Taylor argues that, since *fidei commissum* is translated as *pistis* in Greek variants of such testaments, and since the provision was probably known to Paul and his audience, it is a

10 Richard Hays called its reception in scholarship a 'benign neglect' (Hays 1983, 214; Hays 2002, 185). Taylor's interpretation did not go completely unnoticed, though, since it was approvingly taken up and elaborated by Francis Lyall (1969) and rejected because of the unlikelihood of its acquaintance among Paul's readership by Teresa Morgan (2015, 271, n. 39).

likely candidate to explain the frequent occurrence of *pistis* in a juridical context, particularly in *Galatians*. In Paul's message, it functions as a 'conceptual analogy' to highlight Abrahams role as the first testamentary heir and Christ's role as the second heir of God (hence, *pistis Christou*, 'Christ's liability as a trustee'), who is to include Jews and non-Jews (the foreign beneficiaries) in his inheritance.<sup>11</sup> Upon the death of this second heir, Christ, the *fidei commissum* is executed, which enables foreigners to become the juridical sons and heirs of God by adoption.

Notwithstanding its ingenuity, this uniform 'solution' to the meaning of *pistis* has its shortcomings, and since these have been carefully spelled out already (see §1.2), I can afford to be relatively brief here. In *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (1983), to which I referred earlier (see §6.2.1), Richard Hays advances two main arguments against Taylor's interpretation: 1) *pistis* is not, at least not solely, a juristic concept in *Galatians*; 2) Taylor's treatment of documentary evidence of transactions by means of a *fidei commissum* is 'loose and misleading'.<sup>12</sup> To start with this second point, Taylor refers to only one testamentary papyrus in which *pistis* is used, and here it need not be interpreted as a translation of the technical provision of *fidei commissum*. Nor is there an expression even remotely analogous to Pauline idiom like 'through faith in/of Christ' (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). As to the first point, Hays points out that 'faith' (πίστις) and 'testament' (διαθήκη) are never brought into explicit relation with one another. Moreover, and this is of interest to my own methodology and results, Hays detects a fallacy in the following statement of Taylor:

The direct contrast of any two concepts necessarily implies their common membership in a single conceptual system in terms of which they can be contrasted: we can contrast sweet and sour, good and evil, peace and war, but not sweet and red or peace and youth. If in *Galatians* Paul can directly contrast πίστις with the specifically juridical νόμος and its works, the πίστις of *Galatians* must itself be a juridical quantity. (Taylor 1966, 60)

In reply, Hays points out that the frequent juxtaposition of *pistis* to *nomos* need not result in the conclusion that it is itself 'a juridical quality'; rather, it indicates that both are seen as 'alternative sources of life': 'the whole point of

<sup>11</sup> Taylor 1966, at 61 and 72, respectively.

<sup>12</sup> See for the entire passage on Taylor, 213–218, and for the enumeration of his arguments, 215.



the argument is precisely that πίστις is nonjuristic, that it is a source of life apart from the law.<sup>13</sup>

In my own words, borrowed from the field of cognitive linguistics, *pistis* and *nomos* participate in one semantic domain. The question is, however, what domain that is, what the shared frame is to which both refer. Taylor is right to look for Graeco-Roman contexts, though his approach focuses on one particular provision of Roman law, which is too narrow a discourse. As I argued in chapter 3, *pistis* and *nomos* are often used together, and regularly contrasted, in semantic domain of civic virtues in the context of questions like 'how to live a good life in a community'. In that chapter, I connected this vocabulary to metahistorical perspectives on the Golden Age, utopian communities, and philosophical reflection on the law. In this chapter, I examine discourses on a somewhat less abstract level related to actual social conduct, such as benefaction, patronage, and foreign policy. Within this particular domain, my analysis will also show that it is the transjuridical quality which is foregrounded by the use of *pist-* and *fid-* vocabulary (see esp. §7.3.2).<sup>14</sup>

### 7.2.2 *Deditio in Fidem and Hypakoē Pisteōs: Benign Pistis versus Ruthless Fides?*

While Taylor looked for a parallel to Pauline *pistis* in the *fidei commissum* of hereditary law, there is a more popular suggestion which juxtaposes the Pauline expression 'obedience of faith' (*hypakoē pisteōs*) with the Roman military expression of 'surrender into faith' (*deditio in fidem*). As I will argue here, this parallel is equally narrow and rests on a caricature of what Roman *fides* entails.

The exegetical discussion is caught up in a more general discussion about how *deditio in fidem* is to be understood. The occurrence of *fides* in phrases that point to the surrender of people and territories to Rome, in hope of life, freedom, and often also protection from third parties, has caught the attention of both classical and biblical scholarship. The construct *deditio in fidem*, 'surrender into *fides*', may itself suggest that it represents a technical, legal procedure, yet the absence of this exact substantivized phrase from our sources alone should warn us against jumping to such conclusions (only the verbal variant of *se dedere in fidem* is used). One of the scholarly disagreements is concerned with precisely this issue: whether plain surrender or surrender

13 Hays 1983, 216.

14 Even in the juridical construct of *fidei commissum*, however, this argument that it is in essence transjuridical holds, for at least up until the early empire, the *fides* involved could not be legally enforced. See Heinze 1928, 160–161. Yet, while this closes the gap between Paul and *fidei commissum*, Hays's other arguments against Taylor still stand.

into Roman power (*in potestatem*) or control (*in dicionem*) was of a different character than surrender into *fides* or reception (*receptio*) into *fides*. Another, related one pertains to the question whether ‘surrender into *pistis*’ in Greek may have been understood as a more benevolent or less arbitrary agreement than the Latin variant, which led to cross-cultural misunderstanding. A third involves the possible allusion to this phrase by Paul, particularly by speaking of the ‘obedience of faith’, and whether such an allusion implies an analogy or a contrast with *deditio in fidem*.

The first question appears to have been answered with some degree of scholarly consensus: while there were no formal, legal differences between a ‘surrender in faith’ and any other kind of surrender, the inclusion of a reference to *pistis/fides* pointed to a certain expectation of leniency.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, as Eckstein writes, ‘the *deditio* ceremony was traditionally performed with a strong aura of *fides* surrounding it (i.e. an informal assurance that if the *dediti* behaved properly, they would not suffer extreme penalties): why else, indeed, would the weaker party be interested in *deditio* at all?’<sup>16</sup> *Fides* signified the benign aspect in surrender, yet precisely for this reason it makes no sense to posit some sort of ‘surrender without faith’. As we will see below, that has everything to do with the usage of similar expressions both in the civic, personal sphere and at the international, political level: civic patronage became one of the models for foreign policy. In the model of patronage, good faith and loyalty between both parties is essential and morally expected, yet not legally enforced.

15 See Pöschl 1980, 9: ‘Beide Formeln besagen nur, daß ein Herrschaftsverhältnis begründet wurde, aber römische Herrschaftsverhältnisse haben eben zwei Seiten, eine rechtliche und eine moralische. Bei *in fidem venire* wird die moralische Seite, bei *in dicionem venire* die rechtliche betont.’ And see, most decisively, Gruen 1982, for this debate, 52–54, for his own position, see e.g. at 54: ‘To be sure, *fides* stands outside the juridical realm. Efforts to subsume it under legal categories are bound to go astray. But it is equally erroneous to subsume it under *potestas*.’ Gruen is followed by Morgan (2015, 96–97). Pace Dahlheim, who indeed confirms the non-judicial status of *fides*, but only sees room for *fides* in the subjective judgement of a commander, who is held to account for his military and political success, but not for his moral deliberations: ‘In der praktischen Kriegführung bedeutet dieser Grundsatz, daß *fides* im Rahmen der Deditio keine objektive Norm setzen konnte, an die sich ein römischer Feldherr, der als Vertreter der römischen Macht im Krieg die *deditio* annahm, verpflichtend gebunden fühlen mußte.’ See Dahlheim 1968, citation from 46–47, on *deditio in fidem* see 25–52. Cf. also Hölkeskamp 2004, chapter 4: ‘*Fides—deditio in fidem—dextra data et accepta*: Recht, Religion und Ritual’ (105–136), who comes close to equating (abuse of) power and *fides*.

16 Eckstein 1995, 276.

The debate about what *deditio in fidem* entails and whether it entailed something different according to Romans and Greeks revolves around a particular history narrated by Polybius and Livy about the surrender of Aetolians to Rome in 191 BC. The Aetolians had once been Rome's allies but changed sides to the Seleucid king Antiochus. After Antiochus was defeated by the Romans and proved a disappointment in offering further assistance, the Aetolians were easy prey for the Roman army. After the loss of one of their cities, they sought to return into the Romans' favour by surrendering to Roman *pistis*:

The Aetolians, after some further observations about the actual situation, decided to refer the whole matter to Glabrio, committing themselves 'to the faith' of the Romans (δόντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν Ῥωμαίων πίστιν), not knowing the exact meaning of the phrase, but deceived by the word 'faith' (τῷ δὲ τῆς πίστεως ὀνόματι πλανηθέντες) as if they would thus obtain more complete pardon. But with the Romans to commit oneself to the faith of a victor is equivalent to surrendering at discretion (τό τ' εἰς τὴν πίστιν αὐτὸν ἐγχειρίσαι καὶ τὸ τὴν ἐπιτροπὴν δοῦναι περὶ αὐτοῦ τῷ κρατοῦντι). (Polybius, *Histories* 20.9.10–12)

In the continuation of the encounter between the Aetolians and the Romans, the Roman consul Glabrio indeed seems to understand *fides* in less than benign terms. The Greek *stratēgos* Phaeneas calls them 'neither just nor Greek', upon which Glabrio calls for chains to shackle the Aetolian embassy.<sup>17</sup> Livy also stresses the cultural clash and the different interpretation of the terms of surrender. He has Phaeneas exclaim, 'we have not delivered ourselves into slavery but have entrusted ourselves to your good faith (*non in servitutem, inquit, sed in fidem tuam nos tradidimus*)'.<sup>18</sup> The linguistic confusion surrounding *pistis/fides*, however, is absent from Livy's account, as Glabrio never adopts this vocabulary of *fides* and goes on to treat the Aetolians as defeated supplicants.<sup>19</sup>

17 Polybius, *Histories* 20.10.6.

18 Livy, *History of Rome* 36.28.4; cf. 36.28.1–2: 'Phaeneas, the leader of the embassy, spoke at length and with manifold devices with which to soften the heart of the conqueror and concluded by saying that the Aetolians entrusted themselves and all their possessions to the good faith of the Roman people (*se suaque omnia fidei populi Romani permittere*).'

19 It seems too farfetched, however, to, with Flurl (1969), assume that Livy deliberately adapted his Polybian material to fit the neat distinction between *deditio* and *deditio in fidem*. On the different explanations of the differences between Polybius and Livy, see Gruen 1982, 56–57.

The Polybian passage had become something of a *locus classicus* to underpin the theory that *pistis* meant something more benign in the Hellenistic world than *fides* did to the Romans. *Fides* was seen to have turned into ‘a cover for Roman imperialism, a trap to be sprung on unwitting suppliants who expected clemency but discovered that they had performed unconditional surrender.’<sup>20</sup> When it comes to this discussion and the related debates, we cannot pass over Erich Gruen’s article entitled ‘Greek *pistis* and Roman *fides*’ (1982). Based on the evidence of many more contemporary Greek and Roman sources, some of which I will discuss below (§7.3.4), Gruen argued, in my view conclusively, that the misunderstanding between Glabrio and the Aetolians does not constitute a widely shared conflict over the meaning and implications of faith.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Romans in Polybius’s own narrative emphasize Roman responsibilities towards those that entered into their *fides*, and the author himself does not appear to understand *deditio in fidem* as uncompromising, unconditional surrender either.<sup>22</sup> Polybius appears to have faithfully narrated an incident in which a Roman consul Glabrio tried to frighten the Aetolians into accepting harsh terms, but ‘the memorable vividness of the episode perhaps led him to extrapolate too much from it.’

According to Gruen, the implications of this conclusion for the meaning of *pistis* and *fides* is that ‘Hellenic πίστις and Roman *fides* were quite compatible’ and that both ‘imposed moral restraints and engendered legitimate expectations.’<sup>23</sup> While Gruen received some criticism due to his selection of sources and his shallow treatment of Polybius’s strategy in narrating this episode,<sup>24</sup>

20 This is Gruen’s summary (1982, 52). See p. 52, n. 5 for a bibliography of this former scholarly consensus.

21 Though cf. for another conclusion Dmitriev 2011, 239–240.

22 Gruen 1982, 58–65.

23 Gruen 1982, 68 and 55, respectively.

24 Álvaro Moreno Leoni (2014) challenges Gruen’s position on two these two fronts. Specifically, he argues that Gruen should not use Greek accounts of *pistis* in any sort of interstate relations as relevant parallels to Roman view of *deditio in fidem* or even Roman *fides* in itself: ‘πίστις here is just an act of royal euergetism very different in its political nature from the Roman notion of *fides*’ (151). The distinction Moreno Leoni makes, however, turns *deditio in fidem* or ‘Roman *fides*’ into precisely the sort of legalistic institution it, as the consensus has it, has never been. *Pistis/fides* in the context of *deditio* belongs to the wider semantic domain of foreign policy. As to Polybius strategy, here Moreno Leoni expands upon the argument made earlier by Eckstein, that Polybius may well have had the precise purpose to educate his audience, like Glabrio and Flaminius before him educated Phaeneas, on the double-sided nature of *deditio in fidem*: the unconditional surrender and the expectancy of good treatment are two sides of the same coin, one cannot go without the other (esp. 168). Cf. also Eckstein 1995, esp. 281, n. 29. Eckstein also finds fault in Gruen’s depiction of Glabrio’s diplomatic intentions as insincere: see. 280.

his thesis is generally accepted.<sup>25</sup> As my analysis below demonstrates, this very much concurs with what we find in sources from the Hellenistic-Roman period under consideration here, a period in which it is even more farfetched to distinguish between ‘Greek’ and ‘Roman’ perspectives, as they have grown more and more intertwined.

Gruen’s contribution, however, has not managed to dissuade several classicists and New Testament scholars from proposing that there is precisely such a distinction.<sup>26</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano (1987, 283) appeals to the Polybian passage to demonstrate that *Fides* is always a relation between non-equals, whereas *pistis* seems to point to a relation between equals.<sup>27</sup> He perceives this as a reason to explain why *Pistis*, as a goddess, was not worshipped like the Roman variant: ‘*Pistis* was too much of an egalitarian word, a word of reciprocity, to become important in the relations between men and gods’ (284). As we will see shortly, this distinction does not hold.

More influential in exegetical circles is the reading of Pauline faith against a Roman imperial background by Christian Strecker (2005). Strecker explicitly connects the Pauline phrase *hypakoē pisteōs* (Rom 1.5 and 16.26, usually translated as ‘the obedience of faith’) to the Roman practice of *deditio in fidem*, understood as loyalty to a conqueror.<sup>28</sup> Notwithstanding the many merits of his contribution, to which I will refer in due time, the manner in which it represents Roman *fides* is somewhat caricatural:

In this respect, through the *deditio*, a foreign people stepped out of the foreign territories hostile to Rome ‘into the normative, *fides*-protected interior realm’, yet it remained—beyond the said minimum norms—completely at the mercy of the respective general’s goodwill or arbitrariness. So *fides* went hand in hand with power and violence, in fact it was

25 E.g. Eckstein 1995, who only offers small corrections (see previous footnote); Ando 1999; Morgan 2015, 98. Strangely, Ando approvingly refers to Gruen (p. 15, n. 50) yet uses the example to underline ‘disparities between the semantic fields’ (at 50).

26 See, apart from those discussed in the following paragraphs, Freyburger 2002, 345; Schumacher 2012, 281 (repeated in Schumacher 2017, 305): ‘Im Griechischen wird der Begriff πίστις nicht in gleicher Weise verwendet, und vor allem ist er nicht mit dem System von Patronage und Klientel verbunden, wie das folgende Mißverständnis, das von Polybios überliefert wird, sehr anschaulich illustriert.’

27 This text was originally an edited lecture given in April–May 1983, published first in 1984. Interestingly, Momigliano appears to have been familiar with Gruen’s 1982 essay. However, he does not perceive any contrast but refers to him ‘[f]or a thorough analysis of the political side’ (283, n. 2).

28 Strecker’s thesis is followed by Ekkehard Stegemann (2010, 4, 19–21) and Kathy Ehrensperger (2013, 167–172), on which see the next subsection (§7.2.3).

almost synonymous with *dicio* or *potestas* and constituted a hierarchical relationship determined by ‘on the one hand coercive force, on the other hand obedience’. (Strecker 2005, 236)<sup>29</sup>

Strecker lumps two things together whose relationship to *fides* needs to be evaluated separately: the notion of asymmetry of power and the notion of capricious or arbitrary violence which commands obedience. The relationship with one’s parents is an asymmetrical one regarding the division of power, at the very least in the beginning, but it need (and should) not be determined by unwarranted exercise of force. In fact, the very presence of violence in such a relationship is inversely proportional to the presence of trust.

Without taking note of the discussion engendered by Gruen, Thomas Schumacher (2017, 302–303) also regards Polybius’s account of Glabrio’s offer of *fides* as illustrative of the ‘semantic misunderstanding’ evoked by a supposedly major semantic difference between *pistis* and *fides*. In line with Strecker, Schumacher retraces the fundamental difference to their etymological roots and earliest usage, which, he argues, was dominated by private, reciprocal, interhuman trust-based relationships in Greek, yet was preserved for formal, public, hierarchical contract-based relationships in Latin.<sup>30</sup> In Paul, Schumacher finds a witness to the gradual incorporation of Latin asymmetrical *fides* in Greek *pistis*.<sup>31</sup> Yet this also allows him to argue that in light of the enforced nature of Roman offers of *fides*, Pauline *pistis* shines by comparison.<sup>32</sup>

From this study’s synchronic semantic perspective, however, the usage of Greek *pistis* and Roman *fides* appears to be not significantly divergent. Moreover, in my discussion of sources, it will be shown that while asymmetry is indeed often (though not always) at play in *fides*-relationships, an appeal to *fides* was not made without justified expectations of (and trust in) the superior’s benevolence. Power (*dynamis/potestas*) and faith (*pistis/fides*) were in

29 Citations from Nörr 1991, 21 and Benvéniste 1993, 97f (n. 33). In German: ‘Insofern trat ein fremdes Volk durch die *deditio* aus dem feindlichen Außenraum Roms heraus “in den normativ durch die *fides* geschützten Innenraum”, blieb dabei allerdings—jenseits der besagten Minimalnormen—ganz dem Wohlwollen bzw. der Willkür des jeweiligen Feldherrn ausgeliefert. Die *fides* ging also mit Macht und Gewalt einher, ja sie war nahezu gleichbedeutend mit *dicio* bzw. *potestas* und konstituierte eine Oben-Unten-Relation, bei der “auf der einen Seite Zwangsgewalt, auf der anderen Seite Gehorsam” stand.’

30 Schumacher 2017, 310–311.

31 Schumacher 2017, 313.

32 Schumacher 2017, 342: ‘Denn im Unterschied zum römisch-lateinischen Lebenskontext, wo die Reaktion der untergeordneten Seite auf eine erwiesene *fides*-Zuwendung von Seiten der höherstehenden kaum den Charakter einer freien Antwort trägt, betont Paulus gerade diesen Aspekt.’

some contexts explicitly used as opposites rather than as near synonyms.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, it seems all too easy to connect Roman faith to the abuse of power while positing Paul's faith on the right side of history.

### 7.2.3 *Was Paul's Pistis Language an Anti-imperial Alternative to Roman Fides?*

Strecker is not alone, however, in reading Pauline *pistis* against the background of Roman imperialism. Over the last few decades, a scholarly perspective on early Christianity, and Paul in particular, has developed that focuses on the impact of the Roman colonial discourses and military expansion. Increasing reflection on power relations and value discourse in our own (post)colonial context shapes the questions and methods with which we approach antiquity. The early empire, in all its urgency to legitimize its power both in Rome and in the outer provinces, invested in material and immaterial culture to convey its message in terms of *auctoritas*, *pietas*, and, indeed, *fides*. During the reign of Octavian Augustus, a program was deliberately set up aimed at reviving these so-called traditional values and virtues in the spheres of family, religion, and public office.<sup>34</sup> By means of marriage legislation, rebuilding temples, iconography on coins, reinstating traditional religious festivities, and discouraging foreign cults, the emperor's ideals pervaded the culture of Rome and its provinces.<sup>35</sup> Considering this omnipresent infusion of 'empire' and its preoccupation with traditional values, it is not too farfetched to suppose that provincial writers with their own 'religious programme', such as Paul, would have had reason to respond to this discourse of power.<sup>36</sup> The question is, to what extent and in what manner. To answer this question exhaustively would require a different project. My interest here is in the anti-imperial potential of Paul's *pistis* vocabulary.<sup>37</sup>

33 See in particular §7.3.3 and §7.3.4 *infra*.

34 See e.g., *Res gestae divi Augusti* 8.5. For detailed articles about each of these domains and discussion about whether or not August intended and planned all these changes, cf. Edmondson 2009, part 2: 'Res Publica Restituta'.

35 See e.g. Beard, North & Price 1998, chapters 4, 'The Place of Religion: Rome in the Early Empire' (167–210), and 5, 'The Boundaries of Roman Religion' (211–244).

36 As Ekkehard Stegemann (2010, 7) pointed out, Paul did not start an anti-imperial discourse, but rather participated 'in an already existing Jewish and Roman framework of an imperial and counter-imperial ideological competition' to which for example the book of Daniel pays witness.

37 For a critique of the existence of hidden anti-imperial codes in Paul's letters, see Robinson 2021.

According to Dieter Georgi (1991, 1997), the mere usage of terms that were important in imperial ideology confirms that Paul's message, particularly in *Romans*, was one of anti-imperialism:

Every page of the letter contains indications that Paul has very concrete and critical objections to the dominant political theology of the Roman Empire under the principate. By using such loaded terms as *euangelion*, *pistis*, *dikaiosynē*, and *eirēnē* as central concepts in *Romans*, he evokes their associations to Roman political theology. (Georgi 1997, 148)<sup>38</sup>

Georgi maintains that the term *pistis* in particular stood for 'loyalty, faithfulness to treaty obligations, truthfulness, honesty, confidence, and conviction—all, as it were, a Roman monopoly' and as such was used by Paul to break up this monopoly by asserting that, instead of the emperor and his people, it was in fact Christ and his followers that truly represented these values.<sup>39</sup>

Similar conclusions were reached by Neil Elliott in his anti-imperial reading of *Romans* (2008). The prevalent mindset, as presented by Elliott, is that the Romans saw themselves as natural born rulers of helpless inferiors who welcomed the Roman 'friendship' and 'peace', whereby *fides* was the 'quintessential expression' for Roman conquest and *imperium* (38). The sources quoted either underline this case or are presented in such a manner that they appear to do so: Cato the Elder who exposes maltreatment of allied states as a violation of *fides* is dismissed with the words 'arguably, the violation also demonstrated its true nature' (38). The extant material, however, as I will show, is more diverse than Elliott would have it.

In a similar vein and relying on similar sources, Scot McKnight and Joseph Modica claim that 'the "faith" of Roman subjects was somewhere between fealty and slavery' (2012, 158), whereas in Paul they encounter 'an evangelical "faith" [which] can be naturally contrasted with Roman *fides*' (2012, 157). More nuanced is the assessment of Thomas Schumacher, who argues that Paul 'consciously and purposefully alludes to the meanings and possible uses of the Latin word *fides*' (2012, 297).<sup>40</sup> Schumacher builds on Georgi in his description of how Paul alludes to *fides* as a Roman identity marker, but finds the relevant context for Paul mostly in the imperial cult and oaths of loyalty to the emperor.

38 Cf. for a similar statement Georgi 1991, 83.

39 Georgi 1991, 84; Georgi is here followed by Knust 2004, 157.

40 In German: 'spielt durchaus bewusst und gezielt auf die Bedeutungen und Verwendungsmöglichkeiten des lateinischen Wortes *fides* an'.



The actual wordings of these oaths, however, so far as they are attested, do not include any *pist-* or *fid-* vocabulary.<sup>41</sup>

Kathy Ehrensperger (2013) elaborates on the importance of *fides* to the Romans as ‘the heart of the Roman value system’ and, closely following Strecker and Elliott, postulates a significant difference between benign theory and harsh reality when it comes to the consequences of imperial *fides*:

Although as a minimum such *deditio in fidem* was supposed to guarantee the protection of the life and freedom of the conquered, in reality it meant that those who surrendered were entirely at the mercy of the Roman conqueror. Far from establishing a bond of loyalty between equals it was established and maintained by violence and the continued threat of violence on the part of the imperial power. Protection was granted under the condition of a complete surrender under this power enforced by violence. It established a hierarchical relationship of domination and subjugation between strong and weak with total power in the hands of the conqueror. As Strecker has noted, despite the benevolent rhetoric of *fides* and *amicitia*, to surrender *in fidem* did not establish a bond (*foedus*) based on legal commitment but was clearly ‘outside the juridical realm’. (Ehrensperger 2013, 170)

It is not my aim to defend Roman brutality in any way, which I do not doubt existed throughout and beyond the empire, but this picture of *fides* in Roman foreign policy and practice seems to become more pessimistic in each scholarly discussion—and that without the inclusion of any additional source material. The non-judicial status of Roman *fides* does not relegate it to the domain of self-congratulatory rhetoric of conquest: there is also a sphere of ethical normativity outside the boundaries of law. Ehrensperger goes on to question the equality and reciprocity constituted by *fides* in civic patronage, a relationship which she also deems involuntary since they were ‘a matter of survival’ (171). After referring to the infamous passage in Polybius to confirm her suspicions without any reference to the controversy that surrounds it, she summarises her point as follows: ‘*fides* was a euphemism for domination and exploitation’ (172).

Although she grants that the Pauline letters have been used to validate similar patterns of power and subjugation, Ehrensperger’s ultimate aim is to

---

41 See the inscribed oaths of the Paphlagonians to Augustus (3 BC), Aritium to Caligula (37 AD), Assos to Caligula (37 AD). Greek texts consulted via the website of the ERC project ‘Judaism and Rome’: <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/>.

contrast Roman *fides* to Jewish *pistis*: ‘The cultural encyclopaedia resonating with the semantic web of *fides* could not differ more from that resonating with the Jewish semantic web of πίστις’ (172). Her methodology includes a comparison of the ‘wider cultural encyclopaedias’ (172) and their ‘symbolic universe’ (161, 174) and thus seems to overlap partly with the present study. The outcome of her analysis is theologically appealing: biblical *pistis* is seen as inherently critical to worldly power and forceful submission, with *hypakoē pisteōs* as a voluntary response of trust to the call of God through Christ, in line with biblical narrative.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, as I already noted in the introduction, by placing all emphasis on the divergence of ‘Greek Jewish’ and ‘Roman’ frames of meaning, she presupposes a dichotomy in cultural semantics that simply was not there. Thus, she fails to see Paul’s indebtedness to the Roman world and worldviews he knew, not to mention the complicated networks of Graeco-Roman-Jewish ideas he navigated. It may surprise her to find self-critical discourses in Roman sources, very similar to what she deems ‘biblical’ and ‘Jewish’.

Apart from all these contrasts drawn in scholarly discourse, convergences have also been observed between the message of Paul and that of Roman imperialism, which seem relevant to this study as well. One important convergence is noted by Strecker and picked up by Ekkehard Stegeman. It can be summarized as the inclusion of different people and ethnicities within one realm of peace by means of *pistis*.<sup>43</sup> In the Roman Empire, foreign nations swear loyalty (*fides*) to one lord and saviour, by whose grace they are offered protection (also *fides*) and undergo a change of status, from enemies, to subjects, to confederates or even friends. From this perspective, language of *pistis/fides* indeed seems particularly well-suited to Paul’s gospel of ‘inclusion of the gentiles’. This topic of inclusion and reconciliation by means of *pistis/fides* will be an important part of my own analysis below. A second point of convergence is the manner in which Paul makes use of the importance of *fides* to the Roman mind by praising his audience precisely for this virtue in the opening of *Romans*: ‘your faith is proclaimed throughout the world’ (Rom 1.8).<sup>44</sup> This creative appropriation need not be anti-imperial, however, and may be better understood as a creative *captatio benevolentiae*, upon which he builds his claim that this same *fides* is also his own (Rom 1.12).

42 Ehrensperger 2013, 165–166.

43 See Strecker 2005, 241–247; Stegeman 2010, 21. Cf. also Breytenbach 2010, chapter 8: ‘Salvation of the reconciled (with a note on the background of Paul’s metaphor of reconciliation)’.

44 Cf. Calhoun 2011, 145–147.

Overall, we have seen that, within this rather recent paradigm of empire, it has become quite common to read Paul's usage of *pistis* language against the background of Roman imperialism. For me, however, the question remains whether it makes sufficient sense to first paint this background in the darkest of colours, then to establish a likely connection with the main subject, Pauline *pistis*, only to emphasize its radically different outlook. Was Paul's language of faith marked well enough for his audience to understand this back-and-forth manoeuvring? Was the Roman discourse of political *pistis* so homogeneous that such a contrast could be easily distinguished?

In this chapter, the contrast is not so much sought in the nature of faith, but in the identity of the lord proclaimed and the scope of the audience addressed. Pauline faith *per se*, I argue, approximates the Graeco-Roman variant structurally in its asymmetry and reciprocity, and joins philosophical ideals and criticisms of contemporary practice in its inclusivity, interiority, and publicity. Christ's offer of a faith-relationship was addressed to all ethnicities indiscriminately, and it required a voluntary, interior answer of faith and gratitude that was publicly recognized and celebrated. These elements, however, were not alien to a Roman mindset, but part of an existing self-critical Graeco-Roman discourse.

#### 7.2.4 *Pauline Grace in the Context of Graeco-Roman Benefaction: Reciprocal or Unilateral?*

While these are the main tenets of previous research which place Pauline faith in a Graeco-Roman light, there is a different area of research which discusses the merits of reading Pauline grace against this pagan background. Many insights in this particular area, however, are also relevant to the reading of Pauline faith, since, as I argue, both partake in the same wider discourse of Graeco-Roman benefaction, social cohesion, and foreign policy. So, how exactly is Pauline grace interpreted in light of pagan thought on this subject?

There is considerable debate whether Paul's usage of *charis* vocabulary, particularly when it pertains to God, should be read in light of Graeco-Roman practice and ideology of benefaction. A more general case to do so was made by David deSilva (2000) in two chapters on patronage and benefaction in Graeco-Roman sources and in the New Testament.<sup>45</sup> By comparing the ideal of benefaction as expressed by Roman moralists to that in the New Testament, he

---

45 DeSilva 2000, chapters 3, 'Patronage and reciprocity: the social context of grace', and 4, 'Patronage and grace in the New Testament'. These chapters were previously published in DeSilva 1999.

concludes that the reason why God's grace in Christ was seen as singular was its inclusion of enemies: 'God shows the supreme, fullest generosity (not just what God has to spare!) toward those who are God's enemies (not just ingrates, but those who have been actively hostile to God and God's desires)' (2000, 129; 1999, 53). DeSilva pays some attention to the usage of *pistis* and *fides* in contexts of patronage and highlights its double meaning as both 'dependability' of the patron and the 'loyalty' and 'commitment' of the client.<sup>46</sup> In my own analysis, this element is indeed important but it is combined with a reading of faith in the context of Roman social virtues and politics. It is precisely the inclusive aspect that can be understood by looking at Roman *fides*, characterized as it was by transcending personal interests and the incorporation of political enemies (see in particular §7.3.2).

James Harrison focuses specifically on grace in Paul (2003), using evidence from pagan and Jewish inscriptions, papyri, and rabbinic, Hellenistic-Jewish, and pagan literature to show that *charis* belonged to a consistent semantic field with established conventions of benefaction. Harrison's thesis is that Paul participates in this field with regard to both interhuman and divine-human benefaction. Yet, when it comes to the latter type, 'any implication of reciprocity that might distort the unilateral nature of covenantal grace in Christ was ruthlessly expunged by the apostle' (348–349).<sup>47</sup> Harrison also includes several sections on Greek and Roman philosophical analyses and critiques of benefaction (183–210) and concludes that while 'the ethos of reciprocity was riddled with self-interest and social bias, (...) their faith in the overall system remains intact' (210). This issue of reciprocity is one to which more scholarly contributions return and which represents an important element in my own discussion of the sources. But first, it is good to look at a less optimistic evaluation of the relevance of the Graeco-Roman context of benefaction.

Cilliers Breytenbach (2010) sharply distinguishes between 'mercy/pity' (ἔλεος) and 'favour' (χάρις), arguing that the latter term was borrowed from the imperial ideology of benefaction. After an extensive survey of the theme of mercy in Old Testament, Qumran and other Second Temple Jewish literature, however, Breytenbach concludes that, given this rich Jewish tradition of speaking of divine mercy, Paul need not have leant heavily upon Graeco-Roman ideology of benefaction, which merely 'provides the metaphor in which Paul

46 See 2000, 115; 1999, 55.

47 Cf. at 287: 'the grace of Christ—in sharp contrast to the beneficence of the gods and human beings—is unilateral, not reciprocal'; and at 350: 'The *charis* of Christ stands in opposition to the *do ut des* mentality of the Graeco-Roman world.'

wraps the Jewish notion of God's ἔλεος' (at 226).<sup>48</sup> Paul only opted for *charis* to avoid the unhelpful connotations of human weakness which *eleos* evoked to the Greek mind (232–233). Breytenbach thus juxtaposes Roman *charis* and Jewish *eleos* and seems anxious to exempt Paul from preaching a Graeco-Roman gospel.<sup>49</sup>

This contrast, however, between metaphor and ideological frame seems to be somewhat artificially drawn, which can also be said for the contrast between Paul's Jewish and Roman *Umwelt*. According to Breytenbach, 'in metaphorical language use, some characteristics of the event(s) and/or entity/ies of a source domain are selected and mapped unto the event(s) and/or entity/ies of a target domain (for more detail, see Lakoff and Johnson 1980)' (173). While he thus relies on insights from cognitive linguistics, he fails to mention that these event(s) and/or entity/ies ought to be included or excluded by markers in the context. Otherwise, how could Paul, or any other language user, expect that his audience would know precisely which connotations to avoid and which to retain? The debate is not settled by arguing, however excellently, for a Jewish theological background, for the relevance of a particular semantic domain does not exclude the relevance of another.<sup>50</sup> We may also ask which particular unhelpful connotations Breytenbach would have Paul exclude in this case. Although this is never stated explicitly, it seems that what is at stake for Breytenbach is the theologically inconvenient reciprocity ethic of Roman benefaction.<sup>51</sup> If the idea that a patron expects a return for bestowed favour was in fact transferred to Paul's message, then Pauline grace would cease to be 'pure grace', so the argument appears to be.

Here we come upon the same issue Harrison dealt with, namely the unilateral versus reciprocal nature of Pauline grace. At least three recent monographs have been devoted to this theme, with uniform conclusions: one focusing primarily on the Graeco-Roman-Jewish background of Pauline grace,

48 Cf. at 238: 'As is usual in metaphorical mapping from one domain to another, Paul chose the metaphor of favour for the benefit of his audience. But this should not lead us to overlook the signals in his letters that the theological base of his language of grace lies in the Jewish trust in the abundance of God's mercy.'

49 Cf. at 6: 'This origin of Paul's metaphors does not mean however, that his gospel has a Greek or Roman nature.'

50 Cf. at 226: 'I suppose we have enough evidence to question the Wetter-Harrison thesis: Paul's notion of the χάρις of God has its foundation in this important and influential biblical tradition and not in the benefactor ideology of the Roman Empire.'

51 See e.g. at 211, while summarizing Harrison's findings: 'In humility, humans have to show gratitude for the abundant favours of the gods, whilst performing the correct rituals to secure divine favour.'

another on the Philonic counterpart to Pauline grace, and a third on gift-exchange in Paul's communities in light of contemporary and historical sociological theory—John Barclay's *Paul and the Gift* (2015), Orrey McFarland's *God and Grace in Philo and Paul* (2015b), and Thomas Blanton's *A Spiritual Economy* (2017), respectively. Both McFarland and Barclay emphasize that grace knew different configurations (in the words of McFarland) or perfections (in the words of Barclay) in different strands of contemporary Judaism and paganism, and that while Paul's variant is radical, it is not completely singular.<sup>52</sup> Blanton rejects the Derridean idea of the unilateral, unreciprocal gift and emphasizes the function of reciprocity in gift-exchange: unlike in market exchange, the return-gift does not end the relationship but fosters a continuous circle of reciprocity, a 'constitution and reconstitution of social bonds' (4). I focus here on Barclay's contribution, since it covers a wider range of Graeco-Roman sources and is as such more comparable to my own approach.

Barclay distinguishes between six types of the perfect gift. The notion which is popular nowadays—that the perfect gift is one that is 'non-circular', 'unilateral', or 'unconditional', so without expectation of any return—is one that according to the author's analysis did not exist as such in antiquity, where the reciprocity ethic is paramount.<sup>53</sup> Paul is no exception. Instead of emphasizing the non-circularity of God's grace, Paul perfects the divine gift in *Galatians* and *Romans* by radicalizing its incongruity: the recipient is unworthy of the gift. However, the gift as such possesses a 'transformative power' (497), which may eventually result in the eschatological moral worthiness of the beneficiary: 'what began as a morally incongruous gift, will be completed as a morally congruous gift' (518). Thus, the grace that Paul ascribes to God, manifested in Christ, is 'unconditioned (free of prior conditions regarding the recipient)', but not 'unconditional (free of expectations that the recipient will offer some "return")' (562). Paul is not opposed to moral action per se, but to any system of worth, including the Torah, which renders the receipt of the gift of righteousness 'conditional' (cf. 421, 539).

The outcomes of Barclay's project are convincing overall and to a large degree correspond to my own findings. Yet if I am allowed to identify one

52 Cf. McFarland 2015b, 8: '[W]hat hampers in both paradigms [the Lutheran and the New Perspective] is an essentialist view of grace, which defines grace by Paul and then uses that definition to measure Judaism—and then, rather circularly, reads Paul in light of Judaism. There has been little room for seeing different kinds of grace—that is, different gifts and configurations of grace—in Paul and Judaism.'

53 Barclay explicitly includes Jewish perspectives here: the only difference is that Jews could also expect a return for their benefactions from God (see p. 45).

shortcoming, it has to be the insignificant role assigned to faith. While Barclay says a great many things about faith, as a concept it is completely missing in his analysis of 'Gift and reciprocity in the Graeco-Roman world' (24–50). When it comes to Paul, he only focuses on faith in the context of the incongruence of the divine gift: it is a 'declaration of bankruptcy'.<sup>54</sup> Its meaning appears to be completely overshadowed by Paul's message about the new life in Christ, as is apparent from this statement on faith in *Galatians*:

'Faith' had also already become early Christian shorthand for 'the good news' and for its effect on human lives (cf. 1.23; 3.23). But Paul has no interest in 'faith' as such, as a special cognitive mode or subjective experience, only in faith in Christ, which is the mark of those whose lives have been reconstituted and reordered by the death and life of Christ. (Barclay 2015, 379)

Here, Barclay's explication of Pauline faith comes very close to his own description of Luther's interpretation: 'it is important not in itself, as if it were some superior mental or emotional disposition, but in its relationship to Christ' (107). Yet with this Lutheran take on faith, he neglects the role of faith in creating a continuous, reciprocal, relational structure of gift-exchange. This structure of gift-exchange is constituted precisely by the faith and faithfulness of both parties involved. Paul's ideal, divine gift is indeed conditional—as Barclay also holds—precisely in that it requires the continuation of good faith (with all the reciprocal 'gifts' this entails) of the beneficiary.

Yet without referring to any Roman concept, Barclay seems to interpret faith as an act of empty-handed, unconditional surrender, much like the Roman *editio* in its worst form (see §7.2.2). The logical context elicited by Barclay's own book, however, is not the particular frame of military surrender, but the omnipresent social structures of gift-exchange in the Graeco-Roman world, denoted by terms such as benefaction, friendship, and patronage.<sup>55</sup> Within

54 See Barclay 2015, 384: 'Faith is not an alternative human achievement nor a refined human spirituality, but a declaration of bankruptcy, a radical an shattering recognition that the only capital in God's economy is the gift of Christ crucified and risen'; and at 390: 'in faith, that is, in the declaration of bankruptcy that recognised in Christ's love the sole source of their worth'; cf. at 489 on *Romans* 4.19–22: 'faith amounts to the declaration of incompetence, or total dependence on the competence of God.'

55 To be sure, Barclay devotes a subsection to 'Roman patronage' and another to Stoic responses to the system of benefaction. Yet *pistis/fides* does not play any part in his reflections there, while it is strongly connected to the reciprocity ethic of the system and to the Stoic 'solution' of the *animus* as crux to this reciprocal relationship.

this Graeco-Roman context, offering *pistis/fides* is the reverse of standing empty-handed. As we will see when we turn to the sources, faith is seen as the social capital par excellence that binds people together and that keeps a society sustainable, precisely because of its worth and the inseparable works and benefactions by which it was manifested. In religious contexts, it is the currency in the divine-human *oikonomia*; it is the bond between gods and humans; it is what keeps the metaphysical world together. By analogy, to have *pistis* in Christ is to invest in an asymmetrical yet reciprocal relationship of trust and allegiance, not merely to declare oneself unworthy or undeserving.

The importance of reciprocity and its connection to faith in Paul's letters has been rightly noted, even if not extensively examined, by Peter Lampe:

That receiving *charis* implies obligations, especially gratefulness and loyalty (*fides, pistis*), toward the generous patron according to Graeco-Roman standards shows that this concept of grace, which Paul uses, is not unilateral but prevents 'cheap grace'. (Lampe 2016, 226, n. 89)

As I will argue, in line with Lampe, the contrast for Paul is not between faith and reciprocity, but between faith and 'works of the law' as two different modes of reciprocation. The response of *pistis* to the divine *charis* is distinguished from 'works of the law' by its interiority and its inclusivity. These two aspects of faith, which are highlighted in a Graeco-Roman context, can be an important addition to the contextual approach to Pauline grace.

### 7.2.5 *The Missing Link: Pauline Faith in the Context of Graeco-Roman Benefaction and Imperialism*

Up until this point, we have seen different readings of Pauline faith as a response to Roman law, politics, or imperialism. Whereas the comparisons with *fidei commissum* and *deditio in fidem* choose a very specific and small discourse, the anti-imperial interpretation lacks credibility because of its oversimplified contrasts.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, with some exceptions, Graeco-Roman readings of Pauline grace as a response to Roman benefaction show little interest in the role of faith within this context.

---

<sup>56</sup> Cf. the evaluation of such narrow contextualizations in Morgan 2015, 120: 'To understand what *pistis* meant to the writers of the New Testament, in other words, we need above all to understand how *pistis/fides* was imagined, spoken of, and enacted, not in one or two technical discourses, but, as far as possible, in all kinds of speech, writing, and social relations.'



However, there is a case to be made to see both faith and grace as part of a wider semantic domain which includes social relations between persons, between nations, and between gods and humans, a domain I would denote as ‘benefaction and imperialism’ and, with the combination of key terms in this chapter’s title, *charis* and *dynamis*.<sup>57</sup> While in the Septuagint, *pistis* and *charis* are rarely used in the same context, proximity searches of *pistis/fides* and *charis/clementia* in the TLG and LLT databases produce numerous results.<sup>58</sup> This suggests that by using *pistis* and *charis* vocabulary together, Paul may be participating in a pagan, Graeco-Roman discourse. Within this larger Graeco-Roman discourse of benefaction and imperialism, faith comes to life as a concept determined by asymmetrical reciprocity, transjuridical perfectionism, and transethnic universality.

In the next section (§7.3), I have arranged the results of TLG and LLT searches with related terminology in order to offer an overview of this larger discourse in light of some relevant scholarly discussions of the sources. I start by arguing that *pistis/fides* was seen as a civic-religious virtue: it functions at the crossroads of interhuman and divine-human interactions (§7.3.1). As such, it is ‘bridging’ by nature: forging sacred bonds of trust between citizens, states, and even enemies, bonds that require moral conduct exceeding formal requirements (§7.3.2). Both in the ‘internal’ context in relationships of benefaction and patronage between citizens (§7.3.3) and in the ‘external’ contexts of diplomacy, foreign policy, and military surrender (§7.3.4), the asymmetry involved is alleviated by social expectations of a reciprocity of favours. In early

57 The contextualization of Pauline faith in (Graeco-)Roman benefaction, patronage and politics is suggested (in one rhetorical question) by Jeremy Punt (2012, 6): ‘Or, how would the Pauline insistence on faithfulness (πίστις) “apart from works (ἔργα)” have resonated where Roman patronage and the “works” of benefactors determined people’s lives and livelihood—as ultimately underwritten by the emperor as benefactor par excellence who readily claimed his “works” (cf. Augustus and the *Res Gestae*)?’ Punt’s suggestion seems to be that Paul’s faithfulness did not demand any works; my own approach is rather that it is similar to contemporary philosophical critique in that it does not anticipate the return of ‘works’ and that it exceeds formal bonds of laws (see §7.4.1 *infra*). Note also the observation by Teresa Morgan that ‘*pistis/fides* is one of the very few qualities which are treated as equally domestic and political in Greek, Roman, and Hellenistic Jewish thinking’ (Morgan 2015, 507, n. 19).

58 In the LXX, there are only two relevant co-occurrences where human *pistis* is rewarded with divine *charis*: *Wisdom* 3.14: ‘And blessed is the eunuch, who has done no lawless deed with his hands nor thought evil things against the Lord: for special favour will be given him for his faithfulness (τῆς πίστεως χάρις ἐκλεκτῆ)’; *Proverbs* 3.3: ‘Let acts of charity and loyalty (ἐλεημοσύνη καὶ πίστεις) not fail you; rather fasten them on your neck, and you will find favour (χάρις).’

imperial Rome the asymmetry gains importance together with the inclusive, transpersonal character of *fides*: a stable rule depended on the allegiance of all subjects not to a specific leader, but to the ideal of faithfulness (*fides*), embodied in a trustworthy and trusting emperor (§7.3.5). Finally, philosophical reflection on benefaction is focused on the malfunctions in its reciprocal structure: the exterior return of the favour is not important, but the interior attitude of *fides* must be sufficient for both the benefactor (good faith) and the beneficiary (loyalty) (§7.3.6).

In all of these subsets of the discourse, it is a recurring theme that faith cannot be captured by exclusive structures and formal reifications such as public oaths, contracts, and laws. Faith is *the* content of the human response to divine benefaction, precisely because it transcends ethnic boundaries, outdoes what can be fairly expected, and exceeds what can be lawfully enforced. This is, I would contend, precisely why it was the perfect choice to express Paul's inclusive, morally ambitious gospel of a renewed relationship of trust between God and humanity.

### 7.3 A Religious, Bridging, Asymmetrical, Reciprocal, Universal, and Interior Virtue: Public Usage of Pistis in Graeco-Roman Discourses

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that *pistis/fides* ranked highly among virtues which are to be embraced and imitated by all. As a virtue, *fides* is frequently mentioned in combination with other good personal traits in inscriptions, as for example on first-century funerary stelae that read 'This is love, faith, piety' (*Hic amor, fides, pietas est*) or 'O, what piety did this girl show, what faith, love, feeling, decency, and holiness' (*O quanta pietas fuerat in hac adulescentia, fides, amor, sensus, pudor et sanctitas*).<sup>59</sup> In poetry, *fides* often functions on the borders of what we would deem relational faithfulness and religious faithfulness. Speaking about the lover of a flirt, Horace predicts that 'alas, many a time will he weep at your "loyalty" and the fickleness of the gods' (*heu quotiens fidem mutatosque deos flebit*).<sup>60</sup> Catullus speaks of 'not having

59 See the *Electronic Archive of Greek and Latin Epigraphy*, respectively numbers EDR032865 (funerary stele of Vibia Drosis, found at Rome, dated AD 71–100) and EDR106424 (funerary tabula of Clodia M[arci] l[ibera] Secunda, found at Rome, dated AD 1–50). Alternatively, it may refer to the bond of marriage, as in the moving message addressed to a deceased husband (EDR150372, EDR150356): *Coniugium inceptum dulce mihi tecum, Malchio, memento, quae fuerit nobis consociata fides*.

60 Horace, *Odes* 1.5.5–6.

broken sacred faith' (*nec sanctam violasse fidem*) in the context of a prayer to the gods about his lost love.<sup>61</sup> In one of Propertius's love-elegies, Acanthis offers the poet's love Cynthia the cynical advice to 'tear up promises (*sperne fidem*), cast down the gods, let lies prevail, and shatter all the laws of bankrupt chastity'.<sup>62</sup> In these private relationships, *pistis/fides* stands for faithfulness towards one's loved ones and towards the gods at the same time.

In these subsections, however, I will map some distinctive aspects of *pistis/fides* in relationships which belong to the public domain. In chapter 3, we already saw how faithfulness, justice, clemency, and similar virtues could be seen as distinct from virtues such as wisdom or eloquence, since these are, in the words of Cicero, 'thought to be beneficial not so much to their possessors as to the human race in general (*generi hominum fructuosae putantur*)'.<sup>63</sup> It is to this public embeddedness of *pistis/fides*, that we turn in this chapter.

With the help of the searchable databases Thesaurus Linguae Graecae and the Library of Latin Texts, a rich semantic domain can be distinguished in which *pistis/fides* functions together with other key terms such as 'society' (*πόλις/πολιτεία/societas*), 'power' (*δύναμις/potestas*), 'rule' (*κρατία/imperium*), 'favour' (*χάρις/clementia*), 'goodwill' (*εὐνοια/benevolentia*), and 'piety' (*εὐσέβεια/pietas*).<sup>64</sup> The sources thus traced will be discussed and compared to relevant scholarly theory; there is a rich body of literature devoted to this particular semantic domain as compared to others. The first important aspect to emphasize is how the interrelatedness of the religious and the civic is a necessary background for understanding the public semantics of faith.

### 7.3.1 Faith as Civic-Religious Goddess and Virtue: a Sacred Bond of Trust

Speaking of a civic and a religious domain in antiquity by itself is, as we have seen in chapter 2 (§2.2.2), a risky business. Lacking more hybrid categories, however, I will continue to use the terms 'civic' and 'religious', though they are here understood as representing a single continuum on which the language of faith can be mapped. And while it is contested whether it is useful to use the modern word 'religion' to denote ancient phenomena, we have seen (esp. §2.3)

61 Catullus, *Poems* 76.3.

62 Propertius, *Elegies* 4.5.27–28.

63 Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.343–344.

64 In *Le Vocabulaire Latin Des Relations et Des Partis Politiques Sous La République* (1972 [1963]), Joseph Hellegouarc'h devotes the first chapter (1.1) to 'la fides' and lists the most frequent combinations with *fides*: *amicitia, amor, benevolentia, clientela, necessitudo, officium, pax, patrocinium, potestas, societas, tutela* (p. 24).

that there existed an ancient first-order discourse that distinguished between three different categories in dealing with the divine: the civic, the poetic, and the philosophical. The category of civic religion (*theologia civilis*) is not only thought of as an ancient mode of dealing with the gods, it is a testimony to how *polis* life and religious life were closely intertwined.<sup>65</sup> The interconnectedness of the civic and the religious becomes particularly clear in this chapter, when we see how *pistis* and *fides* function in the semantic domain of public relationships and social coherence.

The interconnectedness of *fides* and political-religious life is frequently cited by classicists. Viktor Pöschl writes, 'in the Roman mind, *fides* was closely linked to Roman religion and sanctioned by the goddess Fides.'<sup>66</sup> According to Giulia Piccaluga, *fides* is deeply rooted in archaic Roman religion, which testifies to its political importance as a strong guarantee of oaths and alliances.<sup>67</sup> Hellegouarc'h also connects the religious and the political aspects of *fides* and highlights that the importance of the cult in archaic times shows its intimate connection to Roman identity as opposed to other cultures.<sup>68</sup> The same case for a religious colouring of *fides* is made, in a more nuanced way, by Gérard Freyburger, who calls *fides* a 'concept inseparable from religion.'<sup>69</sup> Whereas Freyburger is reluctant to grant *fides* the meaning of 'religious faith' from its outset, he shows with a rich array of sources that it was always guaranteed by the gods and linked to respect for the gods.<sup>70</sup> Mueller intuitively notes in this context that as regards the role of faith in religion, classical and Christian *fides* are not very dissimilar:

Reading through the Christian citations, one discovers that, aside from belief in specifically Christian dogma, there is not much to choose between Christian *fides* and ancient, especially inasmuch as classical *fides* was always informed by religion. (Mueller 2002, 255, n. 11)

65 From an anthropological perspective, this connection can be interpreted as caused by the conceptual priority of the sacred to every kind of political thought and action: rather than following a modernist construction of religion and politics as binary opposites, we can understand the quest for transcendence as inherent to and a creative power behind a political reality in all its brokenness. This is the main, thought provoking thesis of Wydra 2015, cf. 16–17.

66 Pöschl 1980, 4: 'Nach römischer Überzeugung war somit die *fides* unter den Menschen eng mit der römischen Religion verbunden und durch die Göttin Fides sanktioniert.'

67 See Piccaluga 1981. Cf. Mueller 2002, 221, n. 145.

68 Hellegouarc'h 1972 [1963], 26.

69 Freyburger 1986, 222: 'concept indissociable de la religion'.

70 Freyburger 1986, 101 and 224 respectively.

An interesting question in this regard, to which I turn in the next main section (§7.4), is whether Christian *fides* or Pauline *pistis* was also meant to be as political as it was religious. The Graeco-Roman, though largely Roman, sources to which we now turn at least suggest that these aspects were inseparable, and the vocabulary used in the Pauline passages discussed below confirm this hypothesis.

An obvious place to look for sources on the civic-religious nature of *pistis/fides* is the actual civic cult of divine Pistis/Fides. Speaking of the goddess Faith usually means speaking of the virtue, and speaking of the virtue often coincides with references to the cult. The Roman cult is especially well attested. In his *City of God* (*De civitate Dei*), Augustine wonders how it is that even Fides was considered divine and given her own cult.<sup>71</sup> Historically, the cult of Fides seems to have been preceded by the more ancient cult of Dius Fidius, who was a hypostasis of Jupiter in his function of guaranteeing trust.<sup>72</sup> Fides Publica is said to have had her first temple erected either when the Trojans arrived at Rome's future site or under the rule of Numa.<sup>73</sup> Whereas this is probably a matter of invented tradition, the legendary and ancient status of the cult testifies to its conceived importance in later times. A more probable historical date in the mid-third century BC, during the first Punic war, is offered by Cicero.<sup>74</sup>

Among the scarce information we have about the rituals associated with her cult is the yearly custom when the priests (*flamines*) would drive in a hooded carriage to her temple and perform the sacrifice with their head and right hand covered in white cloth, alternately explained in our sources as signifying the need to protect *fides* or the need for *fides* to remain secret.<sup>75</sup> In her temple,

71 Augustine, *City of God* 4.20: 'They made Virtue a goddess too (*virtutem quoque deam fecerunt*), and, if indeed a goddess, she had necessarily been preferred to many. (...) But why has Faith both been deemed a goddess (*cur et Fides dea credita est*) and also received a temple and an altar? Anyone intelligent enough to know her, makes of himself a habitation for her!'

72 On Dius Fidius, see Boyancé 1972a, 92–93; Freyburger 1986, 288–298.

73 Freyburger 1986, 259–260; on the temple in general, see 259–273; for extensive bibliography on the temple, see 336–337. Cf. Livy, *History of Rome* 1.21.4 and Plutarch, *Numa* 16.1.

74 See Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.61. On the importance of the cult in the context of foreign policy, see Boyancé 1972b, esp. 112–116. On the historicity and history of the building, see Reusser 1993, 55–61.

75 See, respectively: Livy, *History of Rome* 1.21.4: 'as a sign that faith must be kept (*significantes fidem tutandam*), and that even in men's clasped hands her seat is sacred (*sedemque eius etiam in dexteris sacratam esse*'); Servius, *In Vergilii carmina comentarii* 1.292: 'by which means it is shown that faith is meant to be hidden' (*per quod ostenditur fidem debere esse secretam*). Cf. Boyancé 1964, 424–425.

copies of international treaties were kept and foreign envoys were received.<sup>76</sup> She is also taken to be a hypostasized quality of Jupiter, next to whose temple on the Capitol her temple was located.<sup>77</sup> Jupiter is hence often portrayed as the defender and avenger of the virtue of faith. In Statius's *Thebaid*, for instance, Jupiter argues that the war against Thebes must proceed because 'earth and heaven demand it, and piety and violated faith (*et pietas et laesa fides*) and Nature and the very morals of the Eumenides.'<sup>78</sup>

The goddess is hence both involved in public oaths and treaties, yet also connected to what is secret, hidden, or in need of protection.<sup>79</sup> In an article on 'Fides et le secret', Pierre Grimal juxtaposes these different aspects and emphasizes the importance of the non-fixed and non-judicial realm of Fides:

Rather than in the late metaphysics from Greece, it is in Fides that we can distinguish the origin and principle of Roman universalism. She is the creator of the *ius gentium* as well, at first flexible, then gradually enriched and diversified, as Fides invented solutions to new situations. Jupiter, protector of oaths, could only protect what existed, whereas Secret Fides protected in advance what did not yet exist, but would one day claim to be hers. (Grimal 1974, 155)<sup>80</sup>

More than Jupiter, so Grimal concludes his article, Fides was concerned with what was not yet pinned down, fixed, or certain. Her domain was unknowable future situations that required a trustworthy yet open-minded relationship to uphold the universalizing aspirations and complex political reality of the Roman Empire. The transjuridical sphere of *pistis/fides*—connected to oaths,

76 Fraenkel 1916, 196.

77 See Cicero, *De officiis* 3.104, quoted below. For Fides as an abstraction of Jupiter's faithfulness, see Heinze 1928, 157: 'Sieht man nun, wie oft im alten Rom die Leute aus dem Volke die *fides* einzelner Gottheiten oder der Götter insgesamt angerufen haben, so kommt man zu der Vermutung, daß jene *Fides* auf dem Capitol ursprünglich eben die *Fides Deum* oder, wohl wahrscheinlicher, die *Fides Iovis* gewesen ist: das eben an den Göttern, an das der Schutz- und Hilfesuchende sich wendet.' For the exact place of the temple, see Reusser 1993, 61–62.

78 Statius, *Thebais* 7.216–217.

79 On the strong connection between Fides and formal oaths and treaties, see esp. Boyancé 1972a.

80 'C'est dans la Fides que nous verrions, bien plutôt que dans les tardives métaphysiques venues de Grèce, l'origine et le principe de l'universalisme romain, créateur du *ius gentium*, lui aussi, d'abord souple, puis enrichi progressivement, diversifié, au fur et à mesure que la Fides inventait des solutions aux situations nouvelles qui se proposaient. Jupiter protecteur des serments ne pouvait protéger que ce qui existait; Fides, la secrète, protégeait à l'avance ce qui n'existait pas, mais qui, un jour, se réclamerait d'elle.'

but transcending them at the same time, which is also the theme of my next subsection—can thus already be traced back to the cult of Fides.

The Greek goddess Pistis is less well known but is also occasionally mentioned as a divine figure. The earliest known text dates back to the sixth century BC, to the lyric poet Theognis of Megara. I have already discussed this text in chapter 3 in the context of the divine departure of gods who are at the same time hypostasized virtues. The departure of divine Pistis is immediately linked by Theognis to the malfunctioning of oaths (they are no longer *pistos*) and the lack of piety: ‘Men’s judicial oaths are no longer to be trusted (ὄρκοι δ’ οὐκέτι πιστοὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δίκαιοι), nor does anyone revere the immortal gods.’<sup>81</sup> Again, the religious and the civic are intertwined.

The self-identification of Greeks with *pistis* as a religious-political virtue, however, pales when compared to the Roman fondness of *fides*. Cicero can even use the argument that Greeks never cherished *fides* to discredit Greek witnesses in the court of law:

I shall first say—for this is the common factor—that they are Greeks. Not that I more than anyone else would disparage the trustworthiness (*maxime fidem*) of this nation. (...) but that nation has never cultivated good faith and respect for what is sacred when giving evidence (*testimiorum religionem et fidem numquam ista natio coluit*), and it is quite ignorant of the meaning, the importance or the value of anything to do with it. (Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 9–10)<sup>82</sup>

While the rhetorical opportunism is clear and the accuracy of the stereotype doubtful, it nonetheless demonstrates how such a contrast between Greeks and Romans when it comes to cherishing *fides* was considered effective in a Roman trial.<sup>83</sup> The morally ambitious nexus of *fides* and *religio* was seen as a civic-religious trait, whose cultivation the Romans considered their own.

81 Theognis, *Elegiac Poems* 1139–1140.

82 The Loeb translation by C. Macdonald renders *testimiorum religionem et fidem* as ‘a scrupulous regard for honesty’.

83 The stereotype goes back to at least the second century BC, see Polybius, *Histories* 6.56.13–14: ‘among the Greeks, apart from other things, members of the government, if they are entrusted (πιστευθῶσιν) with no more than a talent, though they have ten copyists and as many seals and twice as many witnesses, cannot keep their faith (οὐ δύνανται τηρεῖν τὴν πίστιν); whereas among the Romans those who as magistrates and legates are dealing with large sums of money maintain correct conduct just because they have pledged their faith by oath (δι’ αὐτῆς τῆς κατὰ τὸν ὄρκον πίστεως τηροῦσι τὸ καθήκον).’ See also Pöschl 1980, 5–6.

In Roman conceptions, the relationship between divine Pistis and the human capacity of keeping commitments is also vehemently present.<sup>84</sup> As we already saw in chapter 3 (§3.3.3), Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes the promotion of *pistis* (here obviously synonymous to Roman *fides*) to a divine status as a religious revolution under king Numa. Numa observed that contracts ‘which are made without witnesses—and these are much more numerous than the others—rest on no other security than the faith of those who make them’, and therefore he erected a temple and instituted sacrificial cult in honour of Pistis.<sup>85</sup> The idea was that his people would become similar in their attitude to what they worshipped: by worshipping Good Faith they would appropriate the civic virtue of good faith (cf. §6.3.1 above). And, so the author concludes, all worked out according to plan, for ‘if there was any dispute between one man and another concerning a contract entered into without witnesses, the faith of either of the parties was sufficient to decide the controversy and prevent it from going any farther.’<sup>86</sup> The religious worship of Fides thus serves to validate civic commitments without juridical status.

The divine status of virtues such as *fides* was the subject of debate among different philosophical schools in the first century BC. This is phrased particularly clearly in the dialogue between schools in Cicero’s *On the Nature of the Gods*. The character who is the spokesperson for the Stoa, Quintus Lucilius Balbus, argues that faith, just like mind, virtue, and concord, was given to humanity by the gods, was thereon deified, and exists now in the divine realm:

Hence we see that wisdom and intelligence also have been derived by men from the gods (and this explains why it was the practice of our ancestors to deify Mind, Faith, Virtue and Concord, and to set up temples to them at the public charge (*maiorum institutis Mens, Fides, Virtus, Concordia consecratae et publice dedicatae sunt*), and how can we consistently deny that they exist with the gods, when we worship their majestic and holy images (*augusta et sancta simulacra*)? And if mankind possesses intelligence, faith, virtue, and concord, whence can these things have flowed down upon the earth if not from the powers above? Also

84 See Le Bonniec 1965, c. 969: ‘Als Bürgin von Eid und Vertrag hat F[ides] im öffentlichen und privaten Leben der Römer und auch in deren Beziehungen zu anderen Völkern eine höchst wichtige Rolle gespielt, zumal da gerade die Römer ihre Politik ausdrücklich den Gesichtspunkten der F[ides] unterstellten und für sich selbst ein bes. Verhältnis zu ihr beanspruchten.’ Cf. Hellegouarc’h 1972 [1963], 26.

85 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.75.1.

86 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.75.3.



since we possess wisdom, reason, and prudence (*consilium, ratio, prudentia*), the gods must need possess them too in greater perfection, and not possess them merely but also exercise them upon matters of the greatest magnitude and value. (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.79)

Thus, according to this Stoic account not only did these human qualities come to us from above, but they are also qualities of the gods, for they logically need to possess them in a more perfect manner.<sup>87</sup> Here we find a preliminary outline of the *mimēsis* and *homoiōsis theōi* topos that I discussed in the previous chapter. The deification of qualities such as *fides* was seen as a reward for their value, also called benefits (*utilitates*) and power (*vis*).<sup>88</sup> According to Balbus, *fides* was deemed so powerful that it could not possibly have been a mere human quality.<sup>89</sup>

Not all schools represented in the *On the Nature of the Gods*, however, agreed on the divine nature of *fides* and similar concepts. Gaius Cotta, representing Academic scepticism, rather deems them as possessing a non-divine power, *fides* belonging to the subcategory of internal human qualities. In Cotta's own words:

Intelligence, faith, hope, virtue, honour, victory, safety, concord (*mentem fidem spem virtutem honorem victoriam salutem concordiam*) and the other things of this nature are obviously abstractions, not personal deities (*vim habere videmus, non deorum*). For they are either properties inherent in ourselves (*in nobismet insunt ipsis*), for instance intelligence, hope, faith, virtue, concord (*ut mens ut spes ut fides ut virtus ut concordia*), or objects of our desire, for instance honour, safety, victory. I see that they have value, and I am also aware that statues are dedicated to them; but why they should be held to possess divinity (*in is vis deorum insit*) is a thing that I cannot understand without further enlightenment. (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.61)

To the Academics, *fides* was a powerful personal attribute but did not possess divine power. A similar view was taken up by Christians in the centuries to come, who continued the tradition of erecting statues to personified virtues

87 In the final sentence, *fides* is not mentioned by name, but it is safe to assume that different qualities are named for the sake of *varietas*.

88 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.62.

89 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.61: 'for they have so much power that they cannot be without divine governance' (*quia vis erat tanta ut sine deo regi non posset*).

like *fides*. Yet for our present purposes it is interesting to take notice of the religious and civic significance of this goddess in Paul's days, even if her divine status was not undisputed by part of the intellectual elite. Whether or not *fides* and these other qualities or objects of desire were seen as divine, their value in the public domain went unchallenged.

The connection of *pistis* with both oaths and piety, or the description of *pistis* as both a civic and religious virtue, is one that is evident from Cicero's wider oeuvre. In the preface of *On the Nature of the Gods*, when Cicero introduces the subject and its urgency *in propria persona*, he emphasizes the importance of piety and religion: if it fails, so will *fides*, human society, and justice.<sup>90</sup> In this sequence, *fides* is presented as an interpersonal virtue or bond, relying on piety, yet also sustaining interhuman social bonds on a higher level and ultimately enabling justice. As such, it is presented as the indispensable link between religion and society. Similarly, in a private letter to Atticus, he describes the fall of the Roman republic, which some of his opponents wish for, in terms of a fall of *religio* and *fides*: 'the collapse of religion (*religio*) and good morals, of the integrity of the courts (*iudiciorum fides*) and the authority of the Senate'.<sup>91</sup> In such contexts, *fides* does not merely denote 'integrity' or 'good faith', but it is a cardinal virtue in the deeper sense of 'faith' and 'trustworthiness'.<sup>92</sup>

This is once more explicitly stated in *De officiis* (*On Duty* or *On Obligations*) 1.23, where, as we already saw in chapter 3, *fides* is explicated as 'truth and

90 Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.3: 'And when these [piety, reverence, religion (*pietas, sanctitas, religio*)] are gone, life soon becomes a welter of disorder and confusion; and in all probability the disappearance of piety towards the gods will entail the disappearance of *fides* and social union among men as well, and of justice itself, the queen of all the virtues (*pietate adversus deos sublata fides etiam et societas generis humani et una excellentissima virtus iustitia tollatur*):' See also §3.3.1.

91 Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 1.16.7.

92 So also Van Zyl 2010, 529–530: 'the values of moral goodness and faith, which may, in jurisprudential context, be rendered as "good morals" (*boni mores*) and "good faith" (*bona fides*), are closely interlinked with the cardinal virtues and with the values contained in Cicero's concepts of justice (*iustitia*), fairness or equity (*aequitas*) and (good) faith (*fides*).' Van Zyl refers explicitly to *On the Republic* 1.2 (*unde iustitia, fides, aequitas?*) and *De officiis* 1.15: 'But all that is morally right rises from some one of four sources: it is concerned either (1) with the full perception and intelligent development of the true; or (2) with the conservation of organized society, with rendering to every man his due, and with the faithful discharge of obligations assumed (*rerum contractarum fide*); or (3) with the greatness and strength of a noble and invincible spirit; or (4) with the orderliness and moderation of everything that is said and done, wherein consist temperance and self-control.'

fideliy to promises and agreements' (*dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas*) and hence the foundation of justice. Trustworthiness in keeping one's own promises and trust in another's oaths form the moral foundation necessary for the system of justice to work.<sup>93</sup> For just as we saw regarding the cult of Fides, the law cannot cover every particular case. The connection of *fides* to oaths is again confirmed by a reference to early Roman history: 'For our ancestors were of the opinion that no bond was more effective in guaranteeing good faith than an oath.'<sup>94</sup> He also endorses the Stoic etymological explanation of *fides* as *fiat quod dictum est*: let it proceed as promised.<sup>95</sup> This definition of *fides* as truthfulness towards what has been agreed upon and as foundation of justice is indeed very civic in orientation. Yet, that it is religious at the same time is shown by the role of the gods as a guarantee that agreements are indeed honoured.

And yet, according to Cicero, *fides* is not something which is enforced by the gods. A specific question Cicero asks himself in the *De officiis* is whether one should keep an oath to an enemy. The answer is given by means of an *exemplum*. When in the Carthaginian wars, Regulus is taken prisoner and sent back to Rome on parole to negotiate the release of their prisoners, he chooses to return to Carthage and prefers a death of torture over 'breaking his vow given to an enemy' (*fidem hosti datam fallere*).<sup>96</sup> The relevant argument for Regulus to keep good faith does not lie, according to Cicero, in fear of the god's wrath, but in the faithfulness that is due to Fides, who has been granted a place next to Jupiter on the Capitol:

An oath is an assurance backed by religious sanctity (*est enim ius iurandum affirmatio religiosa*); and a solemn promise given as before God as one's witness is to be sacredly kept. For the question no longer concerns the wrath of the gods (for there is no such thing) but the obligations of justice and good faith (*ad iustitiam et ad fidem pertinet*). For, as Ennius says so admirably: 'Gracious Good Faith, on wings upborne; thou oath in Jupiter's great name (*O Fides alma apta pinnis et ius iurandum Iovis*)!' Whoever, therefore, violates his oath violates Fides (*is fidem violat*); and, as we find it stated in Cato's speech, our forefathers chose that she should

93 Cf. De Wilde 2011, 459: *fides* was believed to be a basic norm that made the legal system work as it should by founding it on the moral responsibility of those who participated in it.'

94 Cicero, *De officiis* 3.111.

95 Cicero, *De officiis* 1.23.

96 Cicero, *De officiis* 1.39.

dwel upon the Capitol neighbour to Jupiter Supreme and Best. (Cicero, *De officiis* 3.104)

The religious backing of oaths is evident here, not because the gods enforce faith and justice, but because they personify faith and justice. Regulus returned to Carthage, not out of fear to displease the gods, but he made this sacrifice out of his own internal, moral conviction, formed after the example of the gods, Fides in particular. Considering the interconnectedness of what we would now distinguish as civic and religious, it is no wonder that, as we will see below (esp. in §7.4.4), Paul uses ‘civic language’, such as the notion of reconciliation, to denote ‘religious relationships’.

### 7.3.2 *The Bridging Capital of Faith: a Transethnic and Transjuridical Virtue*

We have seen that *pistis/fides* vocabulary in the public domain was thought of as a virtue which is both civic and religious at the same time. As such, it is connected to human contracts, but also transcends the juridical and fixed character of oaths. This transcending aspect is investigated further in this subsection: for not only does *pistis/fides* transcend what is arranged by law, it is also transcends ethnic boundaries.<sup>97</sup>

This latter aspect also comes to the fore in discussions about Regulus, a character that appears quite often when it comes to exemplifying Roman *fides*.<sup>98</sup> Cicero’s description of Regulus’s faith that I just discussed shows not only that *fides* belongs on the crossroads of what we may name the civic and the religious; it also points to another interesting characteristic of the classical concept of *fides*: its reach beyond the obviously trustworthy familial sphere.<sup>99</sup> To put it in modern social-scientific terms, *fides* builds not only bonding, but also bridging capital: it is a virtue which extends beyond the own family (*familia, gens*), people (*gens, ethnos*), and country (*patria*) all the way to

97 One description of what the Greek *ethnos* consists of is given by Herodotus: ‘in blood and speech (ἄμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον), and the shrines of gods and the sacrifices that we have in common (θεῶν ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι), and the likeness of our way of life (ἥθη δὲ ὁμότροπα)’ (*Histories* 8.144.2).

98 In his description of Pauline *pistis* in the context of Roman *fides*, Christian Strecker devotes a section (2005, §2.4, p. 238) to Regulus, without delving deeper into questions about what this *exemplum* teaches regarding how *fides* is configured; he compares Regulus’s faithful defeat to serve a higher cause to Christ’s (see p. 245, n. 87 and p. 249).

99 Cf. e.g. Pomeroy 2010, 61: ‘If *pietas* is the generic term to indicate relationships within a *domus*, which takes its shades of meaning according to which member of the family is required to show social solidarity and how, *fides* is the tie which binds those who have a reciprocal relationship with one another outside familial contexts.’

strangers (*peregrini*), foes (*inimici*), or even enemies of the state (*hostes*). In this capacity, *pistis/fides* proves to extend beyond what is personal and also beyond what is legal, in the good sense of striving towards transjuridical, moral perfection. We will see in this section how this aspect of faith is attested to across literary, philosophical, and epigraphical sources.

As for characterizations of public faith by philosophical authors, I have already referred to Seneca's position that while 'no law bids us keep faith even with an enemy' (*nulla lex iubet fidem etiam inimico praestare*), *fides* belongs to 'the conventions of human life, that are stronger than any law' (*consuetudo vitae humanae omni lege valentior*).<sup>100</sup> The scope of keeping faith towards all, including enemies, is also confirmed by Cicero, who speaks of 'a common fidelity due to all' (*communem fidem quae omnibus debetur*).<sup>101</sup> In the third book of the *De officiis*, Regulus is again discussed at length as the prototypical example of keeping faith with enemies, even faithless ones:

If they mean to adopt it as a principle, that a pledge given to the faithless is no pledge (*nullam esse fidem, quae infideli data sit*), let them look to it that it be not a mere loophole for perjury that they seek. Furthermore, we have laws regulating warfare, and fidelity to an oath (*fidesque iuris iurandi*) must often be observed in dealings with an enemy: for an oath sworn with the clear understanding in one's own mind that it should be performed must be kept. (Cicero, *De officiis* 3.106–107)<sup>102</sup>

Cicero is evidently reluctant to render the value of an oath (*fides*) dependent on the character of its beneficiary.<sup>103</sup> Instead, *fides* is only dependent upon the intention of the one swearing. According to Cicero, this intention of *fides* is more important than the precise words: 'In the matter of a promise (*in fide*)

<sup>100</sup> Seneca, *On Benefits* 5.21.1, on which see §3.3.5 *supra*.

<sup>101</sup> Cicero, *Letters to Quintus* 1.1.28.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *De officiis* 1.39: 'if under stress of circumstances individuals have made any promise to the enemy, they are bound to keep their word even then (*in eo ipso fides conservanda*).' And on Regulus: 'he chose to return to a death by torture rather than prove false to his promise, though given to an enemy (*quam fidem hosti datam fallere*).'

<sup>103</sup> His adversaries rely on lines of the tragic poet Accius, quoted in 3.106 and more fully in 3.102: *Fregistin fidem? Neque dedi neque do infideli cuiquam*. Cicero argues that Accius was only portraying the character Atreus. He only excludes negotiations with pirates from his rule of keep faithing with enemies: such oaths are not made 'with the clear understanding in one's own mind that it should be performed' (*De officiis* 3.107). However, cf. the ironical remark at 3.87: 'Shame upon our government! The pirates' sense of honour is higher than the senate's (*piratarum enim melior fides quam senatus*).'

one must always consider the meaning and not the mere words (*quid senseris, non quid dixeris, cogitandum*).<sup>104</sup> *Fides* thus prevented oaths from becoming mere words: it internalized their meaning and augmented their value beyond the merely juridical.

When push comes to shove, Cicero holds that keeping one's word prevails even beyond the bonds of friendship:

Well then, when we are weighing what seems to be expedient (*utile*) in friendship against what is morally right (*honestum*), let apparent expediency be disregarded and moral rectitude prevail; and when in friendship requests are submitted that are not morally right, let religious duties and trustworthiness take precedence of the obligations of friendship (*religio et fides anteponatur amicitiae*). (Cicero, *De officiis* 3.46)<sup>105</sup>

Cicero here classifies honouring religious obligations and keeping faith as doing what is morally right (*honestum*), and therefore he always ranks *fides* above obligations due to personal friendships. In other words, according to Cicero, *fides* is a moral quality characterized by its border transcending capability. It extends beyond the personal, familiar, and ethnic to the whole public domain, thereby incorporating even public enemies in its range.

In her discussion of Regulus as the prototype of Roman *fides*, Teresa Morgan explicitly connects Regulus's determination to keep faith with enemies with his wish to keep faith with the gods:

If *fides* towards Rome and her gods meant simply partisan loyalty, then there would be little reason for Regulus to keep faith with the Carthaginians: indeed, breaking faith with them might have constituted a form of loyalty to Rome. But Rome and/or her gods require more than that. They demand that Regulus act with trustworthiness/good faith to everyone. (Morgan 2015, 102)

Theologically speaking, we may infer that the gods, even when tied to Rome, function as universal keepers of virtue, thus universalizing the range of these

<sup>104</sup> This *sententia* is elucidated by the *exemplum* that a soldier under oath to return to Hannibal had returned only briefly as if to have forgotten something, thinking that he thereby 'was released from the obligation of his oath; and so he was, according to the letter of it, but not according to the spirit (*erat verbis, re non erat*)' (Cicero, *De officiis* 1.40).

<sup>105</sup> The Loeb translation shows a certain uneasiness with the religious connotations by translating *religio* and *fides* as 'conscience and scrupulous regard for the right'.

virtues to include all humanity. The bridging capital of faith is grounded in the bridging function of the divine.

Throughout her work, Morgan also emphasizes what she calls the ‘elasticity’ inherent to *pistis/fides* vocabulary, which is, she argues, ‘equally at home in the public and private spheres’.<sup>106</sup> From the perspective of discourse analysis, I would add that in the discourse which I discuss in this chapter the private and public spheres in which faith is due are often thought of as being in tension. The ideology that predominates in extant sources is that in such situations, ties of public faith prevail over personal, domestic obligations. The existence of such a tension perfectly fits the sociological model according to which bonding and bridging social capital are not mutually exclusive in principle, even if particularly strong bonding capital may inhibit the development of bridging ties.<sup>107</sup> In the sources discussed here, such tensive circumstances are often addressed in terms of *pistis/fides*. In fact, as we will see in the following subsections (esp. §7.3.5), even the meaning and implications of the concept itself are the object of controversy, as it harbours in itself the same tension between personal loyalty and public reliability.

One interesting literary source that presents this bridging aspect of *fides* in direct contrast to more personal obligations of trust is Vergil’s *Aeneid*. In the romantic involvement of the Roman founding father Aeneas and the Carthaginian queen Dido in book 4, the subject of faith and faithlessness is a recurring theme. Dido accuses the fleeing Aeneas of perfidy three times, laments that ‘*fides* is nowhere safe’, and wrestles with her own vows of *fides* to her late husband Sychaeus, which later offer motivation for her suicide.<sup>108</sup> The irony of this portrayal is often remarked upon, most explicitly in an article by John Starks on ‘*Fides Aeneia*’:

Carthaginian’s accusation of *fides Aeneia*, not *fides Punica*, is the motive and emotive force in Book 4 driving the passions that direct the reader’s sympathies toward the betrayed Punic woman, not the noncommittal

<sup>106</sup> Morgan 2015, 117.

<sup>107</sup> See e.g. Schuller 2007, 16: ‘the relationship between these two forms of social capital may be complementary or conflictual, or both.’ For a case study in which bonding capital inhibits bridging capital, see Anderson 2010, esp. p. 98.

<sup>108</sup> For the accusation of perfidy, see Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.305, 4.366, 4.421; for the remark that *fides* is nowhere safe (*nusquam tuta fides*) see 4.373; Dido’s own marital vows as *fides*, see 4.552: ‘The faith vowed to the ashes of Sychaeus I have not kept (*non servata fides cineri promissa Sychaeo*)’. Cf. *Aeneid* 4.12 for Dido’s first confession of faith that Aeneas is divine: ‘I believe it well—nor is my confidence vain—that he is sprung from gods (*credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse deorum*)’.

Trojan male suddenly called away by his inevitable destiny. (...) Phrases charging *pius Aeneas* with gross perfidy encourage the Roman to consider the ambiguous case upon which Aeneas's *fides* stands. (Starks 1999, 276)<sup>109</sup>

Whereas this ambiguity and irony is evidently there, we may ask what particular conclusion Vergil expects his readers to reach. The examples quoted show that Dido's *fides* is mainly the *fides* sought in marital relationships; it echo's Medea's cry to Jason, 'faith in your oaths is gone' (ὄρκων δὲ φροῦδῆ πίστις).<sup>110</sup> Therefore, I would suggest that the crux to understanding why Vergil would allow such accusations of perfidy on the address of his protagonist and main Roman ancestor lies in Dido's misunderstanding of Roman *fides*, as can be deduced from another sneer at Aeneas's *fides*:

Behold the pledge and promise (*dextra fidesque*) of him who, so they say, carries with him his ancestral gods and bore his worn-out father on his shoulders! Could I not have seized him, torn him limb from limb, and scattered the pieces on the waves? (Vergil, *Aeneid* 597–601)

The public and divine task of Aeneas, captured in the image of his fleeing of Troy with the Penates, is here contrasted with his personal ties to Dido and political obligations to the Carthaginians.<sup>111</sup> Yet Dido fails to see that the one takes precedence over the other. Even if the status of their relationship, which is purposefully left ambiguous in the grove scene, would have been equal to marriage, which Aeneas denies, Roman public-divine *fides* exceeds these personal obligations, so Vergil appears to expect his readership to understand, or at least consider.<sup>112</sup>

Still, the bridging aspect of faith per se was not an exclusively Roman feature: material evidence from Greek city-states demonstrates its roots in

109 For *Punica fides*, see below, in this section.

110 Euripides, *Medea* 492.

111 Richard Monti argues that *dextra fidesque* does not refer to marriage, but to the patronage relationship that is not honoured by Aeneas. I would agree that this phrase does not refer to marriage and that Dido's claim surpasses marriage in that it demands a public acknowledgement of and returned favour for the kind reception of the Trojans. However, I would argue that these obligations are still exceeded by the *fides* that is due to Zeus's calling and the future of his *patria*. See Monti 1981, chapter 1: 'Fides and the Right Hand' (1–8).

112 Whereas the importance of *fides* in the *Aeneid*, particularly book 4, is commented upon occasionally, so far I have not found this interpretation of diverging views of *fides* in commentaries. Cf. Gruen 2012, 134–136; Van den Berg 2014, 3–6.



‘international’ relations. Allegiances were publicly announced and inscribed to withstand the centuries. A stela from 433/432 BC of unknown origin testifies to such a treaty between Athens and Rhegium:

that there shall be an alliance between the Athenians and the Rhegians. Let the oath be sworn by the Athenians, so that everything may be faithful and without deceit and straightforward ([πι]στὰ καὶ ἄδολα καὶ ἡ-  
[απλᾶ]) on the part of the Athenians for all time towards the Rhegians, swearing as follows: ‘We shall be faithful allies, just, strong and unhar-  
mful ([χσύμ]μ.αχοι ἐσόμεθα πισ[τοὶ καὶ δίκαιοι καὶ ἰσ]χυροὶ καὶ ἀβλαβῆς) for  
all time to the Rhegians, and we shall help if they need anything.’<sup>113</sup>

The quality of being *pistos* is here applied to the parties of an alliance and is reified not only by means of a public oath, but literally by inscribing this oath in stone as well.

Other occurrences of the word stem *pist-* in Greek epigraphy that we have access to include honorific decrees which praise the qualities of politicians or ambassadors. One Herodorus is honoured for being ‘of good will to the Athenian People’ (εὖνους ἦν τῷ δήμῳ τ[ῶ]ι Ἀθηναίων) by ‘being in the confidence of king Demetrios’ (νῦν ἐμ πίστε<ι> ὦν τῷ βα[σιλεῖ Δημητρί]ωι).<sup>114</sup> The Athenians had a varied relationship with this Macedonian nobleman and (ultimately) king, who was alternatively seen as their liberator from the unwanted rule of Alexander’s Diadochi and as a licentious oppressor. Diplomacy was key, and the city’s gratitude for the ties of *pistis* between Herodorus and Demetrios earned the former a public token on the Acropolis. Similarly, though in a different period, one Kephisodoros also receives praises after thirty years of public service for displaying ‘to the uttermost his good will towards the People at every opportunity’ and for ‘proposing ways for the People to keep its existing friends firm in their loyalty (τούς τε ὄντας φίλους ὁ δῆμος διατηρήσει βεβαίους ἐν τεῖ πίστε[ι] μένοντας) and to obtain others in addition’.<sup>115</sup> The mediating position of ambassadors was thus one of goodwill and

113 IG 13 53, line 9–16, date: 433/2 BC, stela, original location: unknown, translation Stephen Lambert, P. J. Rhodes (Attic Inscriptions Online).

114 IG 113 1 853, line 12–14, date: 295/4 BC, stela, original location: Athens, Acropolis; translation Sean Byrne (Attic Inscriptions Online).

115 IG 113 1 1292, line 7–8, 17–19, 44–46, date: 184/3 BC or 200/199 BC, stela, Agora, translation Stephen Lambert, Jane Ashwell (Attic Inscriptions Online).

trust to both sides: they could embody the bridge between political partners, rivals, or enemies.<sup>116</sup>

This specific bridging focus of *pistis/fides* was recognized and exploited by Roman historians up to the early empire. Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus offer a particularly interesting overview of the crucial role of *fides* in early Roman history. There are many examples of individual Romans who kept their faith with enemy powers. The girl Cloelia, for example, was given as a Roman hostage to an Etruscan king, yet managed to escape the Etruscan camp.<sup>117</sup> According to Dionysius, ‘then indeed Tarquinius was vehement in accusing the Romans of a breach of their oaths and of perfidy (ἐπιτορκίαν τε καὶ ἀπιστίαν τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἐγκαλῶν)’.<sup>118</sup> To restore the treaty, however, she had to return and, consequently, the Etruscans vouched to keep her and the others unharmed. Upon this point Livy states that ‘both parties kept their word’ (*utrimque constitit fides*), which allowed for the precarious relationship between both powers to be restored.<sup>119</sup>

But what if there was a contract or treaty that was unfavourable to the Romans? After some Roman military leaders had surrendered to the Samnites and accepted a humiliating peace, Livy recounts the senate’s deliberations. One of the leaders argues for sending them stripped of their title and bounded to the Samnites, in order that their treaty be annulled:

And yet, Conscript Fathers, I do not dispute the fact that guarantees as well as treaties are sacred in the eyes of those who cherish *fides* among men on an equal footing with obligations due to the gods (*apud quos iuxta divinas religiones fides humana colitur*); but I deny that without the people’s authorization any sanction can be given which shall be binding on the people. (Livy, *History of Rome* 9.9.4.)

116 Cf. Morgan 2015, 101: ‘We have seen how, in a two-way relationship, *pistis/fides* is characteristically bivalent, referring to the trust and trustworthiness of both sides and often fitting complementary aspects of *pistis/fides* together in a social “jigsaw” pattern. When someone in the middle of a three-part relationship has *pistis/fides*, this bivalency works in two directions. The mediator must be both trusting and trustworthy towards both parties in order to accomplish the desired relationship between them.’

117 The story was well known, as it is also narrated by or referred to in i.a. Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 3.2.2; Plutarch, *Bravery of Women* 14; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 34.6.13; Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.651; Juvenal, *Satires* 8.264–265.

118 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 5.33.2.

119 Livy, *History of Rome* 2.13.8–9.

*Fides* is here used to designate interhuman contracts, which were, Livy emphasizes, deemed of equal sanctity as religious duties owed to the gods. The solution Postumius offers is presented as not violating this core conviction. According to his logic, a treaty cannot be binding on those who had not given their mandate for its negotiation. Still, *fides* is here shown to be more of a handicap, instead of a reputation to live up to and even transcend.

In most historical *exempla* in which *fides* plays an important part, however, it does exactly this: it transcends expectations, ordinary rules of conduct, and formal allegiances. The border-transcending quality of *pistis/fides* is not only apparent from the divergent and even hostile parties involved in a *fides* relationship; it is also a consequence of the conception of *pistis/fides* as a virtue. For as such, its performance always implies striving beyond the ordinary towards perfection. It is important to realize, in the words of Hellegouarc'h, that

it does not strictly belong to the legal domain, but to the moral and above all social domain and is linked to other equally moral values such as Concordia, Virtus, Pietas, Pudor, Iustitia, which have also been deified. (Hellegouarc'h 1972 [1963], 27)<sup>120</sup>

Likewise, Marc de Wilde connects Roman *fides* to the 'exceptional': 'Although *fides* also applies to normal situations, (...) it becomes visible only, or most clearly, in exceptional circumstances, when laws or covenants are lacking.'<sup>121</sup> Faith is a moral quality that transcends the realm of law: it is particularly relevant in cases where the law cannot offer a solution.

Looking back, the same argument was in fact already made in the 1920s, when Richard Heinze wrote that *fides* 'actually has nothing to do with the law'. He continues: 'The essence of the moral bond implies that no state order guarantees its observance.'<sup>122</sup> This is why even the juridical *fidei commissum* I discussed earlier (§7.2.1) is an escape route aimed at providing precisely what the law cannot guarantee by means of trust: that the heritage will fall

120 'Elle n'appartient pas de façon stricte au domaine juridique, mais au domaine moral et surtout social et se rattache à d'autres valeurs également morales comme Concordia, Virtus, Pietas, Pudor, Iustitia, qui ont été elles aussi divinisées.'

121 De Wilde 2011, 460.

122 Heinze 1928, 159: 'Wenn ich das ursprüngliche Wesen der *fides* richtig bestimmt habe, so ist es begreiflich, daß sie eigentlich mit dem Recht nichts zu tun hat' and 'Das Wesen der sittlichen Bindung schließt in sich, daß keine staatliche Ordnung ihre Einhaltung garantiert.' Cf. at 165: 'nicht das Gesetz wacht über ihr: wohl aber das Auge der Mitbürger.'

into the intended hands. Faith, understood as a moral bond or a virtue, is not merely loyalty to oaths and treaties or following prescribed requirements, but it exceeds by its nature such formal arrangements in its effort to do justice to, or even create by itself, a relationship of trust.<sup>123</sup>

Consequently, a diachronic and rather monolithic semantic approach to *fides*, such as the influential one taken a century ago by Eduard Fraenkel, might miss this essential point (on Heinze and Fraenkel, see also §1.2.1 above). While Fraenkel acknowledges that it may have been a virtue from the beginning (even though the ‘moral indifferent’ meaning also existed), he pleads for a more juridical meaning in republican times: ‘Guarantee in the broadest sense, (...) a certain legal relationship between people.’<sup>124</sup> He then argues for a development towards a more encompassing and active virtue of trust and faith in imperial times. Yet, by reducing or relating all uses of *fides* in the republican period to the meaning of ‘guarantee’, his analysis does not sufficiently account for the uncertainty it negotiates and the bridging, relational virtue it represents, also in this period, precisely by transcending the level of formalities, treaties, laws, and guaranties.<sup>125</sup> Even if, and this is far from certain, the original meaning of *pistis/fides* or its shared root *\*bheidh* was that of a non-moral bond, the discourse in our period certainly treats it as deeply moral and transcending formal bonds.

123 This element of perfectionism is also one of the important conclusions of John Barry's thesis (2005) on *fides* in Julius Caesar's *Bellum Civile*. See esp. p. 26: ‘In other words, an individual's *fides* is often seen as exceptionally distinguished by our sources because the person in question acted with regard for justice in situations when he was either not obliged to do so by virtue of a sworn covenant or other prior agreement (or even by shared morality, conventionally understood), or when it was difficult for him to do so. To put it another way, a morality seen as based on *fides* might be perfectionist in its leanings.’ Cf. Grimal 1974, 147–148: ‘On peut dire que Fides est une catégorie à la fois sociale et morale, la permanence dans un type de conduite et, en même temps, en l'absence de détermination particulière du contenu de cette conduite, un rapport social “de base”, auquel on reste fidèle.’

124 Fraenkel 1916, 187 (translation mine): ‘Als Grundbedeutung von *fides* geben die Lexica von Freund, Klotz, Georges übereinstimmend an “Vertrauen, Zutrauen, Glaube” desgleichen Walde (...). Sonst heisst *fides* in der republikanischen Literatur durchaus: Gewähr, Bürgschaft, Versprechen, Zuverlässigkeit, Treue, Glaubwürdigkeit; bezeichnet also alles, worauf man sich verlassen kann, Garantie im weitesten Sinne, sei es dass sie in einem Akte, einer Versicherung, einem bestimmten rechtlichen Verhältnis von Personen zu einander, oder in einer Eigenschaft von Menschen oder Dingen gründet.’

125 See e.g. Fraenkel 1916, 196–197. Since my sources mostly pertain to this later period, such a diachronic development in the use of *fides* cannot be ruled out. Cf. however, for criticism of this position, Heinze 1928, 147 (‘“Moralisch indifferent” kann danach *fides* ursprünglich in keinem Fall gewesen sein’); Freyburger 1986, 20–21; Morgan 2015, 5.

This is evident from situations in which there are no formal treaties between Rome and an enemy power, as in the perhaps even more famous anecdote recounted by Plutarch and Livy of the ‘schoolmaster of Falerii’ set in the early fourth century BC.<sup>126</sup> Camillus, the Roman commander who besieged the city of Falerii, had sent the treacherous schoolmaster, who brought him the children of Faliscan aristocrats, back in disgrace, unwilling to accept his offer to coerce victory. In the interactions between the Roman commander Camillus and the people of the city of Falerii, the town he besieged, the virtue emphasized by Livy is *fides*. Of Camillus it was said that ‘he had conquered his enemies by justice and fair-dealing’ (*iustitia fideque hostibus victis*).<sup>127</sup> Livy also has the Faliscans state the following to the Roman senate:

We give ourselves into your hands, believing nothing can be more honourable to a victor that we shall be better off under your government than under our own laws. The outcome of this war has afforded the human race two wholesome precedents: you have set fair-dealing in war (*vos fidem in bello*) above immediate victory; and we, challenged by your fair-dealing (*fide provocati*), have freely granted you that victory. (...) Neither shall you be disappointed in our fidelity nor we in your rule (*Nec vos fidei nostrae nec nos imperii vestri paenitebit*). (Livy, *History of Rome* 5.27.12–15)

The *fides* of Camillus thus led to a promise of *fides* by the Faliscans. They exchanged their own laws and independence for Roman *fides*, which was shown to outshine these. By acknowledging Roman *fides*, they were transformed from enemies into something in-between allies and subjects.

In this episode of Roman narrative identity, *fides* is not only presented as part of Rome’s core virtues, it is also further defined as reaching beyond what laws, pledges, and treaties require, beyond legalism. Camillus himself had answered the schoolmaster: ‘between us and the Faliscans is no fellowship

126 For Plutarch’s account, see Plutarch, *Camillus* 10.1–7. Plutarch does not emphasize *pistis* so much, but speaks of Camillus’s virtue and the virtue of justice in particular: ‘Standing in the Senate, they declared that the Romans, by esteeming righteousness above victory (τῆς νίκης τὴν δικαιοσύνην προτιμήσαντες), had taught them to love defeat above freedom; not so much because they thought themselves inferior in strength, as because they confessed themselves vanquished in virtue (ἡττᾶσθαι τῆς ἀρετῆς)’ (Plutarch, *Camillus* 10.7.). Valerius Maximus emphasizes that the Faliscans were ‘[v]anquished by benefaction rather than by arms (*beneficio magis quam armis*)’ (Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 5.1a).

127 Livy, *History of Rome* 5.28.1.

founded on men's covenants (*quae pacto fit humano societas*); but the fellowship which nature has implanted in both sides (*quam ingeneravit natura*) is there and will abide.<sup>128</sup> Roman *fides* thus appears to have been culturally conceived of as a relational virtue that was enacted precisely in situations where formal moral guidelines were absent or lacking, thus exceeding expectations and overcoming former hostility. In anticipation of the next sections on Paul, I cannot fail to note already the relevance of this Roman conception of faith as exceeding the demands of law (see §7.4.4 *infra*).

This moral perfectionism when it comes to being found trustworthy is also a central theme across the examples Valerius Maximus presents under the heading of 'De Fide Publica' in his collection *Memorable Doings and Sayings*. In the preface of this section, Valerius makes an intricate connection between the goddess, the virtue, Rome, and all nations:

When her image is set before our eyes the venerable divinity of Faith (*venerabile Fidei numen*) displays her right hand, the most certain pledge of human welfare (*certissimum salutis humanae pignus*). That she has always flourished in our community (*in nostra civitate*) all nations have perceived (*et omnes gentes senserunt*); let us recall it with a few examples. (Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 6.6.praef)

The examples Valerius mentions emphasize Rome's benevolence in the guardianship of Ptolemy's son in 201 BC, in the reception of and unwillingness to detain Carthage's general Hanno or in the release of a ship full of distinguished Carthaginians who claimed to be on a diplomatic mission.<sup>129</sup> Remarkably, five out of the seven anecdotes included by Valerius in this chapter concern the Punic wars, which evidently function as the ideal (and idealized) setting for Roman *fides* and allow Rome's allies to shine amidst Carthaginian perfidy. In the chapter on *perfidia* (faithlessness) Hannibal is dubbed 'the very fountain of faithlessness (*ipsum fontem perfidiae*)', and the rhetorical question is raised whether he, 'professing to make war against the Roman people and Italy, did (...) not wage it more fiercely against good faith itself (*adversus ipsam fidem acrius gessit*), revelling in lies and deceit as in fine arts.'<sup>130</sup>

*Punica fides* appears to be Roman idiom for faithlessness or playing two sides from the first century BC onwards. Ironically, Hannibal, the prototype of

128 Livy, *History of Rome* 5.27.6.

129 Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 6.6.1, 6.6.2, 6.6.4 respectively.

130 Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 9.6.ext.1 and 9.6.ext.2 respectively.

the vice of faithlessness, is derided for his ‘more than Punic faithlessness’ in this vivid portrait by Livy:

His cruelty was inhuman, his perfidy worse than Punic (*inhumana crudelitas perfidia plus quam Punica*); he had no regard for truth, and none for sanctity, no fear of the gods, no reverence for an oath, no religious scruple (*nihil veri nihil sancti, nullus deum metus nullum ius iurandum nulla religio*). (Livy, *History of Rome* 21.4.9–10)

As we saw in the previous section, the perfidy of Hannibal is explained in civic-religious terms of oaths, sanctity, fear of the gods, and religious duty. Just as *fides* was considered a civic-religious virtue, *perfidia* was seen as a civic-religious vice. In Sallust’s *The War with Jugurtha* (*De bello Iugurthino*) we find the remark: ‘But I find that it was more with Punic faith (*magis Punica fide*) than for the reasons he made public that Bocchus kept both the Roman and the Numidian on tenterhooks with the hope of peace.’<sup>131</sup> The episode of Roman history described here concerns the early career of quaestor Sulla (‘the Roman’), who, by order of Roman consul Marius, captures Bocchus’s son Jugurtha (‘the Numidian’), in league with the latter’s father-in-law king Bocchus, who feared his son-in-law’s betrayal. In doing so, Sulla took a risk, for it was not certain that Bocchus would keep faith with Rome. In Plutarch’s words:

Sulla imparted the matter to Mari[u]s, and taking with him a few soldiers, underwent the greatest peril; he put faith in a Barbarian, and one who was faithless towards his own relations (ὄτι βαρβάρῳ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκειστάτους ἀπίστῳ πιστεύσας), and to secure his surrender of another, placed himself in his hands. (Plutarch, *Sulla* 3.3)

Trusting a ‘barbarian’ is here presented as a considerable risk, particularly if that foreigner betrays the trust of his own family by securing this bond. Trusting one’s own family comes naturally, yet ideal *pistis* reaches beyond this sphere. It was eventually a risk worth taking though, as Sulla was able to cash in on this (there actually were coins made remembering the event). According to Plutarch he annoyed Marius by wearing a seal-ring depicting the surrender (3.4).

<sup>131</sup> Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha* 108.3. Cf. Livy, *History of Rome* 30.30.27 and, though less literal, 22.6.12; Florus, *Epitome of Roman History* 2.2. See on this stereotype Starks 1999. Cf. for *Graeca fides* Plautus, *Asinaria* 198; Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 12.13.

Nevertheless, the contrast between the faithful Romans and the faithless Numidians or Carthaginians is not always this straightforward. The expression of 'Punic faith' does not preclude the possibility of specific Carthaginians representing Roman virtues such as *pietas* or even appealing to the *fides* of the gods, as the character of Hanno in Plautus's *Poenulus* demonstrates.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, as we have seen, the *Aeneid* also subtly reverses this stereotype by depicting Aeneas ironically as the faithless hero who is accused of perfidy by Carthage's queen.

In Silius Italicus's *Punica*, an epic from the Flavian period I already referred to several times, the concept of *fides* as the typical Roman virtue set in opposition to the Carthaginian variant is also problematized, though in a different respect. The ideal of *fides* runs as a theme through the entire poem.<sup>133</sup> The Romans themselves are addressed as 'sanctified people of illustrious faith' (*sacrata gens clara fide*).<sup>134</sup> More recent scholarship, however, has also found that Silius seems to find the Romans lacking in this very quality, and that, as such, it may be read as criticizing the degeneration of Roman *fides*, both during the Second Punic war and by extension in the present, under Flavian rule.<sup>135</sup> Hannibal, on the one side, remains the unambiguous counterpart to Roman faith: his hatred and vengeful zeal for the complete annihilation of Rome renders his *fides* to this cause a kind of anti-*fides*.<sup>136</sup> 'By nature he was eager for action and faithless to his plighted word (*fideique sinister*)', as he is introduced by Silius.<sup>137</sup> His faithlessness pertains as much to humans as to the gods, as is shown by his declaration of war on the Saguntines in impious and sacrilegious terms: "Decrees of the Senate," he cried, "law and justice, faith and the gods (*patrum et leges et iura fidemque deosque*), are all in my hand now."<sup>138</sup> On the other side, Rome seems to be playing a more ambiguous role, whose inaction and lack of feeling when it comes to aiding Saguntum, the

132 Plautus, *Poenulus* 967: 'Immortal gods, I implore your protection (*opsecro vostram fidem*)!' This more nuanced view of the supposed Carthaginian stereotype is an important contribution argued for in Gruen 2012, chapter 4: 'Punica Fides' (105–140), esp. 127–128 on Hanno.

133 This was first acknowledged in Von Albrecht 1964, 55–86. See also Hartmann 2004, 153.

134 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 1.634.

135 For an overview of this more recent scholarly direction, see Pomeroy 2010, 59–61.

136 This has been persuasively argued in Fucecchi 2019.

137 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 1.56–57.

138 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 1.303–304. The religious aspect of Hannibal's breach of *fides* and the broader interrelatedness of *fides* and *pietas* in the *Punica* is discussed in Marks 2019. The author concludes, 'The alignment of *fides* and *pietas* in Scipio and his divine father and their shared opposition to Hannibal, the epic's most conspicuous example of *perfidia* and *impietas*, cohere well with this historicizing interpretation of the poem. As other



‘famous home of Loyalty’, is telling, especially when comparing Silius’s account to Livy’s.<sup>139</sup> Just as we saw before in Cicero, Regulus is referred to as the prototypical Roman hero, ‘whose fame ever increases with the passage of time, and of whom it will never be forgotten, that he kept faith with the faithless Carthaginians (*infidis servasse fidem memorabere Poenis*).’<sup>140</sup> When it comes to Regulus, however, emphasis is placed on the plight of Marcia, his wife:

‘See him! He boasts of keeping faith with the enemy (*hosti servare fidem*) and the abominable people of Libya. But where is now the compact made with me, and the troth you plighted at our marriage (*promissa fides thalamis*), unfaithful husband (*perfide*)?’ These were the last words that reached the inflexible ear of Regulus; the rest was drowned by the plashing of the oars. (Silius Italicus, *Punica* 6.516–520)

Regulus, the Roman hero of faith, is here accused of faithlessness. While it is not clear whether there is enough reason to suppose an intended reference here to Dido’s complaint to Aeneas—the intertextual connection with Cato’s wife Marcia as depicted by Lucian is much clearer—this scene presents us with a very similar discussion about the nature of Roman *fides*.<sup>141</sup> Again, the bridging capital of the virtue of trustworthiness is foregrounded by a Roman hero at the expense of the bonding capital: public *fides* to an enemy trumps marital *fides*.<sup>142</sup>

In all these examples, then, *fides* designates the bond of trust between more or less sovereign enemy powers, manifested in treaties, epigraphy, or public oaths or not manifested at all, but always ideally exceeding formal requirements and deemed sacrosanct by the Roman people. These ‘powers’ may not have been of equal strength—indeed, in the early days, Rome seems to have been the Calimero—yet the terms were not those of an imperial superpower

---

contributions show, *fides* was a critically important concept for the Flavians, who were establishing their rule in the wake of civil war’ (at 181).

139 For the citation, see Silius Italicus, *Punica* 1.598. The Saguntine envoy that was sent to Rome to ‘lament our loyalty (*deflete fidem*) and our crumbling walls, and bring us better fortune from our ancient home’ (1.571–572), is not successful.

140 Silius Italicus, *Punica* 6.63–64. On Regulus as a prototype of *fides* in the *Punica*, see Fröhlich 2000.

141 On the intertextuality in this passage, cf. Augoustakis 2010, chapter 3: ‘Comes ultima fati: Regulus’ Encounter with Marcia’s Otherness in *Punica* 6’ (156–195), esp. 171, n. 37; also Pomeroy 2010, 70.

142 Cf. Pomeroy 2010, 70: ‘the effect is more to strengthen the picture of Roman resolve on the part of Regulus.’

versus minor periphery states. Of course, by the time these histories were written, the circumstances were more than reversed. The message of historians such as Dionysius and Livy is that honouring their terms when they were the lesser party allowed Rome to become as powerful as it then was.

The question this leaves us with is whether Roman *fides* still carried the same implications for conquered people, regions, and nations. Was this sphere of good faith conceived of as providing an honest, trustworthy deal between powers that recognized each other's sovereignty, or could it have been perceived as a forced, unsought, ironic 'benevolence', with uncertainty as to what could be expected? Was *fides Romana* treated with as much scepticism and irony abroad as its Punic variant was in Rome? And, consequentially, does 'faith' of itself in the mouth of a first-century Jew carry anti-imperial potential? To give something of an answer, we need to delve deeper into the domestic system of patronage and benefaction (§7.3.3) that was intertwined with the ideology of foreign policy and empire (§7.3.4) and scaled up to the imperial level in the first century BC (§7.3.5). For while *fides* remained an important civic virtue in late-republican and early imperial times, the discourse in which it partakes seems to shift in emphasis from the formal language of oaths and treaties between more or less equal partners to the more subjective realm of asymmetrical benefaction and grace.<sup>143</sup>

### 7.3.3 *Asymmetry and Reciprocity in Domestic Faith-Relationships: Benefaction, Friendship, Slavery, and Patronage*

If we consider social conventions in the days of the early Roman empire compared to those in present-day societies, the major difference can be captured in one word: patronage. Western democracy developed an important distinction between private and the public actions. The former are shaped by particularistic, personal concerns, whereas the latter are determined by the ideal of objective, universalistic considerations. Whereas favouritism and nepotism are strongly rejected in the contemporary Western world, the Roman system of civic patronage was the backbone of both public and private benefaction.<sup>144</sup> Roman officials were not only allowed but expected to share their good fortune with friends, for instance by helping them out of (financial) trouble or

143 Though cf. on the continued use of *pistis/fides* language in documentary papyri to indicate mutual trust in (probably more symmetrical) economical exchanges: Arzt-Grabner 2017, 246–248.

144 See, e.g., Saller 1982, 30–32.

providing them with opportunities to acquire honour as administrators or ambassadors.<sup>145</sup>

Benefaction in private and public capacities played an important role in a wide variety of relationships, yet particularly in those designated by language of *amicitia* (friendship) and *patrocinium-clientela* (patron-client relationship). Definitions of the latter often include the following elements: it is a voluntary, long-term relationship, with asymmetry between the two parties in wealth and/or status, aimed at a reciprocal exchange of goods, services, and symbolic resources, which may take place over a longer period (you can be in someone's debt for some time).<sup>146</sup> Or, in the words of Jerome Neyrey, who summarizes a list of characteristics, collected by comparing several accounts of anthropologists and historians:<sup>147</sup>

Human benefactor–client relationships tend to be asymmetrical, reciprocal, voluntary, often including favoritism, focused on honor and respect, and held together by ‘good will’ or faithfulness. (Neyrey 2005, 251)<sup>148</sup>

I will return to the element of faithfulness shortly. Based on these definitions, it is possible to surmise that, in general, patron-client relationships seem to be distinguished from friendships by the difference in status between both partners (asymmetry) and the criterion of usefulness, in other words, the obliga-

---

145 See Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* 808B: ‘For the principles that govern a statesman’s conduct (...) make it possible for him, after he has once made the chief public interests safe, out of his abundant resources to assist his friends, take his stand beside them, and help them out of their troubles. (...) And there are also favours which arouse no ill-will, such as aiding a friend to gain an office, putting into his hands some honourable administrative function or some friendly foreign mission’, also referred to by Saller (1982, 31).

146 Cf. Malina 2001, 31: ‘At the core of the patron-client relationship lie three basic factors that define and differentiate it from other power relationships that occur between individuals or groups. These are unequal status, reciprocity, and proximity.’

147 He mainly builds on Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984 (43–64, esp. 48–49), but includes views from Gellner & Waterbury 1977, 4; Saller 1982, 1–2, 21, 27–29; Rich 1989, 128; Saller 1989, 52–53; Veyne 1990, 124–130.

148 Cf. for an almost verbally similar sentence also Georgiev 2008, 26, whose text in this section seems to heavily depend on Neyrey’s article, apparently without any acknowledgement.

tional instead of affectional overtone of the relationship.<sup>149</sup> Unfortunately, as may be expected, the borderline was considerably vaguer in real Roman life.

It is difficult to draw a line between what a Roman would consider to be patron-client relationships and friendships. According to most modern standards, the ideal of true friendship implies personal affection, equality of both parties, and the absence of direct ‘usefulness’ or the demanding expectations of returning favours. To what extent these factors are important to the Roman variant is debated. David Konstan, for instance, has argued for the importance of affection and equality in ancient friendship relationships and has thereby emphasized the minor difference in the ancient and modern variant when it comes to expectations of favour and support.<sup>150</sup> If we take one example of how friendship was conceived of, we can at least show that mutual support and services were not considered to be unbecoming a friendship:

In matters in which we ourselves are unable to take a personal part, the faith of our friends is substituted for our own exertions (*in iis operae nostrae vicaria fides amicorum supponitur*); and one who violates this faith attacks what is the common safeguard of all, and, as far as it is in his power, ruins all social life. For we cannot do everything by ourselves; each has his part to play, in which he can be more useful than others. That is why friendships (*amicitiae*) are formed—that the common interest may be furthered by mutual services (*mutuis officiis*). (Cicero, *Pro Roscio* 111)

Here, Cicero deems the exchange of mutual services an essential part of friendship, and this element in particular is designated as *fides*.<sup>151</sup> As for equality, this ideal seems to have been included in Roman conceptions of friendship as well.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, this equality was sought and expressed in the insig-

149 See e.g. Winterling 2009, 35: ‘While friendship can be understood as an egalitarian form of interpersonal relations requiring a symmetrical structure, that is, a certain equality between those involved, patron-client relationships are characterized by hierarchy, inequality of the participants, and an asymmetrical structure.’

150 See Konstan 1997, 148: ‘Ideas of friendship were adapted to different practices, but the core sense of a private bond based on mutual affection, esteem, and liberality—within the capabilities of the respective partners—abided.’ He specifically responds to Gelzer 1912, who classifies both patronage, friendship, and hospitality under the heading of ‘Nah- und Treuverhältnisse’ that are not primarily based on affection.

151 Konstan (1997), however, rightly comments upon this passage that ‘Cicero is here explaining the social function of friendship in general, not reducing particular attachments to utilitarian motives’ (130). Affection and obligation were not mutually exclusive.

152 See, again, Konstan, who responds to counterarguments in Konstan 2010, 238–239 (arguing against the opposite views in Raccanelli 1998, 20 and Herman 2006, 36).

nificance, not in the absence, of differences in social and economic status.<sup>153</sup> Consequently, the social reality behind *patrocinium-clientela* and *amicitia* language could be very much alike, and the semantic fields overlap: 'like *amicitia*, the *patrocinium-clientela* bond implied *benignitas*, *fides*, and *gratia*. Inevitably, the borderline between *patrocinium-clientela* and *amicitia* remained much less than clear-cut.<sup>154</sup> When it comes to self-definition of asymmetrical relationships, the language of friendship was often preferred to the explicit language of patronage, which had the stronger implication of asymmetry and dependence.

Social scientific studies need to apply distinct categories and definitions to properly map different phenomena. David Konstan thus aims to keep such a clear distinction between patronage, characterized by asymmetry or inequality, and friendship, characterized by symmetry or equality. Yet, since our methodological starting point is the language involved, this analysis will be aimed at the broader and multifarious social phenomena behind the terminology of both friendship and patronage. Because both relationships are said to involve *pistis/fides* in combination with distinct terms that indicate a shared semantic domain, no clear-cut distinctions are warranted.<sup>155</sup> However, the element of dependence and asymmetry will be foregrounded in our account, because it plays such a crucial role in discussions about Paul's participation in anti-imperial discourse.

As for the origins of the system of patronage, it existed in different configurations across the ancient Mediterranean world.<sup>156</sup> Roman historians, however, trace its particular origin to the utopian earliest days of Rome. Romulus himself is said to have instituted it, as an improved, emancipated form of Greek custom:

---

153 Verboven 2011, 413: 'The principle of equality in friendship, then, did not imply social or political equality, but the effective irrelevance of such inequalities. Thus, *amicitia* and *clientela* were not mutually exclusive, but the language of friendship was preferable to that of patronage, which implied inferiority and dependency.'

154 Verboven 2011, 413.

155 Cf. Morgan 2015, 118: '*Pistis/fides*, as we have seen, is one of the key qualities that characterize the relationships of wives and husbands, parents and children, master and slaves, patrons and clients, subjects and rulers, armies and commanders, friends, allies, fellow-human beings, gods and worshippers, and even fellow-animals. What is more, the semantic range of both lexica means that they can capture with great subtlety the symbiosis between these relationships, whether symmetrical or asymmetric.'

156 Even though the technical Roman language is lacking, the relations are of a more temporary nature and the obligations are not legally defined, classical Athens also knew patronage, usually denoted as *philia*, in private and public spheres. Such is the conclusion of Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz (2000).

He [i.e. Romulus] placed the plebeians as a trust in the hands of the patricians, by allowing every plebeian to choose for his patron any patrician whom he himself wished. In this he improved upon an ancient Greek custom that was in use among the Thessalians for a long time and among the Athenians in the beginning. For the former treated their clients with haughtiness, imposing on them duties unbecoming to free men; and whenever they disobeyed any of their commands, they beat them and misused them in all other respects as if they had been slaves they had purchased. The Athenians called their clients *thêtes* or 'hirelings', because they served for hire, and the Thessalians called theirs *penestai* or 'toilers', by the very name reproaching them with their condition. But Romulus not only recommended the relationship by a handsome designation, calling this protection of the poor and lowly a 'patronage' (πατρωνείαν ὀνομάσας), but he also assigned friendly offices to both parties, thus making the connexion between them a bond of kindness befitting fellow citizens. (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.9.2–3)

By contrasting the Roman variant with Greek systems of patronage, Dionysius of Halicarnassus thus emphasizes the agency and respectable position of clients, the voluntary nature of the patron-client relationship and the affection it expresses between citizens of different social strata. In the following, Dionysius even compares the enduring relationships between patron-families and client-families to blood-relationships and praises the uncorrupted character of the institution:

It is incredible how great the contest of goodwill (ὁ (...) ἀγὼν τῆς εὐνοίας) was between the patrons and clients, as each side strove not to be outdone by the other in favours (χάριτος ἔκτοπος ἡλίκος ἀμφοτέροις ἦν), the clients feeling that they should render all possible services to their patrons and the patrons wishing by all means not to occasion any trouble to their clients and accepting no gifts of money. (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.10.4)

This rosy picture receives various qualifications in present-day scholarship. Whereas the functionalist approach emphasizes the manner in which patronage served the interests of the inferior clients by providing social security and stabilizing the tensions between social strata, Marxist evaluations highlight how patronage camouflages oppression and injustice by euphemisms

and by propagating the ethos of gratitude.<sup>157</sup> In fact, the latter deconstructive perspective on patronage mirrors a similar movement that questions the underlying assumptions in ‘empire’ discourse—a connection that, as we shall see in the next section, is strengthened by the usage of patronage vocabulary in political contexts. Whichever perspective one opts for, it is good to take into account that in practice, patron-client relationships only bridged limited differences in social and economic status. The urban elite did not confer personally with the urban poor; instead, benefactions slowly cascaded down the socio-economic levels.<sup>158</sup>

There is another relationship characterized by asymmetry, which was omnipresent in both private and public space in the Graeco-Roman world: slavery. Whether slaves were living in the loftiest or most depraved circumstances, the relationship to their master was characterized by its involuntariness. Therefore, if *pistis/fides* and cognates are used in the context of such a relationship, it is surprising that most often the faithfulness of slaves, rather than the fragility or the risks of trusting in slaves, is emphasized.<sup>159</sup> It seems to be a classic topos that even in times of the greatest crisis, slaves exceeded all expectations in demonstrating their loyalty. In the words of Valerius Maximus, who spends an entire chapter on the fidelity of slaves, a ‘fidelity the more praiseworthy as the less expected’ (*quo minus exspectatam hoc laudabiliorem fidem*).<sup>160</sup> Even Tacitus, who starts off rather pessimistic in his narration of the year of the four emperors, manages to praise the virtue of exemplary slaves amidst all corruption:

Slaves were corrupted against their masters, freedmen against their patrons; and those who had no enemy were crushed by their friends. Yet this age was not so barren of virtue that it did not display noble examples. Mothers accompanied their children in flight; wives followed their husbands into exile; relatives displayed courage, sons-in-law firmness, slaves a fidelity which defied even torture (*contumax etiam adversus tormenta servorum fides*). (Tacitus, *Histories* 1.2–3)

<sup>157</sup> For an evaluation of both approaches, see Saller 1982, 37–38.

<sup>158</sup> An exception to this rule is found in the role of high-standard patrons to *collegia*: *collegia* functioned to promote not only the well-being of their members, but also presented them with the opportunity to share in their patron’s social status and in the civic values he represents. See on this subject Garnsey & Saller 1997, 101–102; Van Nijf 2003.

<sup>159</sup> Morgan 2015, 51; on *pistis/fides* among masters and slaves in general, see 51–54. On the virtue of faithfulness and slaves, cf. the papyri cited in Arzt-Grabner 2017, 245.

<sup>160</sup> Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 6.8.praef.

Though we cannot, due to the one-sided perspective and limited scope of our sources, estimate the frequency of exemplary faithfulness from slaves towards masters, we do know that it was enough for a moral philosopher such as Seneca to reflect on the possibility of a slave bestowing a benefit.<sup>161</sup> Seneca does not deem the involuntary, asymmetrical nature of the relationship much of an obstacle to such reciprocity in benefits. He offers several colourful examples of generous loyalty of slaves and concludes that ‘a benefit does not cease to be a benefit because it proceeded from a slave, but is all the greater on that account, because he could not be deterred from it even by being a slave.’<sup>162</sup> Indeed, when he contrasts *fides* with servitude, it is not in a context of actual slavery but in an argument about the ultimate gift to ‘the man who has it all’: ‘Do you not see how such persons are driven to destruction by the absence of frankness and the substitution of cringing obsequiousness for loyalty (*fides in obsequium servile submissa*)?’<sup>163</sup> So rather than slavery, flattery stands in the way of a sincere *fides*-relationship. ‘Slavish obedience’ is the opposite of *fides*, yet it is an attitude anyone can adopt.

A possible conclusion that might be drawn from this stereotype of the faithful slave is that it serves to idealize this relationship between master and slave and thus ease the social tension or revolutionary potential stirred by its asymmetry. In practice, however, the existence of *pistis/fides* towards a master and the importance of it to a master suggest that here, too, the relationship knows a certain reciprocity and therefore a balance in power. The reciprocity which, as I already established, was inherent to public faith characterizes even the most asymmetrical relationships and influences the distribution of power and agency in such relationships. In the words of Teresa Morgan:

The inescapable reciprocity of *pistis/fides* means that within relationships of *pistis/fides*, power (encompassing all kinds of status and authority) never runs all one way. (...) it inflects social relations as powerfully as it is inflected by them. The power in slavery, for instance, may, in law,

---

161 Seneca also offers an eloquently phrased example of a slave taking the place of his proscribed master in the setting of the Civil Wars: Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.25.1: ‘What a hero!—to wish to die in place of a master in times when not to wish a master to die was a rare show of loyalty (*quo rara erat fides dominum mori nolle*); to be found kind when the state was cruel, faithful when it was treacherous (*in publica perfidia fidelem*); to covet death as a reward for loyalty (*praemium fidei mortem concupiscere*) in face of the huge rewards that are offered for disloyalty!’

162 Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.19.4.

163 Seneca, *On Benefits* 6.30.3–5.



belong with the owner, but *pistis/fides* is one of the reasons why in social practice it cannot. (Morgan 2015, 53)<sup>164</sup>

Within the context of a prototypical slave-master relationship, then, there is a potential of reciprocal trust and trustworthiness which serves more to redistribute power rather than to affirm the status-quo.

Within the system of patronage, *pistis* and *fides* function even more prominently, sometimes denoting the trust clients have placed in their patron, but also often emphasizing the actual or expected attitude of the *patronus* or describing the relationship as a whole.<sup>165</sup> In his analysis of Roman friendship, Koenraad Verboven pays particular attention to key words involved, viz. *benevolentia* (goodwill), *benignitas* (kindness, generosity), *gratia* (goodwill, kindness), *fides* (trust, good faith), *amor* (affection, love), and *existimatio* (reputation).<sup>166</sup> *Fides*, he argues, expressed in particular the trust and solidarity involved in the length of time separating the bestowal of a gift and the reception of a counter-gift. It thus signified the enduring bond between people which was at given points in time reified by actual gift exchange. As such, it can only be explained from within this nexus of friendship terminology:

In the context of friendship, *fides* denoted the faith friends had in each other's *benignitas* and *gratia*. Conversely, *fides* implied solidarity, which had to be shown by acts of kindness that in turn generated *gratia*. *Fides* guaranteed that obligations were upheld. Therefore, any *beneficium* signified *fides*, as well as *benignitas* and/or *gratia*. (Verboven 2011, 409)

164 In the following lines, however, Morgan notes that the sources 'shy away' from emphasizing such reciprocity in strongly asymmetrical relationships, as we find no references to the *pistis/fides* of both parties in one text.

165 The importance of the *fides* word group in this context is commonly recognized in scholarly literature: see e.g. Gelzer 1912, 116; Hellegouarc'h 1972 [1963], 28–35; Freyburger 1986, 149–160; Verboven 2011, 409. Strangely enough, in his monograph on Roman patronage (1982), Richard Sellar discusses various key terms, yet he opts to leave out *fides* for two reasons: '(1) the most frequent meanings of the word in the literature from the Principate are "honesty" or "credibility", which do not imply the existence of a social exchange relationship; (2) the importance of the moral aspect of the patronage relationship is very difficult to evaluate' (p. 8, n. 3). Notwithstanding her 'social' approach to *pistis/fides*, Teresa Morgan does not elaborately discuss patronage relationships: she observes that *pistis/fides* in this context is less well attested than we might expect (see Morgan 2015, 61–62).

166 Verboven 2011, 407–411.

According to this description, instead of a (Reformation-like) contrast between faith and reciprocal services, the exchange and expectation of such *beneficiae* is the one and only manifestation of *fides*.

A specific expression commonly used from the perspective of the client, yet in which *fides* denotes the attitude of the patron or relationship as a whole, was '*se in fidem dare*': clients were committing themselves to a trust-relationship with the patron or putting themselves into a patron's trust. John Rich comments upon this meaning of *fides* in the context of patronage in the Roman republic:

In one of the most important of its many uses *fides* means 'protection'. The weaker party is said 'to be in the *fides*' of the stronger. At the formation of such a relationship, the weaker party is said to give himself into or entrust to the *fides* of the stronger and the stronger to receive the weaker in his *fides*. (Rich 1989, 128)

Thus, by committing themselves to the patron's *fides*, and by the patron's acceptance in his *fides*, a client ended up 'being in the *fides*' of his patron. In this case, the *fides* in question is that of the patron. This technical terminology is indeed often chosen in our sources to describe the system of *patrocinium*.

The second-century author Aulus Gellius, for instance, speaks of the duty towards one's clients, 'who also had committed themselves to our *fides* and guardianship (*qui sese itidem in fidem patrociniumque nostrum dediderunt*)', a duty that comes after duty towards parents and wards but before guests and relations by blood and marriage.<sup>167</sup> The priority of *fides* in patron-client relationships is even considered to be the most preeminent and sacrosanct virtue of the Roman people, as we learn from Gellius's discussion of the fifth-century BC Law of the Twelve Tables:

It was by the exercise and cultivation of all the virtues that the Roman people sprang from a lowly origin to such a height of greatness, but most of all and in particular they cultivated good faith and regarded it as sacred, whether public or private (*sed omnium maxime atque praecipue fidem coluit sanctamque habuit tam privatim quam publice*). Thus for the purpose of vindicating the public good faith it surrendered its consuls, most distinguished men, to the enemy (*hostibus confirmandae fidei publicae causa dedidit*), thus it maintained that a client taken under a

---

<sup>167</sup> Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 5.13.2.

man's protection (*clientem in fidem acceptum*) should be held dearer than his relatives and protected against his own kindred, nor was any crime thought to be worse than if anyone was convicted of having defrauded a client. This degree of faith (*Hanc autem fidem*) our forefathers ordained, not only in public functions, but also in private contracts. (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 20.1.39–41)<sup>168</sup>

Gellius thus thematizes the private importance of *fides* in the patronage system, together with its role in keeping up interstate allegiances. In both cases, sacrifices to one's own people, consuls, or relatives are to be made in order to 'keep the faith'. The Law of the Twelve Tables hence protected the rights of clients, once they had been accepted (*in fidem acceptum*) by a patron.

A patron who had thus accepted this relationship needed to perform all the duties that were considered part of his/her role (*fidem praestare*).<sup>169</sup> These duties were traced back to Romulus and Jupiter and thus deemed sacred.<sup>170</sup> In his contribution to the discussion on the semantics of *fides*, Heinze focuses in particular on the patron's function in the context of judiciary representation of clients:

The patron, however, does not simply offer a service as a friend, but if one appeals to his *fides*, it is called *fidem praestare*; his own person is involved, and his own reputation rises or falls with the success or failure of the defense, which is why his work for the client is by no means limited to speech; but in this, too, he not only brings arguments, but also invests his whole self. (Heinze 1928, 158)<sup>171</sup>

Hence, there is a profound fusion of interests, risks, and success between patron and client. Personal honour is at stake.

168 Cf. Cicero, *De officiis* 3.111.

169 An example of a woman as patroness is found in Terence, *The Eunuch* 886–887, where the young man Chaerea seeks the patronage of Thais, a foreign woman (this of course is comedy, so we cannot be sure whether a female patron was part of the joke): 'I entrust myself to your care and protection (*ego me tuae commendo et committo fide*); I take you as my patron (*te mihi patronam capio*), Thais, I implore you.'

170 Cf. Freyburger 1986, 154–155, on the 'fondements religieux' of patron-client relationships.

171 'Der *patronus* aber leistet nicht einfach einen Freundschaftsdienst, sondern wenn einmal an seine *fides* appelliert ist, so heißt es in vollem Umfange *fidem praestare*; seine eigene Person ist mit im Spiele, und sein eigenes Ansehen steigt oder fällt mit dem Erfolg oder Mißerfolg der Verteidigung, weshalb denn auch sein Wirken für den Klienten sich keineswegs auf die Rede beschränkt; aber auch in dieser bringt er nicht nur Argumente, sondern setzt sich mit seiner ganzen Persönlichkeit ein.'

Apart from these formulaic expressions that focus on the role of the patron, *pistis/fides* is used to describe the roles of both inferior and superior positions, as the sources presented below will again confirm.<sup>172</sup> From both sides, to show *fides* is presented as a voluntary act that could either be answered or not, which renders it a fragile yet indispensable aspect of the social economy. However, this step of accepting a client and promising *patrocinium* was a crucial one. In an appendix devoted to ‘*Fides* and (Roman and foreign) *clientelae*’, Sviatoslav Dmitriev points out that ‘*fides* alone did not constitute the totality of the client-patron relationship’: the *fides* or unconditional loyalty of the inferior party, the one who ‘surrendered to the *fides*’ of the other, was not necessarily reciprocated.<sup>173</sup> *Fides* could thus mean different things in different situations. Foreign people that surrendered to Roman *fides*, co-called *dediciti*, could be and were sometimes treated cruelly, since they had not been accepted in a reciprocal *fides*-relationship. *Fides* had to be promised from both sides, if a successful and binding relationship was to evolve.

Dmitriev has a point here, although, as our sources demonstrate, expectations of the reliability of the superior’s *fides* play an important part as well. As there is a considerable disadvantage for the superior if the reputation of *fides* is lost, public opinion limited the patron’s freedom to refuse someone protection.<sup>174</sup> The sources that discuss such social expectations mostly relate to political leaders or Roman foreign affairs and military strategy. This shows how the language of Roman patronage, including the vocabulary of *fides*, was transferred from what we would consider the personal to the political.<sup>175</sup> Patronage and benefaction becomes interwoven with inter-state politics and imperial ideology. The connection between ‘common patronage’ and the political, inter-state variant is evident from a particular shared usage of the expression

172 Cf. on this reciprocity Grimal 1974, 148: ‘A ce degré, il n’y a plus une seule Fides, mais deux—et cela rend d’autant plus remarquable que le mot ne possède pas de pluriel. La langue ne les distingue pas. Elle constate le fait qu’il s’agit d’une forme réciproque, une seule entité à deux faces, qui sont complémentaires.’

173 Dmitriev 2011, appendix 9, 437–444. A similar argument was made earlier by Dieter Nörr (1991, 22): only after the conclusion of a *deditio*, the inferior party partakes in a Roman normative order (‘Römische Normenordnung’), which then also binds the conqueror to this objective code of conduct.

174 Cf. Verboven 2011, 417 (‘to sustain a friend’s *fides* vis-à-vis the world at large was an imperative duty’) and 418 (‘the whole nexus of friendship, as comprehended by the Romans, placed expectations on friends that were tantamount to being compulsory’).

175 Cf. Heinze 1928, 152: ‘eine Übertragung, wie ich meine, privater innerstaatlicher Verhältnisse auf öffentlich internationale’. See also Nörr 1991, 25.

of ‘coming into *fides*’.<sup>176</sup> Cicero, for instance, believes that political patronage is a *mos maiorum*:

Not only must we show consideration for those whom we have conquered by force of arms but we must also ensure protection to those who lay down their arms and throw themselves upon the mercy of our generals (*qui armis positis ad imperatorum fidem confugient (...) recipiendi*), even though the battering-ram has hammered at their walls. And among our countrymen justice has been observed so conscientiously in this direction, that those who have given promise of protection to states or nations subdued in war become, after the custom of our forefathers, the patrons of those states (*earum patroni essent more maiorum*). (Cicero, *De officiis* 1.35)<sup>177</sup>

It is this particular connection between patronage and political dependency, and the questions of empire this raises, that is the topic of the next section.

#### 7.3.4 *Asymmetry and Reciprocity in International Faith-Relationships: Political Patronage, Diplomacy, and Imperial Ideology*

Once the language of *fides* and patronage became part of Roman foreign policy, it appears to have fulfilled a more formal role. In his study *Fides im römischen Völkerrecht* (1991), Dieter Nörr came to the conclusion that in the legal contexts of interstate allegiances, *ius gentium* and *deditio*, it came to convey not merely a subjective meaning as a moral code of conduct, but gained a more formal norm that could be objectively ascertained. In sources that describe Rome’s military and political endeavours, the terminology of *pistis/fides* abounds, often combined with the language of grace (*χάρις/gratia*), mercy (*ἔλεος/clementia*), goodwill (*εὐνοια/benevolentia/favor*), promise (*ἐπαγγελία/promissum*), friendship (*φιλία/amicitia*), power (*δύναμις/potestas*), and liberty (*ἐλευθερία/libertas*). This semantic domain includes, though is not

176 See Lavan 2013, 186: ‘The most obvious—but also the most complex—connection between empire and *clientela* in Roman discourse is the common trope of describing foreign peoples who surrender to Rome as coming into *fides* (*in fidem venire*, etc.). (...) While this particular expression (*in fidem venire*) is largely limited to the context of surrender, it is part of a wider cluster of constructions with *fides* which are normally used of the patron-client relationship.’

177 Cf. at 2.27: ‘[T]he highest ambition of our magistrates and generals was to defend our provinces and allies with justice and faith (*si socios aequitate et fide defendissent*). And so our government could be called more accurately a protectorate (*patrocinium*) of the world than a dominion (*imperium*):’

limited to, the technical language of political patronage. In this section, we will indeed see how *pistis/fides* and cognates function to express something between an idealized political virtue and a social, though not legal, norm. I discuss each combination of terms on the basis of some prototypical examples before delving deeper into questions of empire.

In Livy's *History of Rome* (*Ab urbe condita*), foreign forces and public enemies are often told to rely on Roman good faith (*fides*) and clemency (*clementia*).<sup>178</sup> Sallust relates in *The War with Jugurtha* how according to plebeian tribune Memmius 'if he revealed the truth, he [i.e. Jugurtha] had much to hope for from the good faith and mercy of the Roman people (*in fide et clementia populi Romani*)'.<sup>179</sup> Conversely, however, the Romans also had to live up to their reputation of faith and mercy. In the account of the outbreak of the first Punic war by first-century BC historian Diodorus of Sicily, the Sicilian commander Hiero knew how to use this in his favour. In his dealings with the Mamertines, former mercenaries who had brutally taken over the stronghold Messana and turned to piracy, Hiero was aided by the Carthaginians. This aroused Roman interest: a Roman consul came to Sicily with an army to negotiate the raising of the siege. Diodorus writes:

Hiero replied that the Mamertines, who had laid waste Camarina and Gela and had seized Messana in so impious a manner, were besieged with just cause, and that the Romans, harping as they did on the word *fides* (θρυλλοῦντες τὸ τῆς πίστεως ὄνομα), certainly ought not to protect assassins who had shown the greatest contempt for good faith (μάλιστα πίστεως καταφρονήσαντας); but if, on behalf of men so utterly godless, they should enter upon a war of such magnitude, it would be clear to all mankind that they were using pity for the imperilled as a cloak for their own advantage (ὅτι τῆς ἰδίας πλεονεξίας πρόφασιν πορίζονται τὸν τῶν

178 E.g. Livy, *History of Rome* 44.9.1: 'Before Popilius brought his men against the walls, he sent envoys to persuade the magistrates and chief citizens to prefer making trial of the good faith and mildness of the Romans rather than of their force (*fidem clementiamque Romanorum quam vim experiri mallent*).' Cf. also Livy, *History of Rome* 45.4.7: 'Nothing was accomplished by that embassy, since Perseus clung with all his might to the title of king, while Paulus urged him to entrust himself and all he had to the discretion and mercy of the Roman People (*ut se suaque omnia in fidem et clementiam populi Romani permitteret tendente*).'

179 Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha* 33.4. Cf. at 33.3: 'he [Memmius] declared that the pledge of public protection would not be broken so far as it lay within his power (*fidem publicam per sese inviolatam fore*).'

κινδυνεύόντων ἔλεον), and that in reality they coveted Sicily. (Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 23.1.4)

Hiero thus argues that pity for a faithless people is hardly a convincing motivation for power expansion. Linguistically, it is interesting to see here an example of how *fides* was translated by *pistis* without further ado. Yet more remarkably, the suggestion that Roman faith and mercy were a cover for Roman imperialism was thus already made in the first century BC by a Sicilian writing in Rome. Rhetorically brilliant, Roman *pistis* was used to expose and disarm Roman imperialism.

Civic and military leaders were expected to show *fides* and *clementia* as well. Livy writes that ‘Indibilis, having discarded his plans for war, thought no refuge safer in his distress than Scipio’s honesty and mercy (*fide et clementia Scipionis*), of which he had had experience, and sent his brother Mandonius to him.’<sup>180</sup> If good faith was promised, yet not given, this was considered utterly immoral and even literally ‘without grace’ (*ingratus*). As a prototypical example of such ‘ingratitude’—or rather, since it pertains to the superior, ‘gracelessness’—Seneca recalls the indignation of Sulla’s murder of the inhabitants of the city of Praeneste: ‘O! the wickedness of it, after he had promised *fides* he cornered and mutilated them’ (*quod nefas, post fidem in angulo congestas contrucidavit*).<sup>181</sup> Similarly, notwithstanding its outcome in favour of Rome, Plutarch judges Coriolanus’s abandonment of the Volscians to Rome as dishonourable, for ‘he was appointed their leader, and had the greatest credit and influence among them (μεγίστην πίστιν εἶχε μετὰ δυνάμεως).’<sup>182</sup>

Being known for your faithfulness and grace, and hence inspiring good faith and gratefulness in others, was a benefit for rulers as well; that, at least, is the judgement of Plutarch across his biographical works. Rather than ‘ensnaring and corrupting them with gifts and bribes (χρήμασι καὶ δωρεαῖς); Cleomenes considered it ‘most fit for a king to win over his visitors and attach them to himself by an intercourse and conversation which awakened gratitude and confidence (τὸ δὲ ὁμιλία καὶ λόγῳ χάριν ἔχοντι καὶ πίστιν).’<sup>183</sup> As the king in

180 Livy, *History of Rome* 28.34.3.

181 Seneca, *On Benefits* 5.16.3, Loeb translation adapted. Ingratitude is even the primordial sin, according to Seneca: see *On Benefits* 1.10.4: ‘Homicides, tyrants, thieves, adulterers, robbers, sacrilegious men, and traitors there always will be; but worse than all these is the crime of ingratitude (*infra omnia ista ingratus est*), unless it be that all these spring from ingratitude, without which hardly any sin has grown to great size.’

182 Plutarch, *Comparison of Alcibiades and Coriolanus* 2.7.

183 Plutarch, *Agis et Cleomenes* 13.5.

question is obviously interested in a good relationship, ‘confidence’ seems to be a less logical translation of *pistis* here than ‘loyalty’, ‘trust’, or ‘good faith’. Awakening *pistis* by having conversations is here used in contrast to ensuring temporary or outward loyalty by means of bribes: this is a pattern I will come back to in the course of this chapter (esp. §7.3.6 and §7.4.4).

On a political level, building *charis* and *pistis* offered a royal alternative to forceful occupation, as Aratus advises king Philip v:

There are many lofty hills in Crete, O Philip, and many towering citadels in Boeotia and Phocis; in Acarnania, too, I suppose, as well inland as on its shores, there are many places which show an amazing strength; but not one of these dost thou occupy, and yet all these peoples gladly do thy bidding. For it is robbers that cling to cliffs and crags, but for a king there is no stronger or more secure defence than trust and gratitude (βασιλεῖ δὲ πίστεως καὶ χάριτος ἰσχυρότερον οὐδὲν οὐδὲ ὀχυρώτερον). These open up for thee the Cretan sea, these the Peloponnesus. Relying upon these, young as thou art, thou hast already made thyself leader here, and master there. (Plutarch, *Aratus* 50.5–6)

Like *pistis*, grace (χάρις) is polysemous and can be used to denote the attitude of the superior (‘grace’), the attitude of the inferior (‘gratitude’), or, in a reified sense, the thing conferred (‘favour’).<sup>184</sup> And together, *pistis* and *charis* among the people serve as the hallmarks of strong kingship.

A argument similar to the one in the citation above, yet with *pistis* and *charis* language focusing on the king’s attitude, is used by the first-century-AD historian Quintus Curtius Rufus, who wrote a history of Alexander the Great. Rufus emphasizes that building a reputation of clemency and faithfulness will have the ‘snowball’ effect of bringing others to trust and surrender as well. A certain Phrades of the Tapuri, ‘was received under protection (*hic quoque in fidem receptus*), and was an example to many in entrusting themselves to the king’s clemency (*multis exemplo fuit experiendi clementiam regis*).<sup>185</sup> By showing clemency to hostages of a different tribe, Alexander ‘drove them to surrender; and he subdued the rest of the cities in a similar manner and received them under his protection (*in fidem accepit*).<sup>186</sup> According to this

184 See also Konstan 1997, 123: ‘Like the Greek *kharis*, the Latin term *gratia* refers both to the return that is due for a service (*officium* or *beneficium*) one has received, and to the sense of debt or gratitude that is morally incumbent on the beneficiary.’

185 Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander* 6.4.23–24.

186 Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander* 9.1.23.



author, Alexander's general vision underlying his conquests and rule is as follows:

That possession is not lasting of which we are made owners by the sword; the gratitude for acts of kindness is everlasting (*beneficiorum gratia sempiterna est*). If we wish to hold Asia, not merely to pass through it, our clemency must be shared with its people (*cum his communicanda est nostra clementia*); their faith in us (*horum fides*) will make a stable and lasting empire. (Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander* 8.8.12)

Here, it is clemency on the part of the leader which in its turn leads to *fides*, trust or loyalty, on the part of the people. Likewise, in Plutarch, the statesman Aratus is said to have the goodwill (*eunoia*) and faith not only of the Greeks, but also of king Phillip v.<sup>187</sup>

This logic of reciprocity also helped to explain the occasional co-occurrence of '(having) faith' (πιστεύω/πίστις) and '(to) promise' (ἐπαγγέλλω/ἐπαγγελία). These *lemmata* are quite commonly combined in early Christian literature, yet are only occasionally connected in pagan Greek literature that antedates these writings, predominantly by the historians Polybius (second century BC) and Diodorus Siculus (first century BC). From these cases, we learn that promises *per se* only form one side of the communication; they are either believed or disbelieved and can be backed up by *pisteis*, tokens of faith or assurances. The majority of these cases has its *Sitz im Leben* in the sphere of political or military diplomacy. Promises made by one party are often distrusted. The Persian king Artaxerxes II, for example, after defeating his brother Cyrus, asked the Greeks who had fought for Cyrus to lay down their arms and become allies. Yet, though they were not defeated themselves, the sentiment among the Greeks is that Artaxerxes is treating them as if they were by not offering a 'counterbalancing favour' (χάριν (...) ἀξίαν). Therefore, the question put in the mouth of Socrates the Aechean is, 'if, knowing well enough that we are the victors, he uses lying words, how shall we trust his later promises (πῶς αὐτῷ περὶ τῶν εἰς ὕστερον ἐπαγγελιῶν πιστεύσομεν)?'<sup>188</sup>

187 See, respectively, Plutarch, *Aratus* 35.3 (τῶν Ἀχαιῶν τὴν πρὸς τὸν Ἄρατον εὔνοιαν καὶ πίστιν) and 47.4 (τὴν πρὸς τὸν Ἄρατον εὔνοιαν αὐτοῦ καὶ πίστιν). The collocation of goodwill and faith is a frequent one, particularly in historiographical and biographical genres; in Plutarch's works alone we count fifteen cases (with a maximum of 5 words distance).

188 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 14.25.6. Cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 19.44.2: 'He wished, indeed, to have at his side a man who was a good general and who would be under obligations to him, but he had little faith in Eumenes's promises (οὐ λίαν δ'

Otherwise, trust in promises often turns out to be misplaced, as when Agathocles, the tyrant of Syracuse, promised the Messenians to surrender their fort in exchange for thirty talents:

When the Messenians gave him the money, he not only failed to keep his promise to those who had put faith in him (οὐ μόνον διεψεύσατο τοὺς πιστεύσαντας τῆς ἐπαγγελίας), but he also undertook to capture Messene itself. (Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 19.65.2)

Hence, tokens or proofs of trust (*pisteis*) are usually demanded. In a plot to draw out the king Mithridates VI of Pontus during his siege of Rome's ally Cyzicus, a Roman centurion pretended to betray the city in exchange for Mithridates's rewards and 'asked to have guarantees to these promises' (πίστεις τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν ζητοῦντος), by which he meant that he wanted to see the king in person.<sup>189</sup> In all these diplomatic contexts, promises thus seem to require *pistis*, 'trust', on the side of the ones the promises are made to, and if this is lacking, they require in addition reified *pisteis*, 'guarantees', from the one giving the promise.

Another striking co-occurrence in the context of political patronage, yet one that fits the conceptual closeness of patronage and friendship, is that of 'faith' (πίστις/*fides*) and 'friendship' (φιλία/*amicitia*). Already before the period under consideration here, this pair is used to describe a treaty between a superior and inferior power: Xenophon has the pro-Spartan Critias in the Athenian senate judge Theramenes an untrustworthy traitor, the very man

---

ἐπίστευεν αὐτοῦ ταῖς ἐπαγγελίαις) because of the latter's loyalty to Olympias and the kings (διὰ τὴν πρὸς Ὀλυμπιάδα καὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς φιλίαν). Cf. also Polybius, *Histories* 1.46.5: 'They listened to his [Hannibal of Rhodes'] offer eagerly, but did not believe he could do this (οἱ δὲ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας μὲν ἀσμένως ἤκουσαν, οὐ μὴν ἐπίστευόν γε), as the Romans were anchored outside the mouth of the port.'; Polybius, *Histories* 11.25.9: 'He said they should undertake to pay the men their arrears, and in order to secure credence for this promise (χάριν δὲ τοῦ πιστεῦσθαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν), collect at once publicly and energetically the contributions formerly imposed on the cities for the maintenance of the whole army, making it evident that the measure was taken to adjust the irregularity of payment.'

189 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 37.22b.1. Cf. also Polybius, *Histories* 3.100.3–4: 'On reaching Gerunium, (...) he [Hannibal] at first sent messages to the inhabitants asking for their alliance and offering pledges of the advantages he promised them (πίστεις ἐδίδου τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν), but as they paid no attention to them he began the siege.'; Polybius, *Histories* 8.18.10: 'The king received him graciously, assured him of the promised reward (δόντος πίστεις ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν). For a Latin variant, cf. Seneca, *Thyestes* 294–295, when Atreus seeks to draw out his brother Thyestes: 'Who will give him assurance of peace (*Quis fidem pacis dabit*)? Whom will he trust so greatly (*cui tanta credet*)?'

who, after Athens defeat at Aegospotami (405 BC), ‘took the initiative in the policy of establishing a relationship of trust and friendship with the Spartans (ἄρξας τῆς πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους πίστεως καὶ φιλίας)’.<sup>190</sup> Although this treaty with the Spartans was unfavourable, it was not so in the eyes of Critias. Thus, even though it is the ‘inferior party’ speaking, there is nonetheless no sign of anti-imperial irony here in the use of ‘friendship and trust’.

In Latin sources, it is particularly Cicero, in his speeches against Verres, who develops the theme ‘that Sicily was the first of all foreign nations to become the loyal friend of Rome (*se ad amicitiam fidemque populi Romani applicavit*)’ and that ‘to the Sicilian city-states we granted conditions of trust and friendship (*in amicitiam fidemque accepimus*)’.<sup>191</sup> In the Verrine speeches, this theme helps to emphasize Rome’s role as protector of the Sicilian cities.<sup>192</sup> Julius Caesar also notes that Gallic communities have similar ties: in *The Gallic War* (*Bellum Gallicum* / *Commentarii de bello Gallico*), the diplomat and druid Diviciacus states that ‘the Bellovaci have always enjoyed the protection and friendship of the Aeduan state (*in fide atque amicitia civitatis Aeduae fuisse*)’.<sup>193</sup> Caesar abstains from describing Rome’s relationship to Gallic peoples in terms of patronage, though. Livy, like Cicero, uses ‘faith’ and ‘friendship’ terms quite often as parallels, such as when he asks ‘who would think it fair either that they should admit no one, however deserving, to their friendship (*in amicitiam recipi*), or that, having once taken people under their protection (*receptos in fidem*), they should not defend them?’<sup>194</sup> The emphasis in these examples is on the duties of the party serving as patron in a relationship that is described

190 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3.28.

191 Cicero, *Verrine Orations* 2.2.2 and 2.3.12 respectively. Cf. also Cicero, *Verrine Orations* 2.2.90 (*in amicitia fideque mansissent*); 2.5.83 (*in amicitia fideque populi Romani perpetuo manserant*); 2.5.124 (*amicitiam fidemque populi Romani secuti sumus*).

192 See also Lavan 2013, 193: ‘Representing the Sicilians as Rome’s clients asserts a similar claim to Roman protection.’ On *fides* and related terms in the Verrine speeches, see Rothe 1978, chapter 2: ‘*Humanitas, Misericordia, Clementia, Mansuetudo* und *Fides* in Ciceros Reden gegen Verres’ (13–59). Rothe also notes the perfectionism inherent to *fides* as a virtue, see at 54: ‘Für Cicero haben die Römer gegenüber der Provinz moralische Verpflichtungen, die über rein rechtliche Festlegungen hinausgehen.’

193 Caesar, *The Gallic War* 2.14.

194 Livy, *History of Rome* 21.19.5. Cf. e.g. (out of near thirty co-occurrences) 8.25.3: ‘For the Lucanians and Apulians, nations which until then had had no dealings with the Roman People, put themselves under their protection (*in fidem venerunt*) and promised arms and men for the war, and were accordingly received into a treaty of friendship (*foedere ergo in amicitiam accepti*)’; 28.32.5: ‘The only bond which once existed, that of loyalty and friendship (*fidei atque amicitiae*), they had themselves broken by their crime.’

in the benevolent (or perhaps euphemistic) terms of friendship, regardless of the inequality involved.

When 'faith' (πίστις/*fides*) language is combined with the language of 'power' (δύναμις/*potestas*), it appears that faith and power can be aligned but also contrasted. Writing on *fides* and *deditio in fidem*, historian Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp first states that *fides* is 'charged with power' (*'potestas-geladen'*) and 'a concept that denotes power itself and the concrete violence of the powerful and superior over the weaker and subordinate'.<sup>195</sup> According to Hölkeskamp, this strong connection between faith and power is toned down a little in Roman discourse by the voluntary act of submission and the 'reciprocity inherent to *fides*', but the 'principal unlimited nature of power' remains foregrounded.<sup>196</sup>

Passages in which *fides* language is used together with *potestas* language, however, demonstrate that this judgement is in need of some refinement. Plutarch stated that if a leader possesses a reputation and proof (δόξα καὶ πίστις) of the virtue of righteousness, 'above all power and trust follow it (καὶ δύναμις αὐτῇ καὶ πίστις ἔπεται) among the people'.<sup>197</sup> Here, power and trust are indeed aligned, yet they represent the effect of just leadership, not unlike *dynamis* and *pistis* in the opening sentences of Paul's *Letter to the Romans*, as I will argue below (§7.4.3). Moreover, confidence (*pistis*) in leaders not only benefits the leader; it can be indispensable to the follower's survival. Plutarch recalls Odysseus's justified self-praise in the *Odyssey* for managing to escape the cyclops's cave and states that 'at critical moments salvation may depend largely on the regard and *pistis* that are placed in some man who possesses the experience and power of a leader (δόξα καὶ πίστις ἀνδρὸς ἡγεμονικῆν ἐμπειρίαν καὶ δύναμιν ἔχοντος).'<sup>198</sup> As we see in these examples, in the context of faith placed in leaders *pistis* is often paired with power (δύναμις), for power either inspires confidence or is something that is gained by the people's confidence, which is then dependent on it.<sup>199</sup>

195 Hölkeskamp 2004, 116: 'ein Konzept, das die Macht selbst und die durchaus konkrete Gewalt des Überlegenen, Übergeordneten über den Schwächeren, Untergeordneten zeigte.'

196 Hölkeskamp 2004, 116: 'für die *fides* typische Reziprozität' and 'primären Unbegrenztheit der Macht'.

197 Plutarch, *Cato the Younger* 44.7–8. For a discussion of the entire passage, see §3.3.1 *supra*.

198 Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively* 545D.

199 See e.g. Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* 812F: 'few men enjoyed so much confidence and power as he (πίστιν ἔχων ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα καὶ δύναμιν)'; Plutarch, *Comparison of Alcibiades and Coriolanus* 2.7: 'he was appointed their leader, and had the greatest credit and influence among them (μεγίστην πίστιν εἶχε μετὰ δυνάμεως).'

In some sources, a sharper contrast between power and faith can also be discerned. In the context of surrender to Rome, Valerius Maximus suggests that the surrender of the Faliscans into Roman *fides* instead of *potestas* implies non-violent treatment:

The Roman people wished to take violent measures against them, but were instructed by Papirius, by whose hand the words of the surrender were written at the Consul's order, that the Falisci had committed themselves not to Roman power but to Roman faith (*non potestati sed fidei se Romanorum commisisse*). (Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 6.5.1b)

Similarly, Livy writes the following about the Gauls, who had crossed the Alps in search of a new home (183 BC): 'preferring an assured though unattractive peace to the uncertainties of war, they had entrusted themselves to the good faith rather than to the power (*dedidisse se prius in fidem quam in potestatem*) of the Roman people.'<sup>200</sup> While we must be careful, as Gruen has so emphatically reminded us, not to 'impute technical significance to phrases', these passages make it clear that there was awareness that an appeal to Roman *fides* imposed moral constraints and that it required a different response than a show of force.<sup>201</sup> Ideally, power is both enhanced and restricted by faith.

A final pair of terms worth querying is that of faith (*πίστις/fides*) and liberty (*ἐλευθερία/libertas*), which is also at home in the context of political patronage.<sup>202</sup> Together they seem to occur in sources where the colonial perspective of the Roman conqueror is dominant. For, as benign as these characterizations of political 'friendships' may seem, from a present-day critical perspective the political discourse of *fides* and the related terms I discuss is also an excellent example of self-congratulatory rhetoric that served as oppressive propaganda to submitted territories. By applying language of dependence from 'ordinary' social relationships to foreign policy, Romans described not only their responsibilities to, but also their authority over, the people included in their realm. Plutarch writes about Titus Flaminius, a Roman commander who is apparently

<sup>200</sup> Livy, *History of Rome* 39.54.7.

<sup>201</sup> Gruen 1982, 53. See above, §7.2.2. Cf. Pöschl 1980, 9: 'Wichtiger aber ist, daß die durch religiöse Formeln sanktionierte Verbindung von *fides* und *Imperium* darauf hindeutet, daß die Rechte, die das *Imperium* verleiht, durch die Pflichten eingeschränkt sind, die die *fides* vorschreibt.'

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Derow 2012, 143: 'The return of freedom (and property) was the act expected of a general who had received a *deditio in fidem*.'

warmly welcomed after 'liberating' Greek cities from Macedonian tyranny.<sup>203</sup> This gratitude also brought Greek officials to loyalty and obedience:

In the case of Titus and the Romans, however, gratitude for their benefactions to the Greeks brought them, not merely praises, but also loyalty among all men and power, and justly too (ἀλλὰ καὶ πίστιν ἐν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις καὶ δύναμιν ἢ χάρις ἀπὴντα δικαίως). For men not only received the officers appointed by them, but actually sent for them and invited them and put themselves in their hands (ἐνεχειρίζον αὐτούς). And this was true not only of peoples and cities, nay, even kings who had been wronged by other kings fled for refuge into the hands of Roman officials, so that in a short time—and perhaps there was also divine guidance in this—everything became subject to them (πάντα αὐτοῖς ὑπήκοα γενέσθαι). But Titus himself took most pride in his liberation of Greece (ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐλευθερώσει). (Plutarch, *Titus Flaminius* 12.4–5)<sup>204</sup>

This 'liberation' was even celebrated, according to Plutarch, in the form of festivities, with buildings dedicated to Flaminius, offerings made in his honour, the election of a 'priest of Titus', and with hymns that praise Roman *fides*:

And the Roman faith we revere (πίστιν δὲ Ῥωμαίων σέβομεν), which we have solemnly vowed to cherish; sing, then, ye maidens, to great Zeus, to Rome, to Titus, and to the Roman faith (Ζῆνα μέγαν Ῥώμαν τε Τίτον θ' ἄμα Ῥωμαίων τε πίστιν): hail, Paean Apollo! hail, Titus our saviour! (Plutarch, *Titus Flaminius* 16.4)

Along with gods and Roman leaders, Roman faith became the object of cultic veneration.

Nevertheless, the other side of this coin was the imperial reputation and corresponding obligations towards those that appealed to Roman *pistis/fides*. A few decades after Flaminius's success, ambassadors of the city of Rome sought to turn the complicated political situation to their advantage by stressing Rome's role as a patron towards the Greeks:

203 See Plutarch, *Titus Flaminius* 11.4: 'these men underwent the greatest perils and hardships in order to rescue Greece and set her free from cruel despots and tyrants (τυράνων ἐλευθεροῦσι).'

204 The Loeb translation translates *pistis* as 'confidence', which leaves the object of this confidence ambiguous.

For the sake of standing and fame in the eyes of the whole world, which for long now has regarded your name and empire as next after those of the immortal gods, you have waged your wars. What it was difficult to get and acquire, it may be perhaps still more difficult to keep. You have undertaken to defend against slavery to a king the liberty of a most ancient people, most famed either from the renown of its achievements or from universal praise of its culture and learning; this championship of a whole people taken under your protection and guardianship (*hoc patrocinium receptae in fidem et clientelam vestram*) it befits you to guarantee for ever. (Livy, *History of Rome* 37.54.16–18)

The ambassadors hereby hoped to persuade the Romans to leave their city independent, yet, in Livy's account, they do so by making use of the same Roman rhetoric.<sup>205</sup>

So, how ought we to evaluate the frequent use of *pistis/fides* language in the context of political patronage and diplomacy? Myles Lavan discusses various metaphors of dependence, including patronage, and draws attention to the effect that 'claims of Roman generosity are always also assertions of Roman dominance and of the moral obligation of Rome's dependants'.<sup>206</sup> Lavan strongly connects *fides* language to the metaphor of patronage, yet he also argues that patronage was a relatively mild metaphor, expressing not merely Rome's dominance (like the metaphor of slavery) but her moral obligations as well. In fact, the relative concentration of the technical language of patronage in contexts of political dependence of foreign states in Cicero and Livy is evidence of the idealized vision of empire these authors exhibit.<sup>207</sup> Whereas to our modern ears being in the friendship and *fides* of patron Rome is very much a euphemism for being in a state of utter dependence and subordination, more than other metaphors it seems to have conveyed the sense of reciprocity in favours.

Based on these considerations, it is possible to give a provisional answer to our initial question of whether Paul's use of *pistis* should be understood

205 See Lavan 2013, 200: 'Livy represents foreign speakers trying to use Roman rhetoric to manipulate Roman behaviour.'

206 Lavan 2013, 157. See especially his chapters on 'Benefactors' (156–175) and 'Patrons and Protectors' (176–210).

207 Lavan 2013, 205: 'It is in political invective that Cicero appeals to *patrocinium* as the paradigm of how Rome ought to behave to its subjects. The point is to vilify the provincial conduct of his opponents. For Livy it is a trope for Roman speakers to use in order to differentiate Roman rule from subjection to the Hellenistic Kings.'

as a critical response to Roman imperialism. It is good to refrain from detecting responses to imperialist ideology lurking behind all emphatic usages of *pistis/fides*, even if there is a religious or even political dimension to this usage, as in the Pauline letters. *Pistis/fides* could express ideas of dependency and the loyalty of the inferior in asymmetrical relations, yet it also always implied the responsibility of the superior.<sup>208</sup> As such, it was used in empire discourse, with the inherent duplicity of both asymmetry and reciprocity. The ‘violation’ of this sacred bond did not demonstrate ‘its true nature’, as research on the anti-imperial potential of early Christianity would have it.<sup>209</sup> Of course, the early Christian movement proclaimed a different ‘lord’ in and to whom they expressed *pistis*, which must have led—and did lead—to competition and confrontation. Paul’s *pistis* language demonstrates his usage of the wider metaphor of patronage, yet we cannot cast him as a critic of empire by citing his choice of this word group alone. However, before we jump to any definitive conclusions, another factor needs to be taken into account, namely whether the changing political landscape, from republic to empire, had any significant impact on the discourse of *fides*, patronage, and politics.

### 7.3.5 *The Reassessment of Faith in Imperial Times as Universal Loyalty to One Ruler*

According to Gérard Freyburger, the political changes in the first century BC led to the disappearance of a particular kind of *fides*, *fides* as horizontal solidarity between citizens:

Evidently, in the imperial period, the horizontal bond of *fides*, binding the citizens to each other, was replaced by a vertical bond of *fides*, uniting the subjects to the emperor. In this situation, it seems that the sense of a duty of solidarity towards fellow citizens was lost. (Freyburger 2002, 347)<sup>210</sup>

208 Cf. also Pöschl 1980, 8: ‘Der besiegte Feind konnte sich in den Schutz des siegreichen Feldherrn begeben, d. h. durch die Kapitulation unterwirft er sich, aber die *fides* verbietet dem Sieger, seine Macht zu mißbrauchen. Natürlich geschah das trotzdem, und der Begriff der *fides* wurde genauso mißbraucht wie andere Wertbegriffe.’

209 See the suggestive remark in Elliott 2008, 38 and §7.2.3 *supra*.

210 ‘Manifestement, à l’époque impériale, le lien de *fides* horizontal, liant les citoyens entre eux, a été remplacé par un lien de *fides* vertical, unissant les sujets à l’empereur. Dans cette situation, il semble qu’on ait perdu le sens d’un devoir de solidarité envers le concitoyen.’ Freyburger refers to Tacitus and Suetonius.



In order to assess these potential changes in the character of *fides*, we should evaluate the impact of the principate on civic patronage. Already at the close of the Republican era, economic, political, and military power seems to have accumulated in the hands of a few influential individuals, draining the potential of exchange of political and economic benefits between the rest of the aristocracy and from them to the lower strata. In a sense, this process was intensified under Augustus's reign. The emperor made ample use of the imagery of patronage by depicting himself, and by having himself depicted, as the supreme public patron and benefactor, the *pater patriae*.<sup>211</sup> However, the question of how this impacted the function of patronage remains debated.

In *Politics and Society in Imperial Rome*, Aloys Winterling presents two opposing scholarly views.<sup>212</sup> Firstly, according to Anton von Premerstein, patronage as a political tool had in fact died out in the principate, due to the princeps's control over both the grain (and thereby the dependence of the people) and the appointment of magistrates (thus monopolizing political benefits to the upper class).<sup>213</sup> Conversely, Richard Saller holds that political patronage continued to be of great importance in the form of interaristocratic office patronage by its function in gaining excess to the princeps's favours. Instead of monopolizing all benefits, the emperor purposefully provided resources to the aristocratic houses so they could maintain their status vis-à-vis their clients.<sup>214</sup> By delving beyond the utilitarian value and deeper into the symbolic value of patronage, Winterling reconciles both views: the system of patronage was still of paramount importance, only its shape and function changed significantly. While 'the semantics of contemporary self-description (...) did not change', the economy of benefaction became one of a unilateral nature.<sup>215</sup>

Relations formerly based on reciprocity—despite the different positions of those involved—now changed in the direction of an independence of those at the top from those at the bottom. (...) In this way, reciprocal *amicitia* evolved into a hierarchically structured favor because of the new

211 E.g. Saller 1982, 32; Garnsey & Saller 1997, 97, who refer specifically to *Res gestae divi Augusti* 15–18 and Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus* 2.21.

212 Winterling 2009, 39–41.

213 Von Premerstein 1937, 13–25. See also Lampe 2016, 208: 'In imperial times, the political influence of the noble families faded. Consequently, clientage became less a political factor but remained a social and economic institution. (...) Juridical implications were negligible; the patron-client relationship was legally irrelevant during imperial times.'

214 Saller 1982; see also Garnsey & Saller 1997, 98–99.

215 Winterling 2009, 49.

imperial position of power—favor that was passed on or denied unilaterally from top to bottom and sought out of utilitarian considerations by those at the bottom from the top. (Winterling 2009, 48)

In other words, according to Winterling, the exchange between patron and client became even more determined by asymmetry and less by reciprocity, since the patron was not in any need of returned favours. In the pyramid structure that arose, benefits flowed downwards, not upwards.

This picture is refined if we take some additional dimensions into account, highlighted in an earlier article by Saller and Peter Garnsey. They argue that ‘since subjects could not repay imperial benefactions in kind, the reciprocity ethic dictated that they make a return in the form of deference, respect and loyalty.’<sup>216</sup> This is in line with the analysis of Jed Atkins, who argues that the virtue of obedience (*obsequium*) gains prominence in imperial times, whereas the virtue of justice becomes solely the emperor’s domain.<sup>217</sup> Hence, rather than speaking of a unilateral arrangement, the reciprocity inherent to imperial patronage required an immaterial return in the form of a disposition of the receiver. The immaterial, interior response gains importance in the late Roman republic and early Roman empire. This response, as we will see, was often thought of in terms of *pistis/fides*.

Furthermore, Saller and Garnsey note that

emperors did not and could not monopolize patronage. They did not attempt to be universal patrons to all their subjects, since universality would have undermined the incentive for personal gratitude on the part of the subjects. (Garnsey & Saller 1997, 98)

The attitude of deference, respect, loyalty, and gratitude, these authors argue, is not solicited by a patron that does not discriminate between who is worthy of gifts and who is not. Patronage requires exclusivism. Hence, according to Saller and Garnsey, the emperor could not be an actual patron to all. However, as the sources we will now turn to demonstrate, emperors did strive towards a relationship of mutual trust and loyalty with all their subjects. This suggests that the concepts of patronage and *fides* did not completely overlap when it came to this relationship between ruler and ruled.

*Pistis* and *fides* language is, as can be expected based on what I have already discussed, regularly found in connection with qualities of *imperatores* and the

---

<sup>216</sup> Garnsey & Saller 1997, 97.

<sup>217</sup> Atkins 2018, 90.

faith put in them by their soldiers, followers, and, once they were recognized as legitimate rulers, subjects. The presence of *fides*, understood as both this relationship of faith and, more broadly but relatedly, the popular trust in matters of social life and economy, is seen as indicative for the stability and success of an emperor's reign. In chapter 3, we saw how the retreat and return of Fides, as a goddess and a virtue, was used in narratives of a metahistorical or eschatological character. In this section, a similar motive is addressed in sources that are more historical or biographical. This overview of the contemporary and later reception of the successive periods in Roman imperial history shows the recurrent theme of *fides* being absent or present as in a pendulum movement.

The tensions that arose in the first triumvirate between Caesar and Pompey were described almost two centuries later by Plutarch as a matter of misplaced trust. Pompey mistrusted Cato's counsel and trusted both in Caesar's consistency and in his own luck and ability: 'Pompey heard these counsels repeatedly, but ignored and put them by; he did not believe that Caesar would change (ἀπιστία τῆς Καίσαρος μεταβολῆς), because he trusted in his own good fortune and power (διὰ πίστιν εὐτυχίας τῆς ἑαυτοῦ καὶ δυνάμεως).'<sup>218</sup> In these days of civic unrest and contested loyalties, there seems to be a widely recognized crisis of faith. The first-century poet Lucan laments the lack of *fides* in Roman soldiers who were employed in an Egyptian plot against Julius Caesar:

Men who follow the camp have no loyalty, no sense of duty (*Nulla fides pietasque viris qui castra secuntur*): their swords are for sale; the cause that offers immediate reward is the good cause; serving for scanty pay, they attack Caesar's life to gratify others. Oh, law divine! Where does the hapless destiny of our empire fail to find civil war? (Lucan, *The Civil War* (*Pharsalia*) 10.407–411)

Loyalty (*fides*) is juxtaposed here with being for sale and thus used in opposition to the frame of amoral commerce again. Yet, not only personal loyalty is crushed. Just before he brings up Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, Lucan also describes the absence of justice on a political level and the lack of faith on an economic level: 'consuls and tribunes alike threw justice into confusion (*turbantes iura*); (...), credit was shattered (*concussa fides*), and many found their profit in war.'<sup>219</sup> This use of *pistis/fides* to indicate financial credit and

<sup>218</sup> Plutarch, *Cato the Younger* 44.6.

<sup>219</sup> Lucan, *The Civil War* 1.177, 182. Cf. on the motivation to enlist as a soldier 2.253: 'to bury bankruptcy under the destruction of the world (*mundique ruinae permiscenda fides*)'.

trust in the economy goes back to at least the fifth century BC, when in an anonymous treatise—excerpts of which found their way into Iamblichus's *Protrepticus*—*pistis* is deemed the direct result of respect for the law (*eunomia*) and the prerequisite for money to circulate.<sup>220</sup>

References to faith and a lack thereof during the crisis in the first triumvirate can be found in contemporary sources as well as in later reception. After Pompey's defeat, Cicero appealed to Caesar's 'honour, consistency, and clemency' (*per fidem et constantiam et clementiam tuam*) to spare one of Pompey's allies, the Galatian king Deiotarus.<sup>221</sup> This is an excellent example of *fides*, together with constancy and clemency, as the ultimate quality of a benefactor, a quality that was deemed essential to rulers. Yet an appeal to that same *fides* is recorded by Caesar as an excuse by another one of Pompey's leaders, Lucius Afrianus: 'You should not be angry with us or our soldiers because we chose to keep faith with our commander Gnaeus Pompey (*quod fidem erga imperatorem suum Cn. Pompeium conservare voluerint*).' Afrianus, however, is reproached by Caesar for his earlier lack of *fides*.<sup>222</sup> Thus, in days of civil war, the *fides*-relationship between a particular commander and his legions seems problematic, especially when it prevails over *fides* as a virtue of public trustworthiness. *Fides* restricted to loyalty in a patronage relationship is, so at least Caesar seems to think, not proper Roman *fides* at all.<sup>223</sup>

Consequently, it was of the utmost concern to the emperors to restore *fides* on an economic, political, and military level by presenting their own person as the sole benefactor from whom all other relations of faith evolve. By the time Octavian had become the sole emperor, his *fides*, good faith, and the faith people put in him seems to have been an important constituent of his public image. The Capitoline area, including the temple of Fides, was subjected to

220 Anonymous Iamblichi, *Fragment* 7.1: Diels & Kranz 1951, 89, found in Iamblichus, *Protrepticus*. For an analysis of the use of *pistis* and *apistia* in economic contexts in classical Greece, see Faraguna 2012; specifically on this treatise: 360–366.

221 Cicero, *Pro rege Deiotaro* 8.

222 Caesar, *Civil War* 1.85.3–4: 'You did not uphold the rules pertaining to talks and truces, and with extreme cruelty you killed inexperienced men duped by the talks (...) you are reverting to something you scorned a little while ago, and now seek it with the utmost eagerness.'

223 Cf. Bartera 2019, 258: '*Fides* was also at the basis of the patron-client relationship, which served as the model for the special relationship that existed, in the republican period especially, between the general and his soldiers, and, during the empire, between the emperor and his subjects. (...) In the context of civil wars, when the army's loyalty wavers among different contenders, *fides* is no longer to Rome but to an individual.' Cf. Coffee 2009, 158: 'Such limited expectations for Roman *fides* show how far the virtue has degenerated and how perilous it is for Pompey to continue to rely on it.'

extensive refurbishments and renovations by the new emperor, thus rendering it a physical representation of the values of his reign.<sup>224</sup> As we saw in chapter 3, the Augustan poets connected the new imperial rule to the return of *fides* and the Golden Age. A famous passage of the *Res Gestae*, an excellent example of political propaganda, spread as inscriptions across the realm and possibly written or dictated by Augustus himself, reads:

Phrates, son of Orodes, king of the Parthians, sent all his sons and grandsons to me in Italy, not because he had been conquered in war, but rather seeking our friendship (*amicitiam nostram*) by means of his own children as pledges. And a large number of other nations experienced the good faith of the Roman people during my principate (*Plúrimaeque aliae gentes exper[tae sunt populi Romani] fidem me prin|cipe*) who never before had had any interchange of embassies or of friendship with the Roman people. (*Res gestae divi Augusti* 32)<sup>225</sup>

While the historical reality behind this representation may differ considerably from the Augustan account, which is an obviously selective and optimistic narration of events, it shows us how the language of friendship and *fides* became part of the self-image and public message of the principate.

Flavius Josephus recounts the speech Nicolaus of Damascus held in defence of Herod Archelaus, the son and appointed successor of the then recently deceased Herod the Great.<sup>226</sup> In it, the abundant use of *pistis* is evident. It is used to denote both the virtue of Caesar to which Nicolaus appeals and, at the same time, the relational attitude of loyalty Herod showed by relying on this good faith:

At any rate Caesar would certainly not annul the will of a man who had left everything to his decision, who had been his friend and ally, and who had put his trust in Caesar in making that will (ἐπὶ πίστει τῇ αὐτοῦ

224 The addition of new dedications made by private individuals was even prohibited by the emperor: see Corbeill 2005, 91–92.

225 The Greek variant, found as an inscription, reads: Πάρθων Φρα[άτης Ὀρώδο]υ υἱός[υ]ϊούς [αὐτοῦ] υἱώνους τε πάντας ἔπεμψεν εἰς Ἴταλίαν, οὐ πολέμωι | λειφθεῖς, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἡμ[ε]τέραν φιλίαν ἀξιών ἐπὶ τέ[κνων] ἐνεχύροις, πλείστα τε ἄλλα ἔθνη πείραν ἔλ[α]βεν δήμου Ῥωμαίων πίστεως ἐπ' ἑμοῦ ἡγεμόνος.

226 Josephus probably made use of Nicolaus's own writings, which survive only in fragments. Nicolaus was Herod the Great's advisor, yet after his death, he took it upon himself to function as an intermediary to the imperial administration and even befriended Augustus himself. See Toher 1989, 161.

γεγραμμένος). Nor would the virtue and good faith of Caesar, which were unquestioned throughout the entire civilized world (τὴν Καίσαρος ἀρετὴν καὶ πίστιν, πρὸς ἅπασαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀνευδοίαστον), so far imitate the malice of these men as to condemn a person of kingly rank, who had left the succession to his worthy son and had taken refuge in Caesar's good faith (πίστει δὲ τῇ αὐτοῦ προσπεφευγός), on the grounds of madness and loss of reason. Nor could Herod have been wrong in deciding upon his successor when he showed enough prudence to leave everything to the judgment of Caesar.<sup>227</sup>

Now, whether or not Caesar's *fides* was indeed known across the realm—for this is undeniably flattery from the side of the suppliant—it appears that this presentation is befitting of the agenda of the early empire. The Caesars advertised that they restored one stable address and source of public *fides* after the destructive division of the civil wars and could exploit this achievement in building relationships of loyalty and dependence with rulers of provinces and foreign nations.

Another outstanding example of the role of *fides* in early imperial 'public relations management' is a passage from the preface of Valerius Maximus's *Memorable Doings and Sayings* in which he dedicates the work to Tiberius Caesar:

Therefore I invoke you to this undertaking, Caesar, surest salvation of the fatherland (*certissima salus patriae*), in whose charge the unanimous will of gods and men has placed the governance of land and sea, by whose celestial providence the virtues of which I shall tell are most kindly fostered (*cuius caelesti providentia virtutes (...) benignissime foventur*) and the vices most sternly punished. Orators of old rightly began from Jupiter Best and Greatest, the finest poets took their start from some deity. My petty self shall betake me to your goodwill (*ad favorem tuum*) all the more properly in that other divinity is inferred by opinion (*quo cetera divinitas opinione colligitur*), whereas yours is seen by present trustworthiness as equal to the star of your father and grandfather (*tua praesenti fide paterno avitoque sideri par videtur*), through whose peerless radiance much far-famed lustre has accrued to our ceremonies. For other gods we have received, the Caesars we have bestowed (*reliquos*

227 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 17.246–247 = Nicolaus Damascenus, *Fragment* 95a: 35–45.

*enim deos accepimus, Caesares dedimus*). (Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 1.praef)<sup>228</sup>

Tiberius is addressed here as the ultimate benefactor, who is ‘salvation’ both in his capacity as a ruler and as a supporter or nurturer of virtue. The contrast drawn with other divinities is also telling, for, according to Valerius, the Caesars stand out in the ubiquity of their *fides*, as opposed to the uncertain trustworthiness of those whose divinity is ‘inferred by opinion’. *Fides* thus appears to be a proper criterion to rank the gods. The final sentence quoted seems to add a somewhat ironical twist by presenting the Roman people as benefactors who bestow the Caesars as a gift to humanity.<sup>229</sup>

When the bond between emperor and subjects breaks, this is perceived as a public crisis of *fides*, as we learn from subsequent periods of crisis, in particular those leading up to the establishment of the Flavian dynasty.<sup>230</sup> We have already encountered the tragedy *Octavia*, probably written in the Flavian period, which deals with the reign of Nero. Apart from the eschatological visions of a return of *Fides* after ages of vice (see §3.3.2 and §3.3.3 *supra*), the play also diagnoses the rule of Nero by his lack of concern for the trust or loyalty of the public:

[Nero] I should be foolish to fear the gods, when I myself create them!  
 [Seneca] You should fear all the more because you have so much power.  
 [Nero] My good fortune gives me licence to do anything. [Seneca] Do not put such trust in her compliance (*Crede obsequenti parcius*): she is a fickle goddess. (...) [Nero] Steel is the emperor’s protection (*Ferrum tuetur principem*). [Seneca] Loyalty a better one (*Melius fides*). [Nero] It befits Caesar to be feared. [Seneca] But more to be loved. (Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia* 449–452, 456–457)<sup>231</sup>

228 The Loeb translation renders *fide* as ‘certainty’, which is a logical epistemological counterpart to *opinione* yet does not sufficiently negotiate the semantic domain of benefaction and petition which is evident from the wider context.

229 There have been conjectures that prefer *vidimus* or *videmus* for *dedimus*, yet this seems to be an unlikely antithesis to *accepimus* and an unlikely repetition of the sentiment already expressed in this sentence: cf. Shackleton Bailey 2000, 15, n. 3.

230 A very helpful work for understanding *fides* in this period is the volume resulting from the 2015 Nijmegen conference ‘*Fides* in Flavian Literature’: Augoustakis, Buckley & Stocks 2019.

231 Cf. Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia* 527, where Nero is convinced that the same military security kept Augustus safe: ‘It was his soldiers’ arms and loyalty that kept him safe’ (*armis fideque militis tutus fuit*).

The dialogue engages in a familiar topos in which the just king and the tyrant are contrasted in terms of impiety versus godliness, fear versus love, and steel versus the loyalty (*fides*) of the people. The fear of the gods and the trust and love of his subjects represent the checks and balances of Roman imperial power, and, as the author knows, it is the absence of these that would prove fatal to Nero. *Fides* is here the alternative to mere obedience, not its equivalent.

A lack of *fides* is also part of the language used to describe the chaotic year of the four emperors (69 AD). In particular, the loyalty of the legions and the praetorian guard proved crucial for a contender's claim to the imperial throne. In the *Histories*, Tacitus writes:

The first message that gave Otho confidence (*fiduciam addidit*) came from Illyricum, to the effect that the legions of Dalmatia and Pannonia and Moesia had sworn allegiance to him (*iurasse in eum*). The same news was brought from Spain, whereupon Otho extolled Cluvius Rufus in a proclamation; but immediately afterwards word was brought that Spain had gone over to Vitellius. Not even Aquitania long remained faithful (*diu mansit*), although it had been made to swear allegiance to Otho by Julius Cordus. Nowhere was there any loyalty or affection (*Nusquam fides aut amor*). Fear and necessity made men shift now to one side, now to the other. (Tacitus, *Histories* 1.76)

This sense of *fides* as loyalty to an imperial candidate recurs throughout the *Histories*, often in combination with words denoting loyalty and obedience. Princes of the Suebi are said to have been 'loyal (*obsequium*) to the Romans and whose people were more inclined to remain faithful (*gens fidei (...) patientior*) to Rome than to take orders from others', whereas 'Raetia was hostile to Vespasian's party, its procurator Porcius Septiminus being unshaken in his loyalty to Vitellius (*incorruptae erga Vitellium fidei*)'. Faithfulness, loyalty, obedience not only to Rome, but to a specific commander became essential.

Overall, in the *Histories* there is a much higher occurrence of *fides* and related terms (including its opposite, *perfidia*) compared to the *Annals*, with a concentration in those books which describe the period of the civil wars.<sup>232</sup> In most of these instances, it refers to military faith or lack thereof. In his analysis of *fides* in the *Histories*, Salvador Bartera offers the following interpretation of how Tacitus uses the semantic flexibility of the term to denote different, deteriorating stages of social cohesion:

---

<sup>232</sup> For these and some of the following insights pertaining to the Flavian period, I am indebted to Bartera 2019.



*Fides*, in this state of degeneration, is placed more on a dishonest and cunning man, and is therefore a far cry from traditional Roman *fides*, which was associated with *iustitia*, *modestia*, and *temperantia*. With Galba, *fides* began a decline that reached its lowest with Otho, where *fides* became a mere 'personal allegiance.' (...) Tacitus portrays the Flavians as spectators, outside the struggle, as it were, between the corrupt Otho and Vitellius, and thus untainted by the degenerated concept of *fides* that had replaced the traditional type, which the Flavians come to embody. (Bartera 2019, 262)<sup>233</sup>

The changing use of *fides* as loyalty to a particular contender for the Roman principate thus necessitated a reassessment of the term under the Flavian dynasty: a return to the traditional concept of *fides* as a public virtue. By his complex and nuanced conception of *fides*, Tacitus is able to evaluate and interpret the actions of the different contenders and hence consciously strengthens the claim of the Flavians to the Roman throne.<sup>234</sup>

Nevertheless, particular ideological propaganda strategies are not the main issue here. In the context of this study, it is important to emphasize the existence of a discourse on the proper configuration of Roman *fides*. As we already observed in Caesar's dealing with his enemies, in times of civil war it becomes evident that personal loyalty to a military leader as such was not deemed enough. *Fides* comprised more than allegiance to a patron-figure, more than obedience; it was conceived of as part of an integrated web of public values and virtues, whose ethical norms exceeded personal obligations. If loyalty to a leader is played out against a more general trustworthiness or integrity, the concept was thought to erode until it eventually turns into its opposite, *perfidia*. In other words, when *fides* is robbed of its bridging capital, it eventually ceases to be *fides*. Personal, vertical *fides* was foregrounded in the context of imperial power struggles, yet the horizontal solidarity that is *fides* did not die out, as Freyburger argued; its importance was rather confirmed anew.

233 For an interesting wordplay regarding Vitellius's misplaced trust, see Tacitus, *Histories* 2.60: 'Vitellius believed in their treachery and acquitted them of the crime of loyalty towards Otho' (*et Vitellius credit de perfidia et fidem absolvit*).

234 Cf. Bartera 2019, 268–269: 'While he expresses sharp criticism for the three short-lived emperors of that fatal year, his views of the Flavians are more difficult to evaluate, given the loss of the later books of the *Histories*. I am inclined to believe, however, that Tacitus is reflecting, in his use of *fides* and its cognates, the Flavians' desire to be seen as the restorers of the old Roman traditions, which included *fides*. This is not to say that Tacitus was adhering to the Flavians' official propaganda; but his narrative suggests that he was aware of their strategy.'

After the chaotic year of the four emperors, 69 AD, the stability depending on a relationship of faith between one ruler and all his subjects was sought all the more emphatically. The numismatic evidence shows that Fides herself was now even more explicitly employed to restore or perhaps rather simply proclaim public faith in the principate: whereas in the Julio-Claudian period there are only a few remnant coins that possibly refer to this goddess, under the Flavians there is a remarkable increasing of representations of Fides often combined with the words 'Fides Publica' and, though less often, 'Fides Exercituum'.<sup>235</sup> The iconography normally includes either the figure of the goddess, customarily holding a *patera* (the symbol of *pietas*), *cornucopiae* (the symbol of *fortuna*), and/or a plate of fruits or corn-ears in her hands, or, also very commonly, a right-hand shake that refers to the taking of oaths.<sup>236</sup>

Whereas Domitian continued this tradition of Fides coinage, with his own portrait to be found on the other side of all extant coins, our sources contrast his reign to that of his successors particularly in terms of faith. Domitian was assassinated precisely because 'his relationship with the Senate and especially with those nearest to him deteriorated so that he trusted no one and no one could trust him'.<sup>237</sup> In one of his epigrams, Martial contrasts Nerva with his direct predecessor Domitian and depicts Nerva's ascension to the throne as the return of *recta fides*:

Unswerving faith, cheerful clemency, circumspect power now return (*recta fides, hilaris clementia, cauta potestas iam redeunt*). The terrors that were with us so long have taken flight. Loyal Rome (*pia Roma*), the prayer of your peoples and nations is this: may your Leader ever be such as he, and long be he. (Martial, *Epigrams* 12.5)

235 See the online catalogue of coins OCRE, keyword 'fides'. The strategy of coining was already employed by Galba and Vitellius, who often combined images of 'Fides Exercituum', Fides Praetorianum', or 'Fides Publica' with 'Concordia' or their own portrait. Cf. Bartera 2019, 258–259.

236 Cf. e.g. Cicero, *Philippics* 11.5: 'right hands, the accustomed pledges of good faith (*fidei testes*)'. See OCRE, keyword 'fides'; Boyancé 1972c; Reusser 1993, 86–91; Morgan 2015, 129–130. For further bibliography on the symbolism of the right hand, see Freyburger 1986, 339.

237 Spisak 2015, 66; cf. also at 66: 'Throughout much of the poem Martial contrasts Nerva with his assassinated predecessor, Domitian: Nerva is mild, Domitian was severe; in Domitian's reign Rome faced distrust and intrigue, cruelty, abuse of power, and terror, whereas under Nerva good and easy relations have returned; all of this strongly implies that the trust that was necessary for a healthy exchange between emperor and subjects had deteriorated under Domitian.'

The adjective *recta*, 'straight', emphasizes the wish for an uncomplicated and true relationship of faith between the leader and his subjects. Similarly, Trajan, who succeeded Nerva after barely one and half years, is hailed by Pliny the Younger for his abolition of the trials of high treason: 'Loyalty is restored among friends (*reddita est amicis fides*), a sense of duty to freedmen (*liberis pietas*) and obedience to slaves (*obsequium servis*)—who can now respect and obey and keep their masters.'<sup>238</sup> Pliny also includes the idea that a good emperor is an emperor who believes and trusts the people who praise him:

But among the many words of weight and wisdom spoken on that day, these must be singled out: 'Trust us, trust yourself (*Crede nobis, crede tibi*).'<sup>239</sup> This was said with great confidence in ourselves (*Magna hoc fiducia nostri*), but greater still in you; for a man may deceive another, but no one can deceive himself, so long as he looks closely at his life and asks himself what are his true deserts. Moreover, our words carried conviction (*dabat vocibus nostris fidem*) in the ears of the best of princes through the very factor which made them unconvincing to his evil predecessors; for though we went through the motions of affection before them, they could never believe that they were genuinely liked (*illi tamen non amari se credebant sibi*). (Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus* 74.2–3)

Thus, according to Pliny it is the confidence of the emperor which allows him to be sincerely praised. *Fides* of the emperor is here the ultimate characteristic of a reign that is free from terror, insincere flattery, and distrustful paranoia.

All in all, we can conclude that in imperial times, on the one hand, the prototypical *fides*-relationship shifts towards a unilateral relationship between one beneficent ruler and many dependent subjects, who cannot return favours in any way other than by exhibiting immaterial loyalty and gratitude. Yet, in the discourse surrounding public *fides*, there is continuity in the ideal that as a virtue, it should encompass more than a formal allegiance or loyalty to a specific person; instead it ought to be a generous dedication to a cause or principle, embodied in the figure of the ideal ruler who confirms this bond by reversely granting trust to his subjects.

The restatement of this ideal type of *fides* is often linked to reflection on periods of civil war or unstable leadership.<sup>239</sup> From the internal Roman per-

<sup>238</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus* 42.2.

<sup>239</sup> On the occurrence of *pistis/fides* vocabulary in situations of crisis and decision-making, and the fragility of trust in such situations, cf. Morgan 2015, in particular her conclusions on p. 75 and n. 197.

spective, the concept of *fides*, particularly its high ambition as a bridging, inclusive virtue, functions as a self-critical measure to re-evaluate recent history and present-day politics. It also functioned as a propaganda-tool vis-à-vis provinces and foreign people. Yet there is an important connection: the loyalty of these nations conversely functions to confirm the qualification of the Roman emperor as faithful, as their only good option of protection. The stability of the realm depended on this trust and loyalty in universal leadership, so there is also an important benefit to be gained with dependency on the side of the imperial conqueror. Good emperors trust their subjects and seek their loyalty, not merely obedience.

Imperial Roman *fides* thus maintains its reciprocal nature, and the subjugated people who participate in Roman *fides* are not ‘somewhere between fealty and slavery’, whereas Pauline *pistis* is supposedly something entirely different.<sup>240</sup> Of course, there is anti-imperial potential in proclaiming *pistis* in Christ, yet it is anti-imperial precisely because it mirrors Roman imperial *fides* in both its asymmetric and reciprocal aspects, along with its universal claim. Because commitment to ultimately only one lord was of eminent importance to the interests of imperial Rome, commitment to another could more easily be conceived of as rivalry. Yet, from the perspective of discourses and how Paul’s language participates in them, there may be more convergence than divergence between the Roman and Pauline conception of faith. In fact, as the next section (§7.4) will explore further, Paul seems to contribute to an internal Roman discussion on the malfunctioning of faith and how it ought to be properly enacted.

### 7.3.6 *Philosophical Critique of Benefaction-as-Business and the Alternative of Interior Faith*

In the previous subsections, I discussed how in this chapter’s discourse faith constitutes an important religious-social virtue whose radius extends beyond personal relationships and whose potential is based on expectations that exceed formal obligations of laws, oaths, and treaties (§7.3.1–2). *Pistis/fides*’s prominence in the semantic field of benefaction and patronage shows that it can easily accommodate asymmetrical relationships and represent the expected behaviour of superior and inferior positions alike (§7.3.3). When language of patronage is transferred to the field of imperial power-relations, however, *pistis/fides* language is often used to emphasize the moral obligation of the superior party to protect the inferior (§7.3.4), whereas in the early principate,

---

240 McKnight & Modica 2012, 158.

the dependence of emperors on the trust of their subjects is often foregrounded (§7.3.5). All in all, whatever the aims of the particular work or author, reciprocity is deemed essential to faith-relationships.

Up until this point, this chapter has covered a larger number of sources than the previous chapters which are not particularly philosophical in nature. Already in these sources, I distinguished self-critical reflections on what *pistis/fides* means and what does and does not contribute to relationships of faith in the public domain. These reflections are found in a more explicit and refined manner in philosophical literature. Philosophical reflection on the social aspects of benefaction and faith tells us what benefaction-relationships should be like in the eyes of some of Rome's elite. The most important sources in this regard are Cicero's treatise *De officiis* and Seneca's *On Benefits* (*De beneficiis*). These philosophical treatises offer valuable insights in the intellectual discourse of what benefaction ought to be like—although we must of course realize that in the social dynamics of real-life faith-relationships, the ideal and the real are not so easily reconciled.

I have already given some attention to the first of these works regarding the bridging function of faith as evidenced by the *exemplum* of Regulus. According to Cicero, to keep faith is part of what is morally right (*honestum*), which should always prevail above what seems—but is not truly—expedient (*utilitas*). This lofty ideal is nevertheless contrasted with a harsh reality, such as when military or political ambition clouds the view of justice. In this context, Cicero approvingly quotes the poet Ennius: 'there is no fellowship inviolate, no faith is kept when kingship is concerned' (*nulla sancta societas nec fides regni est*).<sup>241</sup>

As for the exchange of benefits, Cicero contrasts having a generous nature with outward ostentation or seeking glory (*gloria*): the latter is not benefaction but rather hypocrisy.<sup>242</sup> Cicero also offers an interesting distinction in two kinds of 'receivers':

241 Cicero, *De officiis* 1.26. Cf. Cicero, *On the Republic* 1.49, with a small variation: *nulla sancta societas nec fides est*.

242 See Cicero, *De officiis* 1.44: 'We may also observe that a great many people do many things that seem to be inspired more by a spirit of ostentation than by heart-felt kindness (*non tam natura liberales quam quadam gloria ductos*); for such people are not really generous but are rather influenced by a sort of ambition to make a show of being open-handed (*facere multa, quae proficisci ab ostentatione magis quam a voluntate videantur*). Such a pose is nearer akin to hypocrisy (*vanitati est coniunctior*) than to generosity or moral goodness.'

As a rule, our will is more inclined to the one from whom we expect a prompter and speedier return. But we should observe more carefully how the matter really stands: the poor man of whom we spoke cannot return a favour in kind, of course, but if he is a good man he can do it at least in thankfulness of heart (*etiāmsi referre gratiam non potest, habere certe potest*). (...) On the other hand, they who consider themselves wealthy, honoured, the favourites of fortune, do not wish even to be put under obligations by our kind services (*ne obligari quidem beneficio volunt*). Why, they actually think that they have conferred a favour by accepting one, however great; and they even suspect that a claim is thereby set up against them or that something is expected in return. Nay more, it is bitter as death to them to have accepted a patron or to be called clients (*clientes appellari*). (Cicero, *De officiis* 2.69)

According to Cicero, a poor man cannot repay the grace (*gratia*) shown, but he can have an attitude of gratitude (*gratia*). Conversely, those who consider themselves rich are afraid to be seen as indebted to another and want to return the favour as quickly as possible. For Cicero, the conclusion of this internalization of reciprocity is that a gift given to a poor but worthy and thankful person is in fact the expedient choice.<sup>243</sup> These distinctions between showing off generosity and having a generous nature and between externally, boastfully returning a favour and having an attitude of gratitude are also taken up roughly a century later by Seneca.

Another distinction made by Cicero which returns in Seneca's exposition is the distinction between borrowing and giving, between commerce and benefaction. Cicero argues in his *De finibus bonorum et malorum* (*On Ends of Good and Evil*) that if excellence consists of following your own interests, this 'does away with generosity (*beneficium*) and with gratitude (*gratia*), the bonds of mutual harmony (*vincla concordiae*)'. He continues: 'if you lend a man money for your own advantage, this cannot be considered an act of generosity—it is usury (*feneratio*); no gratitude is owing (*nec gratia deberi*) to a man who lends money for gain (*sua causa*).'<sup>244</sup> As a virtue, generosity is seen by Cicero as a good in itself and hence not in need of recompense.<sup>245</sup> Benefaction is thus

243 See Cicero, *De officiis* 2.71: 'I think, therefore, that kindness to the good is a better investment than kindness to the favourites of fortune.'

244 Cicero, *On Ends* 2.117.

245 Cf. Cicero, *On the Laws* 1.48: 'What of generosity, is it disinterested or does it look to a recompense (*liberalitas gratuitane est an mercennaria*)? If a man is kind without any reward, then it is disinterested (*gratuita*); but if he receives payment, then it is hired. It

utterly other-regarding and not self-serving. Yet it is precisely for this reason that reciprocity is inherent to it, for a response of gratitude is due.

The *On Benefits* offers more of an in-depth analysis of misconduct as regards the ethics of gift-giving and keeping faith. As we have already discussed, for Seneca, *fides* is a virtue that belongs to the domain of interhuman conventions which exceed the rule of law.<sup>246</sup> There is no question, however, as to Seneca's belief about the validity and importance of the social rules of *fides*, even if, or perhaps precisely because, they cannot be enforced by the system of justice.

The *On Benefits* opens with the lament about the contemporary ignorance in the art of giving and receiving and the omnipresence of the vice of ingratitude. On the side of the receiver, Seneca echoes Cicero in his observation that many people are reluctant to be indebted to another, even more so if this obligation is publicly known. Instead of boasting in our own merit, we must learn to be publicly grateful and acknowledge our dependence:

Let us show how grateful we are for the blessing that has come to us by pouring forth our feelings, and let us bear witness to them, not merely in the hearing of the giver, but everywhere (*ubique testemur*). He who receives a benefit with gratitude (*Qui grate beneficium accipit*) repays the first instalment on his debt. There are some who are not willing to receive a benefit unless it is privately bestowed; they dislike having a witness to the fact or anyone aware of it. But these, you may be sure, take a wrong view. As the giver should add to his gift only that measure of publicity which will please the one to whom he gives it, so the recipient should invite the whole city to witness it; a debt that you are ashamed to acknowledge you should not accept. (...) Some men object to having any record made of their indebtedness, to the employment of factors, to the summoning of witnesses to seal the contract, to giving their bond. (...) They shrink from taking it openly for fear that they may be said to owe their success to the assistance of another rather than to their own merit (*sua potius virtute*); they are only rarely found paying their respects to those to whom they owe their living or their position, and, while they fear the reputation of being a dependent, they incur the more painful one of being an ingrate. (Seneca, *On Benefits* 2.22.1–23.3)

---

cannot be doubted that he who is called generous or kind answers the call of duty, not of gain. Therefore equity also demands no reward or price; consequently it is sought for its own sake. And the same motive and purpose characterize all the virtues.'

246 Seneca, *On Benefits* 5.21.1. See §3.3.5 and §6.3.2 *supra*.

Two things stand out here: the importance of publicly acknowledging a gift received and the reason for not doing so, namely the fear of being thought of as a dependent rather than a self-made man. To those familiar with Pauline writings, Seneca's critique may sound much like Paul's contrast between grace and merit, or faith and works of the law, and I will indeed return to this similarity.

A main caveat for the giver, conversely, is to not to give grudgingly, not to demand or even count on a return, but to be of good faith:

The best man is he who gives readily, never demands any return, rejoices if a return is made, who is sincere (*bona fide*), forgets what he has bestowed, and accepts a return in the spirit of one accepting a benefit. (Seneca, *On Benefits* 2.17.7)

A giver should never insist on a return, for then, Seneca argues, both the gift (*beneficium*) and the response of gratitude (*gratia*) are corrupted.<sup>247</sup> This does not mean that there is no expectation of reciprocity (the whole system relied on that), only that the response ought to be voluntary, internally motivated by the receiver.

It may seem at odds with this focus on publicly expressing gratitude that for Seneca the essence of this gratitude at the side of the receiver and of the generosity of the giver is located in its interiority. Yet, when one is internally grateful, there is no reason to publicly conceal that one is under obligation. In perfect accordance with Stoic teaching, Seneca holds that ethics is a matter of *voluntas*, 'will', and *animus*, 'mind', 'heart', or 'spirit'.<sup>248</sup> *Gratia* and *fides* alike are virtues and are as such good in themselves, as an internal *habitus* or attitude, independent of whether they are received or perceived as such on the outside:

He who receives a benefit gladly has already returned it. For, since we Stoics refer every action to the mind (*ad animum*), a man acts only as he wills; and, since devotion, good faith, justice (*pietas, fides, iustitia*), since, in short, every virtue is complete within itself (*intra se perfecta sit*) even if it has not been permitted to put out a hand, a man can also have gratitude

247 Cf. Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.7.2–3: 'In the second place, although to repay grace (*referre gratiam*) is a most praiseworthy act, it ceases to be praiseworthy if it is made obligatory (*desinit esse honesta, si necessaria est*); (...) So we spoil (*corrumpimus*) the two most beautiful things in human life—a man's gratitude and a man's benefit (*gratum hominem et beneficium*).'

248 Cf. also Barclay 2015, 48.



by the mere act of will (*voluntate*). (...) For he [i.e. the benefactor] had no wish that I should give him anything in exchange. Otherwise, it would have been, not a benefaction, but a bargaining (*aut non fuit beneficium, sed negotiatio*). (...) 'But,' you say, 'he wished to gain something besides!' Then it was not a benefit, for the chief mark of one is that it carries no thought of a return. (Seneca, *On Benefits* 2.31.1–3)

Seneca here discusses both the desired attitude of the receiver (gratitude) and of the giver (to be of service). The receiver should receive in a spirit of gladness; the giver ought to give without expecting a return. The virtue of the receiver is thus not dependent on the ability to return the favour, and the virtue of the giver is not dependent on the actual reception of a return. Both ought to have the right *voluntas* (goodwill, intention) or *animus* (mind, heart, disposition). As a virtue, *fides* is its own reward.<sup>249</sup>

While the goodness of benefaction is thus sought in interior attitudes such as faithfulness and gratitude, the relationality of *fides* remains indisputable to Seneca, as we read in the same treatise:

Of course, since benefaction must be included among those acts that require a second person. Certain actions, though honourable, admirable, and highly virtuous, find a field only in the person of another. Fidelity (*bona fides*) is praised, and honoured as one of the greatest blessings of the human race, yet is it ever said that anyone for that reason has kept his faith to himself (*num quis ergo dicitur sibi fidem praestitisse*)? (Seneca, *On Benefits* 5.10.4)<sup>250</sup>

Hence, there is something of a paradox in conceiving of faith as a virtue which is good in itself and independent of the other, yet which at the same time requires another to be enacted.<sup>251</sup> The relationship with this 'other' must, he

249 Cf., on the independence of *fides*, Seneca, *On Benefits* 4.21.6: 'If it sees its own loyalty subjected to the chastisements reserved for treachery (*Si vero bonam fidem perfidiae supplicii adfici videt*), it does not descend from its pinnacle, but abides there superior to its punishment. (...) [T]hough my very heart, brimming with conscious virtue, should drip with blood, it will delight in the flame through which its loyalty will shine forth (*per quem bona fides conlucebit*).'

250 The Loeb translation by John W. Basore (1935) renders *fidem* as 'promise'.

251 Hellegouarc'h (1972 [1963], 30, 35) makes a distinction between moral and social qualities and assigns *fides* to the latter and *fidelitas* to the first. Considering Seneca's treatment of *fides*, this distinction seems unwarranted.

argues, be relatively strong. Queueing up of heaps of clients for a morning *salutatio* is not the best way to develop *fides*:

Do you call a man who must stand in line to give you his greeting a friend? Or can anyone possibly reveal loyalty to you (*tibi fides patere*) who, through doors that are opened grudgingly, does not so much enter as sneak in? (Seneca, *On Benefits* 6.34.3)

The contrast of benefaction with the realm of business transactions is also a recurrent theme in the *On Benefits*. The ones bestowing a benefit must not only be of good faith themselves, but they are also admonished to 'look only to the good faith of the recipient' (*solam accipientis fidem specta*) and not demand them to pay back.<sup>252</sup> *Fides* thus comes in the place of returning the favour. After all, 'all the greatest benefits are incapable of being repaid' and 'if we make merchandise (*mercem*) of benefits, all the merit of so fine an action will perish'.<sup>253</sup> Seneca goes on to lament the practice of nailing down *fides* in contracts in an effort to make an arrangement watertight:

Would that no compact marked the obligation of buyer to seller, and that no covenants and agreements were safeguarded by the impress of seals, but that, instead, the keeping of them were left to good faith and a conscience that cherishes justice (*fides potius illa servaret et aecum colens animus*)! But men have preferred what is necessary to what is best, and would rather compel good faith than expect it (*cogere fidem quam expectare malunt*). (...) More trust is placed in our sealings than in our consciences (*Anulis nostris plus quam animis creditur*). (...) So would it not have been more desirable to allow some men to break their word (*a quibusdam fidem falli*) than to cause all men to fear treachery (*quam ab omnibus perfidiam timeri*)? (...) To help, to be of service, is the part of a noble and chivalrous soul; he who gives benefits imitates the gods (*qui dat beneficia, deos imitatur*), he who seeks a return, money-lenders. Why, in wishing to protect benefactors, do we reduce them to the level of the most disreputable class? (Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.15.1–4)

According to Seneca's logic, the moment you want to have good faith guaranteed, you move from the realm of interior virtue, trust, and benefaction to that

---

252 Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.14.2.

253 Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.14.2.

of external security, mistrust, and business. By expecting trust, you imitate the gods—by enforcing it, money-lenders.<sup>254</sup>

Teresa Morgan refers to this idea as ‘the literary cliché that the world would be a better place if people practised *pistis/fides* instead of needing laws, contracts, or tokens of exchange like money.’<sup>255</sup> I would emphasize the importance of this ‘cliché’, discourse-wise, for understanding the ancient distinction between the sphere of trade and the sphere of benefaction or, alternatively perhaps, between the realm of law and the realm of faith. The main difference between both spheres seems to be that whereas a business relationship is ended when the return is made, a gift is given with the intention to establish or uphold a continuous relationship of mutual trust.<sup>256</sup> As I will argue more fully below, this distinction may provide us with a potential crux for understanding Paul’s attitude towards the law.<sup>257</sup>

In Paul, the benefactions at stake are usually those given by God. In the *On Benefits*, divine beneficence is a recurring theme too, for it is often used as the ultimate model for human beneficence. What makes the gods ideal benefactors is that they are ‘always ready to give and will never expect return’ (*qui et semper daturi sunt et numquam recepturi*).<sup>258</sup> Since the gods are in need of nothing, the only possible return humans can offer their divine benefactors is an interior attitude of gratitude, a response of ‘the mind without a material offering’ (*animus sine re*).<sup>259</sup> The gods bestow favours ‘without any reward’ (*sine mercede*).<sup>260</sup> Moreover, what stands out regarding the divine benefactions is that they are given to all without discrimination. The gods

follow their own nature, and in their universal bounty include even those who are ill interpreters of their gifts. Let us follow these as our guides in so far as human weakness permits; let us make our benefits, not investments, but gifts (*demus beneficia, non feneremus*). The man who, when

254 In the case of money lending, *fides* can be legally enforced to prevent excuses. See Seneca, *On Benefits* 7.16.3: ‘Yet they [our forefathers] accepted no excuses in order to teach men that a promise must be kept at all costs (*ut homines scirent fidem utique praestandam*); in their eyes it was better that a few should not find even a good excuse accepted than that all should resort to excuse.’ On contemporary discussion of this law in antiquity, cf. Griffin 2013, 333–334.

255 Morgan 2015, 105.

256 See Blanton 2017, 4, quoted above in §7.2.4.

257 This suggestion was also made by Jerome Neyrey (2005, 491–492, and cf. also Neyrey 2004, 253). See §7.4.2 *infra*.

258 Seneca, *On Benefits* 6.23.7.

259 Seneca, *On Benefits* 7.15.4, cf. 2.30.2.

260 Seneca, *On Benefits* 4.25.2.

he gives, has any thought of repayment deserves to be deceived. (Seneca, *On Benefits* 1.1.9)

Here we should be mindful of the ease with which Seneca combines two ideas that are often contrasted in theological discussions: on the one hand, the inclusion of non-deserving people in divine benefaction, and, on the other, the reception of this gift as grace without making a material return. The Pauline parallel would be ‘works of the law’, explained as exclusive device on the one hand and as self-righteousness on the other. From the perspective of the divine benefactor, to extend gifts to all also means not seeking a return of works: otherwise, there would be a careful selection of worthy beneficiaries. The benefaction-perspective thus effortlessly combines elements from the ‘Lutheran Perspective’ and the ‘New Perspective’ (on which, see also §3.2 above). I will return to this when it comes time to do a close reading of the Pauline passages (§7.4).

A further question following Seneca’s adage that we ought to imitate the gods and his characterization of the gods as indiscriminatory givers is whether we humans should also give to the ungrateful.<sup>261</sup> The answer is not a simple ‘yes’. The argument is advanced that the gods cannot discriminate in their gift-giving, but that their gifts—such as the change of seasons or the availability of water—are designed for good people.<sup>262</sup> However, when push comes to shove, the concluding advice is that even in this inclusive benefaction we should imitate the gods: ‘Let us imitate them; let us give, even if many of our gifts have been given in vain; none the less, let us give to still others, nay, even to those at whose hands we have suffered loss.’<sup>263</sup> In the end, Seneca concludes, repeated acts of kindness may overcome the ingratitude, ‘as a good farmer overcomes the sterility of his ground by care and cultivation.’<sup>264</sup> This is still a long way from Paul’s bold statement that God justifies—or, with Sanders, ‘righteouses’—the ungodly (see §7.4.4 below). That said, the idea that grace may end up transforming the beneficiary is already present in Seneca’s thought.

To sum up, in moral philosophy of the first century BC and AD, the sphere of benefaction is opposed to the realm of business and to the realm of law. Within

261 Seneca, *On Benefits* 4.26.1: “If you are imitating the gods,” you say, “then bestow benefits also upon the ungrateful; for the sun rises also upon the wicked, and the sea lies open also to pirates.” This point raises the question whether a good man would bestow a benefit upon one who was ungrateful, knowing that he was ungrateful.’

262 Seneca, *On Benefits* 4.28.1.

263 Seneca, *On Benefits* 7.31.2–5.

264 Seneca, *On Benefits* 7.32.

this sphere, grace (*gratia*) and good faith (*fides*) are seen as other-regarding, interior virtues, good for their own sake and not in need of a return, reward, or recompense. Reciprocity is assumed but should not be juridically enforced or contractually ensured by the benefactor. On the side of the receiver, an attitude of gratitude (*gratia*) and good faith (*fides*) is the most important return. One's indebtedness to and dependence on one's benefactor is not to be resolved by speedy returns but rather whole-hearted acknowledgement in public. Otherwise, the gift-exchange is turned into a negotiation, the giver into a money-lender. Especially when it comes to divine benefaction, humans cannot offer any return of actual value. Nevertheless, an interior response is required to uphold a certain relational reciprocity between God and the human.

#### 7.4 The Proclamation of a Transjuridical and Transethnic Bond of Trust in Paul's Letters

This chapter takes as its semantic domain and discourse the structure of patronage as it is expressed in public situations of benefaction and political structures of imperialism. We have seen that *pistis* in this context was generally recognized as an important social virtue, entrenched in religiosity, praised for its transjuridical and transethnic character, and typically used to describe asymmetrical yet reciprocal relationships in which it could describe both the good faith of the benefactor and the interior loyalty of the beneficiary. Now that we turn to Paul, how can this discourse help us understand his usage of *pistis* language?

As an important social structure, patronage was, of course, an unavoidable aspect of life in the Pauline churches.<sup>265</sup> Paul's own role can also be described in terms of patronage, though there is debate as regards the top-down character of his influence.<sup>266</sup> When it comes to *pistis*, at least, Paul expresses his concern not to 'lord it over' their faith (2 Cor 1.24, see §5.4.3 *supra*). I will not

265 On the influence of patronage on the Corinthian community, see Coutsoumpos 2015, 38–42. In this interhuman context, it seems that symmetry was foregrounded, cf. Lampe 2016, 216: 'In summary, in early Pauline Christianity, there were no clear-cut and rock-solid static vertical relationships. Things were more dynamic.'

266 Cf. the contribution by Thomas Blanton (2017, chapter 3: 'The Benefactor's Account Book: The Rhetoric of Gift Reciprocation According to Seneca and Paul'), who argues that Paul does in fact exploit his own role as patron to Philemon by emphasizing that Philemon owed him, contrary to the type of advice Seneca gives. Cf., though, Lampe 2016, 224: 'wherever we encountered vertical patron-client-like structures in the social

elaborate on this subject here, since I found that occurrences of *pistis* language in the Pauline letters that may be best explained within the context of benefaction and patronage are concerned with divine-human relationships. Nonetheless, in these 'vertical' relationships, Paul seems to perform an important intermediary function as broker or ambassador.

Not everyone would agree that Paul's use of the terminology of faith fits the Graeco-Roman idea of patronage. The difference between Pauline and Roman use of *pistis* regarding relationships of patronage has been addressed by Efrain Agosto. While the language is taken over, Agosto argues, the relationships expressed by these words are not structurally mirrored by Paul:

Whereas Paul reconfigured the terms of Roman political ideology (e.g. *euangelion*, *kyrios*, *sōtēr*, *pistis*, and so on) into the center of his anti-imperial gospel, he does not appear to have infused the language, much less the relationships of patronage, into either his letters or his relations with his communities. (Agosto 2004, 123)

As I explained earlier (§7.2.3), unlike Agosto I have not found *pistis* in particular charged with anti-imperial potential. I would agree that *pistis* is not used often by Paul in the context of interhuman benefaction or patronage (although *Philemon* 1.5–6 could be so understood). Yet the question at hand is, rather, whether or not the semantic domain of patronage, benefaction, and imperialism, in which *pistis* language functions prominently, was used by Paul to shed light on divine-human relations. To this question (and my positive answer), I now turn.

#### 7.4.1 *Proclaiming Pistis (Gal 1.23, Rom 1.8, Rom 10.8): Paul as Ambassador of a Reciprocal Divine-Human Bond of Trust*

In several distinct passages, Paul speaks of *pistis* as something which is announced, proclaimed, or declared (as the object of Greek verbs such as *εὐαγγελίζομαι*, *καταγγέλλω*, and *κηρύσσω*, respectively Gal 1.23; Rom 1.8; Rom 10.8). In these instances, as in others, Paul styles himself as a messenger of good news. In 2 *Corinthians*, Paul even explicitly indicates that he is working as an ambassador (*πρεσβεύομεν*) to bring a message of reconciliation

---

life of Pauline Christianity, they were in conflict with the strong early Christian feeling that horizontal symmetry and equality should govern the social interactions of Christians. This maxim constantly questioned and undermined top-to-bottom social structures and often led to ambiguity in social relationships.'

(2 Cor 5.18).<sup>267</sup> As a citizen of the heavenly society (Phil 3.20: ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει), Paul represents God towards the nations.<sup>268</sup> His message is qualified as being the ‘word of God heard from us’ (1 Thes 2.13: λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ) and its contents are described as a call from God into his kingdom and glory (1 Thes 2.12: τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν).

In the surviving undisputed letters, there are three instances in which Paul describes his own role in terms of being ‘entrusted’ with a commission or with the gospel, using a middle or passive variant of *pisteuō* (1 Thes 2.4: πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον; Gal 2.7: πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον; 1 Cor 9.17: οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι). This depiction is reminiscent of Cicero’s description of the duties of a Roman magistrate, who is to remember ‘all this has been committed to him as a sacred trust (*ea fidei suae commissa*)’.<sup>269</sup> Yet, unlike in Cicero, Paul’s *pistis* vocabulary is not only used to describe the trust invested in him from above, it is far more often used to describe the contents of what is being pronounced by him. I argue in this section that in these contexts of proclamation, *pistis* refers to the bond of trust with God: God’s offer of faithfulness/trustworthiness (*pistis*) that Paul proclaims to the nations in God’s name and that should in turn be met with a response of loyalty/trust (*pistis*).

When *pistis* is used in this context of announcement and public speech, however, this combination frequently leads commentators to assume a complete identification of this ‘faith’ with the whole content of the kerygma, as a near synonym to syntactically similar constructions with ‘the good news’ (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον), as found in 1 *Corinthians* 15.1 (with εὐαγγελίζομαι) and *Galatians* 2.2 (with κηρύσσω).<sup>270</sup> *Galatians* 1.23 is then translated as ‘they only heard it

267 Cf. on this passage Wright 1993, 206: ‘the idea of the covenant ambassador, who represents the one for whom he speaks in such a full and thorough way that he actually becomes the living embodiment of his sovereign’.

268 For an overview of *polis* language in the NT, see Porter & Pitts 2013, 261, with the comment: ‘perhaps the most significant is in *Acts* 23.1, in his defence before the Sanhedrin when Paul straightway affirms his living as a citizen for God (πεπολίτευμαι τῷ θεῷ) in his opening statement, showing his ultimate allegiance. This is not accidental. Paul would have had ample opportunity or general exposure to, if not careful study of, ancient *politeiai*.’

269 Cicero, *De officiis* 1.124.

270 See, among others, Bultmann 1968, 213: ‘Paul can already use πίστις in the sense of Christianity, which may be further differentiated into being a Christian and the Christian message, teaching or principle’; Hay 1989, at 475: ‘In 1.23 ἡ πίστις seems to mean “the kerygma” (cf. Rom 10.8)’; Brandenburger 1988, 169: “Den Glauben verkünden” (Gal 1.23): das charakterisiert nun, schließlich auch dem Judentum gegenüber, exklusiv das von dieser Gruppierung propagierte Gottes- bzw. Christusverhältnis als Weg zum Heil.’

said, “The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming *the faith* he once tried to destroy (νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει).”<sup>271</sup> The question at hand in this section is: is this the best interpretation of *pistis*, bearing in mind the Graeco-Roman discourses in which it is involved? Does *pistis* stand for ‘what is believed’ in *Galatians* 1.23, *Romans* 1.8, and *Romans* 10.8?

An important incentive to look for different discourses to understand *pistis* in the Pauline letters is the fact that the ‘kerygmatic’ interpretation would imply a major shift in meaning at a very early stage of what we now know as Christianity. Throughout her work, Teresa Morgan has argued persuasively that the occurrence of such an instantaneous shift in meaning is uncalled for.<sup>272</sup> Others have emphasized that the burden of proof rests with those who plead for such a development in Paul’s days.<sup>273</sup> Michael Wolter also points to the ‘ordinary’ pagan usage of *pistis* as ‘listening with approval’ in contrast to a kerygmatic interpretation as the closest parallel for Paul’s usage.<sup>274</sup>

In this study, I look for the specific semantic domains that may be in play in each passage. In §6.4.1 above, where a kerygmatic meaning of *pistis* was also considered, I suggested that *Philippians* 1.27 can best be understood from the domain of the training of philosophical virtue. In the passages under scrutiny in this section, the idea of a political alliance or a relationship of patronage seems to be foregrounded. In both cases, the semantic domain involved suggests a less kerygmatic faith yet also a more than ‘ordinary’ type of belief (as Wolter would prefer). Whereas Wolter rightly rejects overly theological readings and opts for understanding *pistis* as a normal, ‘pagan’ acknowledgement of truth, his reading remains quite cognitive and omits those ‘pagan’ discourses in which *pistis* is a suprahuman force (as in my part I: a *pistis* cosmology), is actively transforming one’s character (see part II: a *pistis* mentality), or is a newly found relational status (see part III: a *pistis* society). And building on Morgan’s work, with whose general emphasis on relationality I heartily

271 Cf. Watson 2018, 244: ‘πίστις can serve as a metonym for the entire content of Christian preaching and teaching (Gal 1.23).’

272 Morgan 2017b, 175; Morgan 2015, 265–267; Morgan 2018b, 259–260. Although cf. Watson 2018 and Seifrid 2018.

273 See e.g. Tilling 2014, 251.

274 See Wolter 2017, 353 (commenting on Plutarch, *On Talkativeness* 503D and 1 Thes 2.13): ‘Das paulinische Glaubensverständnis basiert nicht auf dem Inhalt oder dem Gegenstand des Glaubens, sondern auf einem durch und durch alltagssprachlichen und trivialen Verständnis von “glauben”, nämlich als zustimmendes Hören, das das Gehörte für *wahr* hält.’ Cf. Spaeth 2017, 375–376, who affirms the interpretation of *pistis* as hearing and accepting (at 397: ‘für-wahr-halten’) by Wolter and Friedrich.



agree, my approach seeks to further delineate the specific discourses at play in each Pauline phrase or passage.

In *Galatians* 1.23, the verb ‘to destroy’ (πορθέω) suggests, Morgan argues, that Paul was in his early years not seeking to destroy a point of view or a body of beliefs, but rather ‘to destroy the trust, in the sense of “the relationship of trust” (or even “the bond of trust”) between God, Christ and Christ’s followers.’<sup>275</sup> Morgan understands this meaning as an early Christian development, a small evolution of the known range of meanings in the shape of a further reification of the relationship trust into a bond or covenant of trust.<sup>276</sup> The object of Paul’s destructive actions was indeed first the community itself (Gal 2.13: ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν), which suggests that *pistis* also seems to be connected to community and relationship. In the context of the discourse of patronage discussed in this chapter, such an attempt to destroy a bond of trust can be more specifically understood as an attempt to break up a patron’s relationship with his clients or a commander’s bond with a newly conquered people—serious matters indeed.

This discourse of patronage also explains why the opposite of ‘destroying’ *pistis* in this sentence is ‘proclaiming’ *pistis*: the restoration of the trust-relationship between God and human beings requires a public acknowledgment from both sides. God’s faithfulness to Jew and Greek is paramount, and like the divine benefaction in Seneca, it is part of the divine nature and not dependent on a reciprocal human faithfulness (cf. 2 Tim 2.13: ‘if we are faithless (ἀπιστοῦμεν), he remains faithful (πιστός)—for he cannot deny himself’; 2 Thes 3.2–3: ‘for not all have faith (ἡ πίστις); but the Lord is faithful (πιστός)’). This faithfulness of God to all nations must be announced, but human faithfulness must be publicly acknowledged in response in order to establish a reciprocal bond of trust. Hence, the reciprocity in the terms Paul uses are part and parcel of Paul’s message. Paul proclaims the grace (*charis/gratia*) and

275 Morgan 2017b, 175; cf. also at 175: ‘this is a reference to the structure rather than the story of divine-human *pistis*.’ This interpretation of *pistis* in Gal 1.23 as a ‘relationship of trust’ was endorsed and further refined by Peter Oakes (Oakes 2018, 267) as a ‘relational way of life’ and as a ‘metonym for the house churches of the early Jesus movement’.

276 Cf. Morgan 2015, 305 (in her conclusion of the chapter on Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon): ‘The process of developing this model also leads Paul to develop his use of *pistis* in some other passages: not dramatically, but in ways which will significantly shape later Christian thinking. In places in these letters the relationship of divine-human trust becomes something more like a bond of trust, a community of trust, the assurance created by the sacrifice of Christ, and perhaps even the new covenant in Christ’s blood. This gradual semantic shift will lead to Christians defining the nature of their community, the content of its proclamation, and eventually the cult itself by the name *hē pistis*.’

faithfulness (*pistis/fides*) of God in offering through Christ the gift of justice to all. This calls for a public response of gratitude (*charis/gratia*) and commitment (*pistis/fides*) to this divine patron.

In *Romans*, the importance of this public reciprocity also comes to the fore. Paul describes his own role here as serving God ‘in the good message concerning his Son’ (Rom 1.9: ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ). This Son is indeed presented by Paul as the promised Davidian King (Rom 1.3), whose ‘house and kingdom will be made sure (πιστωθήσεται) forever’ according to Nathan’s prophecy.<sup>277</sup> In the same opening, he writes about the Romans that their ‘faith is proclaimed throughout the world’ (Rom 1.8: ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ). Again, we may ask, is this to be understood as ‘the early Christian collection of beliefs’? For the reasons just laid out, I would argue that it is not. Just as in *Galatians* 1.23, these words confirm the importance of the human response of loyalty to the divine offer, here designated as the ‘good news about his Son’. Even more, they confirm the importance of a public response for the entire world to hear.

Philosophical critique of the benefaction practised in the days of Cicero and Seneca focuses, as we have seen, in particular on ingratitude, on the reluctance to be *seen* as a receiver of benefits, and on the importance of publicly recognizing indebtedness. Nevertheless, especially in philosophical treatments of benefaction, this outward appearance was only a reflection of inner virtue or vice. The proclamation of *pistis* is thus only the outward reflection of what we might call a more encompassing interior response of faithfulness by the Romans addressed.

A text in which the discourse of benefaction and patronage is more explicitly present, and where this response is also at stake, is found at the end of *1 Corinthians*. Here, the Corinthians are reminded of the good news Paul proclaimed (1 Cor 15.1: τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν), a message they received and in which they ‘stand’ (ὁ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε). If they do not, they ‘have come to believe in vain’ (15.2: εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε), as it is often translated. Does *pisteuō* designate their belief in Paul’s message? Some would hold that the usage of *pistis* in this passage is purely and evidently cognitive, as ‘believe to be true’.<sup>278</sup> I would agree that this dimension is part of it, but more than holding it to be true, it signifies their answer of loyalty and allegiance.

277 LXX 2 *Reigns* / 2 *Samuel* 7.16: καὶ πιστωθήσεται ὁ οἶκος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος ἐνώπιόν μου.

278 See Hay 2006, 206, who mentions *1 Corinthians* 15.1–19 and Paul’s unmarked usage in *1 Corinthians* 11.18 (‘to a certain extent I believe it’) as texts that belong to this ‘dimension’.

In light of the discourse presented in this chapter, the remainder of this section shows that it is the Corinthians' allegiance which is at stake. In what follows, Paul discusses his intermediary role as a beneficiary of the divine gift ('grace to me'), which in turn is a gift that is working 'with him' and that led him to 'working' and proclaiming the good news:

But by the favour of God (χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ) I am what I am, and his favour towards me (ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἢ εἰς ἐμέ) has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the favour of God that is with me (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἢ] σὺν ἐμοί). Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have begun to answer with allegiance (οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπίστεύσατε). (...) and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your allegiance has been in vain (κενὸν ἄρα τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν). (1 *Corinthians* 15.10–11, 14)

Allegiance to a disgraced and dead leader is in vain, but if the gift (*charis*) of God in raising Christ as proclaimed is true, then a response of loyalty to and trust in this powerful lord is meaningful and required to enter into (mind the ingressive aorist) a living relationship.<sup>279</sup> From this angle, faith cannot be reduced to cognitive assent to the content of what is proclaimed—in one's life one may believe a lot of meaningless things; instead the exclusive relational investment of the Christ-followers is at stake. *Pistis* amounts to the full human response to the proclamation. Proclamation and *pistis* are thus the complementary sides of the same coin: the proclamation of God's favour or grace, in the shape of a new divine leader, asks for the human return of allegiance, loyalty, commitment, trust, or good faith.<sup>280</sup>

The reasoning in *Romans* 10.8–13 can also be understood against this background. The chapters 9 to 11 of this letter are commonly considered to contain

279 I use 'loyalty' and 'allegiance' in this chapter to underline the formal and political connotations of *pistis/fides*. It is good to remember, however, that the *pistis* vocabulary does not permit this loyalty to be explained as unquestioning and blind dedication regardless of any emotional or relational state. See on *pistis* and loyalty Konstan 2018, 253 and Morgan's response in the same issue Morgan 2018a, 302.

280 I agree with Morgan here (Morgan 2018b, 257): 'What it takes to participate in the kingdom is not simply thinking that what Paul preaches is true, but responding to it with new actions and new relationships. When, therefore, πίστις/πιστεύειν brought the Corinthians to salvation, more than belief *stricto sensu* was involved in it.'

a coherent line of thought.<sup>281</sup> I focus here on a particular section in the middle which contains an unusual high frequency of *pistis* vocabulary, even for Paul. According to Ben Dunson, it is here that ‘we find Paul’s most expansive discussion of faith as it is related to righteousness.’<sup>282</sup> In this passage, Paul elaborates on a citation from *Deuteronomy*: ‘the word is near you, on your lips and in your heart.’<sup>283</sup> This word is identified by Paul as ‘the word of faith that we proclaim’ (Rom 10.8: τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν). As is evidenced by the choice of words, Paul again presents himself as the ambassador of the new faith-relationship between God and all who would listen.

The response ‘on your lips and in your heart’ is further explicated by Paul as relying (πιστεύω) with the heart on the fact that Jesus is Lord and confessing (ὁμολογέω) with the mouth that he was raised from the dead by God:

Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord (ἐὰν ὁμολογήσης ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν) and are convinced in your heart that God raised him from the dead (πιστεύσης ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν), you will be saved. (*Romans* 10.9)

The divine reassurance of faithfulness, proclaimed by Paul, thus demands a two-sided response of allegiance by his audience: an interior answer in the heart (*pisteuō*) and an exterior answer in the mouth (*homologeō*), so that there can be no duplicity. It is interesting that *pistis* is again related to the interior person, a peculiarity that makes sense in view of the philosophical discourse of benefaction (§7.3.6), to which we will return in the next subsection (§7.4.2).

281 These chapters have traditionally been understood structurally as a parenthetical digression concerned with the status of Israel and its relation to the salvation of gentiles. The opposite position, that it is the climax of the preceding chapters or at least that the chapters are central to Paul’s analysis, has also received more and more proponents recently. Particularly their relationship to the rhetorical questions in *Romans* 3.1–9 is widely acknowledged. Apart from its subject matter, the abundant quotations from Scripture it contains are one reason why it is usually seen as a separate section, and the nature of this intertextuality has also solicited many scholarly contributions. An overview of outlines of the letter in different commentaries is given in Fowler 2016, 20–27. The chapters are treated separately by i.a. C.H. Dodd, Douglas J. Moo, James Dunn, and Robert Jewett. On the specific status of these chapters, cf. Aune 1991, 118; Keener 2009a, 115; Steyn 2015; Windsor 2014, 195–247 (chapter 6: ‘Paul’s Paul’s fulfilment of Israel’s vocation (*Romans* 9–11)’).

282 Dunson 2011, 29.

283 On the parallelism between *Deuteronomy* 30.12–14 and *Romans* 10.6–10, see Keener 2009a, 125–127.

It is also interesting to note that of the thirteen active aorist forms of *pisteuō* in the undisputed letters, five are related to proclamation of the good news in this passage (Rom 10.8,14,16) and in the passage discussed (1 Cor 15.2,11).<sup>284</sup> This tense is perfectly equipped to denote the start of the *pistis* relationship with the *kyrios* Jesus Christ: viewed in light of this semantic domain, to 'come to believe' denotes the start of reciprocal bond of trust, the first response to the announcement of a graceful lord, and the transfer into the realm of this ruler.

Is this faith to be understood as a cognitive acknowledgement, as 'holding to be true' or 'believing'? 'If you are convinced that' (ἐάν (...) πιστεύσης (...) ὅτι) comes close to the mental act of believing, yet the direct implication here, as in the majority of Pauline usage, is that faithfulness is due.<sup>285</sup> The parallel usage of *homologeō* and *pisteuō* bears witness to the conceptual closeness of both words: *pisteuein* is here an act of acknowledgement, of proclaiming loyalty and faithfulness to a leader.<sup>286</sup> Faith in this context is 'the acknowledgement that one "belongs" to Christ, and as such it is an act of commitment to him'.<sup>287</sup> The interchangeability of these statements demonstrates that both express the same recognition of Christ as divinely appointed Lord, the same performative act of faith.

284 Four can be traced back to the Septuagint version of *Genesis* 15.6 ('Abraham came to trust'): *Galatians* 3.6 and *Romans* 4.3, 4.17, 4.18; one to *Psalms* 116.10 ('I came to believe, therefore I spoke'): 2 *Corinthians* 4.13 (Paul uses the present tense when he compares the psalmist's faith to that of the Christ community: πιστεύομεν). The others clearly denote the starting point of a *pistis* relationship: *Galatians* 2.16; 1 *Corinthians* 3.5 (also in context of a response to the proclamation of Paul and Apollos); *Romans* 13.11.

285 There is one interesting example in the Pauline corpus where *pisteuō* is limited to 'believing to be true': 'I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it (καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω)': (1 Cor 11.18).

286 Lohse and Bultmann have argued that *fides quae* and *fides qua* are one and the same in this passage. *Fides quae*, however, is here limited to an acknowledgement of Christ's resurrection. It does not involve an elaborate *credo* or kerygmatic complex. Cf. Lohse 1977, 152: 'die Annahme der Mitteilung über Jesu Auferstehung schließt zugleich die bejahende Zustimmung dazu ein, daß der gekreuzigte und auferstandene Christus der Herr, unser Herr und deshalb mein Herr ist. (...) Die *fides quae creditur* und die *fides qua creditur* bilden eine Einheit im Hören auf die Christusbotschaft, so daß Glaubensinhalt und Glaubensvollzug unlöslich zusammengehören.' And cf. Bultmann 1968, 209, and at 217: 'Since ὁμολογεῖν and πιστεύειν are obvious equivalents in the synonymous parallelism (...), it is apparent that acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord is intrinsic to Christian faith along with acknowledgement of the miracle of His resurrection, i.e. acceptance of this miracle as true. (...) Kerygma and faith always go together'.

287 Furnish 2009, 185.

Does this faith function ‘in a markedly individual fashion’, as Ben Dunson argues based on this passage?<sup>288</sup> It may be that the vocabulary of the passage, with the repeated singular *sou*, gives the argument an individual ring. This language, however, is taken over from the quotations from *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy*. More importantly, the broader context of the passage is concerned with a question about communalities: the status of Israel vis-à-vis the gentile nations. Whereas Paul never denounces the importance of an individual relationship of loyalty to Christ, this passage is about which nations, which groups of people can call upon God. From the perspective of political patronage, such a communal approach is not farfetched: peoples and nations are invited to become part of the *pax Romanum*, and similarly, peoples and nations are invited to become part of the *pax Christi*. ‘The same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him (πλουτῶν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτόν)’ (Rom 10.12), Paul explains. In other words, the divine benefaction is universally configured and extends to all nations.

In sum, in all three passages where faith is being proclaimed, it is not ‘the faith’ that is preached, but rather the renewed relationship of trust, which is now publicly announced from the side of God in order to be acknowledged from the side of humanity. This first acknowledgement is often expressed with the aorist of *pisteuō*. What this response further entails will be explored further in the next two sections on ‘hearing’ (§7.4.2) and ‘obedience’ (§7.4.3) ‘of faith’.

#### 7.4.2 *Hearing That Results in Pistis (Gal 3.5): Akoē Pisteōs as Interior Alternative to Offering Ostentatious Returns*

In *Galatians*, Paul contrasts ‘works of the law’ with the phrase *akoē pisteōs* (ἀκοή πίστεως) twice. The most common translations of this phrase are ‘hearing of faith’, ‘believing what you heard’, and ‘the message of the faith’. I argue for an alternative which emphasizes the attitude by which Paul’s message was received, an attitude characterized by trust, allegiance, fidelity, commitment, good faith, and faithfulness—in one word, *pistis*.

The text in question reads as follows:

The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by *akoē pisteōs* (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως)? Are you so foolish? Having started with the

288 See Dunson 2011, 38–39: ‘[B]eginning in *Romans* 10.6–17 with Paul’s most expansive statement of what it means for righteousness to be revealed ἐκ πίστεως, we have seen that faith functions in a markedly individual fashion: faith is believing in Christ and receiving salvation and righteousness.’

Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? Did you experience so much for nothing?—if it really was for nothing. Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit (ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα) and work powers (ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις) among you by your doing the works of the law, or by *akoē pisteōs* (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως)? (*Galatians* 3.2–5)

Due to the polysemy of both *akoē* and *pistis*, the amount of possible interpretations of *akoē pisteōs* is multiplied. The two basic options for *akoē* are (1) the act or faculty of hearing and (2) the thing heard, that is, the message or the proclamation. The word is used by Paul at different places in both senses, so this does not conclusively tip the scales.<sup>289</sup> While the first meaning is found in most common translations,<sup>290</sup> the second interpretation is supported in scholarship.<sup>291</sup> Theologically, the meaning of '[God's] message' is sometimes preferred to '[human] hearing' because it offers a non-human alternative to the all-too-human effort to uphold the law.<sup>292</sup>

As for the meanings of *pistis*, often the two options presented as most likely are 'belief' (accepting the gospel as true, *fides qua creditur*) or 'the faith' (the gospel itself, *fides quae creditur*), resulting in combined interpretations such as 'the message that evokes belief', 'hearing and believing', or, alternatively,

289 Cf. 1 *Corinthians* 12.17 ('If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be (ποῦ ἢ ἀκοή?)') and *Romans* 10.16 (for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message (τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν)?'). De Boer (2011, 175) strictly differentiates the faculty of hearing (as in 1 Cor 12.17) from the act of hearing, whereby he finds only Pauline evidence in favour of the rendering 'message'.

290 KJV and American Standard Version: 'the hearing of faith'; NIV and NRSV: 'believing what you heard'.

291 See Friedrich 1982, 101: 'Predigt des Glaubens'; Betz 1979, 128: 'proclamation of [the] faith'; Hays 1983, 149: 'the faith-message', i.e. either 'the message that evokes faith' or 'the message of "the faith"'; Martyn 1998, 284: 'the proclamation that has the power to elicit faith'; Barclay 2015, 390: 'the message that was received in faith' or 'the message that elicited faith'. But cf. also the defence of the traditional interpretation by Sam K. Williams (1989).

292 See Martyn 1998, 288: 'Paul is not asking the Galatians which of two human acts served as the generative locus in which they received the Spirit, a decision on their part to keep the Law or a decision on their part to hear with faith. On the contrary, he is asking rhetorically whether that generative locus was: their act in becoming observant of the Law or God's message (*akoē*):' In response, Silva (2004, 234–236) connects the question to the *pistis Christou* debate. He is at pains to demonstrate that *akoē pisteōs* pertains to the (divinely initiated) human response and could either mean 'by believing what you heard' or, with *akoē* itself referring to the human act, 'hearing with faith'. Cf. also Friedrich 1982: Friedrich interprets *akoē* as 'Botschaft' and views faith as 'Entscheidung Gottes', see 108–111. And cf. De Boer 2011, 176, who takes *akoē pisteōs* to refer to 'Gods act in Christ', with *akoē* meaning either 'hearing' ('a human passivity') or 'message'.

‘the message of the faith’ or ‘the hearing of the faith’.<sup>293</sup> In §6.4.1 and again in §7.4.1, I have already argued against the presumption that *pistis* pertains to the complete contents of the Christ-message, ‘the faith’, in Paul’s time. This seems to leave us with the interpretation of *pistis* as the act of believing. Regardless of the meaning of *akoē*, however, this interpretation renders the juxtaposition with ‘works of the law’ and the result of receiving the Spirit and God’s powerful workings somewhat puzzling. Perhaps in the context of modern churches, people have grown accustomed to the idea that belief as a cognitive assent to factual truths is indeed the opposite of self-righteous works and the condition for gifts such as righteousness, the Spirit, and divine miracles. According to this line of thinking, the barrier of belief and unbelief is some kind of mental barrier that is to be crossed from our side in order to gain access to the divine gifts (to which Reformation theology naturally adds that this is in no manner our own merit, but a divine gift itself).<sup>294</sup> However, such a construal is not the most logical interpretation from an ancient perspective.

If we look for an ancient frame of reference, it is essential to note that we are speaking about gifts here, and Paul is as well, as indicated by the verbs ‘to receive’ (λαμβάνω) and ‘to supply’ (ἐπιχορηγέω). As I have argued at length (in section 7.3), in the ancient Mediterranean, even the most asymmetrical relationships of benefaction were characterized by a type of reciprocity which is commonly indicated by the word group *pistis/fides*. To give a gift is to expect a return. If we understand the message Paul preached as a divine offer of righteousness, to be made explicit by a powerful divine presence (*pneuma* and *dynamis*), the logical condition for the reception of these goods offered is the establishment of a reciprocal, trusting relationship, an allegiance characterized by mutual faith. Such a relationship can only come into existence if there is also a voluntary response of the receiver characterized by good faith, loyalty, and trust vis-à-vis the benefactor. It is my suggestion that by using the phrase *akoē pisteōs*, Paul indicates precisely such a response.

In this passage, the divine gifts are explicated by Paul as the Spirit (3.2 and 3.5) and the ‘working of powers (3.5: ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις)’. It is interesting to note

293 See e.g. Spaeth 2017, 376: ‘Die ἀκοή πίστεως, die Predigt des Glaubens, heißt, den Inhalt des Evangeliums, den Gekreuzigten zu predigen.’ De Boer (2011, 174–184) argues for another option, namely that *pisteōs* refers to the faithfulness of Christ, in analogy with *Galatians* 2.16. Nevertheless, the immediate context in 3.6, ‘just as Abraham believed God’ (καθὼς Ἀβραάμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ) with the active aorist of *pisteuō* which as De Boer acknowledges refers to human faith (p. 192), renders this reading less likely.

294 For an attempt to combine human faith in the sense of an acceptance of truth and the work of the Holy Spirit, see Spaeth 2017, 376–377.



here that the Spirit is seen later in the letter as the ultimate sign of adoption into God's family, of the transition from slaves to heirs (Gal 4.6–7). From the perspective of patronage, this gift testifies to this new relationship between patron and client. The 'working of powers' also confirms this: by becoming God's children, the Galatians moved into the direct sphere of influence of God, where his powers are manifestly present.

The interpretation of *akoē pisteōs* as response of good faith not only fits the context of an offer of divine benefaction and patronage, it also explains the contrast with 'works of the law'. As we saw in §7.3.6, both Cicero and Seneca contrast business transactions with benefaction. They argue against the reluctance of beneficiaries to be seen as dependent on and indebted to a patron. As the ideal benefactor, God does not give to those who can offer 'a prompter and speedier return', but he looks 'only to the faith of the receiver' (*solam accipientis fidem*).<sup>295</sup> By offering such a return of external or material 'works', people even turn God into a money-lender: 'Why, in wishing to protect benefactors, do we reduce them to the level of the most disreputable class?'<sup>296</sup> Instead, the proper return that befits a continuous relationship of gift-exchange is a return of interior gratitude (*gratia*) and good faith (*fides*). The gift must be reciprocated, but, the Stoics argue, the most important return is an interior one.

It is not too farfetched to believe that Paul speaks about an analogously inappropriate attitude of people who think that they can respond to the divine gifts as worthy recipients deserving the gifts, a worthiness they express by reciprocating with 'works of the law'. The reasoning is that by offering such a business-like, exterior return to God, people exhibit an unwillingness to acknowledge God as patron and benefactor. This suggestion has also been made by Jerome Neyrey: 'I suggest that Paul understands the debate over "faith" vs "law" as the insistence by some on a form of balanced reciprocity between mortals and God.'<sup>297</sup> In Neyrey's social-science terminology, they turn God's altruistic 'generalized reciprocity' into 'balanced reciprocity'

295 Cicero, *De officiis* 2.69 and Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.14.2.

296 Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.15.4.

297 See Neyrey 2005, 491–492. Following a model of three types of benefaction, introduced to biblical scholarship by Bruce Malina, Neyrey uses the term 'balanced reciprocity' for quid-pro-quo exchange, to be distinguished from both 'negative' reciprocity (for personal gain) and 'generalized' or 'altruistic' reciprocity (aimed at the other's wellbeing), which was often linked to both parenthood and to divine benefaction (at 469; see also Neyrey 2004, 253). Neyrey does not elaborate too much on his suggestion about Paul's conception of faith and the law in this article or monograph, apart from some remarks on *Galatians* 3.5.

which follows a quid-pro-quo pattern.<sup>298</sup> From the additional political perspective described in this chapter, such people act as though they are outside of the domain of the lord Jesus and unbound by the divine offer of patronage. Instead, Paul argues, God is after a continuous, reciprocal, relational structure of gift-exchange. The establishment of this structure does not require an external return, ‘works of the law’, but an interior response of faithfulness that acknowledges a position of dependence.

This interpretation is also well attuned to the subsequent parallel (in *Galatians*) of Abraham’s *pistis*: the pagan people are blessed, not, as the NRSV and other translations would have it, ‘with Abraham who believed’, but ‘with the faithful Abraham’ (Gal 3.9: σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ).<sup>299</sup> Abraham was thought to have shown his faith not by accepting an unlikely truth—in fact, he made a habit of denying or at least questioning these truths—but by lifelong relationship of faithfulness and allegiance to God. The example of faithful Abraham gains even more weight in *Romans* 4, a passage which I will discuss at greater length below (§7.4.4), in which we encounter a similar opposition between *pistis* and works, with the added notion of the payment of wages.

Does this interpretation have any implications for the meaning of *akoē* (in Gal 3.2,5)? It does to some extent. For a relationship of reciprocal faith to take off, what is needed is not merely the announcement of the benefaction, not even if hearing it ‘evokes belief’, but also an appropriate response in the form of enduring commitment, wholehearted loyalty, and good faith. Consequently, with the phrase *akoē pisteōs*, the emphasis is predominantly on the second word, the genitive *pisteōs*. This is confirmed a few sentences later, when Paul speaks of the blessing of Abraham coming to the gentiles ‘so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith’ (Gal 3.14: ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως). Here, the same reception of the Spirit Paul also spoke of in *Galatians* 3.2–5 is connected only to faith rather than to ‘hearing’ or ‘message’. The Spirit belongs to those who exhibit *pistis*: those who accept that they completely belong to the divine patron.

If *akoē* is indeed strongly determined by its adjective, it follows that it most likely refers to the human response to the message of God’s and Christ’s faithfulness (on which, see §7.4.1), not to the message itself. The proper human

298 Cf. Neyrey 2004, 200: ‘The course of ruin has to do with misconstruing the source of the benefaction. Whence came the “Spirit”? By benefaction-as-gift or by labor that earns a wage?’

299 Cf. also Williams 1989, 89: ‘with believing Abraham’. The active meaning of *pistos* as ‘trusting’ is attested (e.g., Theognis, *Elegiac Poems* 283), yet it is commonly used in the sense of gullibility and much rarer than the passive meaning.

response to the divine offer is accepting it by entering into a relationship characterized by trust, good faith, and loyalty, a ‘hearing which results in a response of faithfulness’. Hearing, *akoē*, thus comes close to obeying, *hypakoē*: actually changing your ways in response to the message of another.<sup>300</sup> And to obey means to respond ‘in word and deed’, as Paul phrases it in yet another passage on pronouncing the good message of Christ (Rom 15.18: εἰς ὑπακοὴν ἔθνῶν, λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ). It is no wonder, then, that Paul also makes a connection between *pistis* and *hypakoē*, as the next subsection will further explore.

#### 7.4.3 *A Response of Pistis among All the Nations (Rom 1.5, 16.26): Hypakoē Pisteōs as Fidelity towards Faithful Leaders*

The centrality of the notion ‘obedience of faith’ in *Romans* is noted by many. It is mentioned at first in the opening lines of the *Letter to the Romans* (1.5) and repeated, though the manuscript tradition is somewhat puzzling here, in the doxology (16.26). But whether or not Paul wrote these lines as a conclusion, it is an apt *inclusio* because it recalls the words in the opening of the letter, where Paul speaks about his own role as

set apart for the gospel of God (εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ) (...) the gospel concerning his Son (περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ), who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power (ἐν δυνάμει) according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith (εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως) among all the nations (ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) for the sake of his name. (*Romans* 1.1–5)

The good news, in Paul’s opening words, is that of Jesus a resurrected ‘lord’ (κύριος), whose ‘power’ (δύναμις) results in ‘obedience of faith’ (ὑπακοή πίστεως) among all nations. And, perfectly in line with what we saw in Graeco-Roman sources (in §7.3.4), the people’s *pistis* is the natural companion to a leader’s demonstrated power. Not only does Paul thereby set the agenda for this particular letter, he seems to summarize his broader mission. The good news itself is described as a ‘power’ (δύναμις) a little further on and again

<sup>300</sup> This connection is also noted by Williams (1989, 91), who concludes based on OT parallels: ‘To hear is to heed—that is, to allow oneself to be shaped by a threat, a command, a promise, or a word of wisdom or judgment. Thus does “to hear” often bear the specific connotation of obeying.’ Cf. Müller 1994, 439: ‘Offenbar geht es Paulus beim Hören des gelesenen Wortes nicht nur um ein Wahrnehmen, sondern ein Aufnehmen im Sinne der Verlebensigung im Lebensvollzug.’

linked to the aim of achieving salvation for all the faithful (Rom 1.16: δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι).

The question I focus on in this subsection is how we ought to understand the genitive construction of *hypakoē pisteōs* and the two words of which it is made up. First, I will address three major studies on this topic that do not take the Graeco-Roman context into account. Then, the advantages reading it against this imperial background (see §7.3) will be considered, before I examine the argumentation in favour of an anti-imperial reading.

An influential contribution to the interpretation of *hypakoē pisteōs* was made by Don Garlington in his monograph on ‘obedience of faith’ contextualized in the literature of Second Temple Judaism (1991). According to Garlington, these are words whose significance ‘transcends their function within the introduction of *Romans* and expands to encapsulate a world of thought’.<sup>301</sup> The main novelty of the Christian ‘obedience of faith’, he argues in line with the New Perspective, lies in the idea that such obedience is possible apart from dedication to the whole of the Torah and from the distinctive marks of Jewish identity. In addition to this monograph, Garlington further expounded his views on ‘obedience of faith’ in *Romans* in three subsequent articles (1990; 1991b; 1993). He opts for an interpretation of *hypakoē pisteōs* in *Romans* that is ‘deliberately ambiguous’, since it means both the ‘obedience which consists in faith’ (appositional genitive) and the ‘obedience which is the product of faith’ (subjective genitive of source).<sup>302</sup> The theological consequence is that ‘the notion of faith’s obedience provides the link between present justification by faith alone and future judgment according to works’.<sup>303</sup> This conclusion is in line with earlier scholarly analyses of the social background of *Romans* which view this notion as crucial to overcoming the differences between Jewish-Christian and pagan-Christian congregations in Rome.<sup>304</sup>

It is unfortunate that in these distinctions Garlington seems to have adopted a rather narrow meaning of *pistis* as a mental attitude, for he appears to understand faith in the appositional genitive as something very much distinct

301 Garlington 1991a, 14. Cf. Nanos 1996, 219: ‘Paul’s fascinating programmatic phrase’.

302 Garlington 1990, 209, 223–224.

303 Garlington 1991b, 47.

304 See Bartsch 1968, 52: ‘The proclamation of “the obedience of faith” understood as faith which is living as obedience towards the Law will unite the two groups into one congregation.’ Cf. also Minear 2003 [1971].

from obedience.<sup>305</sup> According to Garlington, the appositional genitive is not a combination of two synonymous words, but a redefinition of (Jewish) obedience by works as obedience by faith/belief, thus widening its scope to pagans. Faith in this reasoning is a lot like cognitive belief. As I argued in the previous chapter, however, such a rigid distinction between faith as a mental attitude and faithfulness as a virtue should not be projected onto Pauline thought. Garlington indeed emphasizes the conceptual closeness of ethical obedience and faith when he discusses the genitive of source: 'to speak of faith is to speak of obedience'.<sup>306</sup> But if we understand *pistis* in the context of obedience to indicate loyalty or faithfulness and not 'belief', as I think we should, the distinction between an appositional genitive and a genitive of source is no distinction at all.

A similar evaluation counts for the work of Glenn Davies, who explains the phrase 'obedience of faith' in the introduction of his monograph on *Faith and Obedience in Romans* (1990). Even more explicitly than Garlington, Davies posits a sharp distinction between faith and obedience: 'Obedience for Paul, is more comprehensive than faith as mere believing; it involves *doing* also' (italics by Davies).<sup>307</sup> Obedience refers to the 'changed lifestyle, (...) the consequence of such an act of belief'.<sup>308</sup> *Hypakoē pisteōs* should hence be understood as a subjective genitive or genitive of origin, not as a genitive of apposition.<sup>309</sup> Since Davies thus presupposes quite a lot about what faith is and is not according to Paul, the results of his reasoning are dubious. There is no clear-cut division between faith and works, trust and faithfulness, believing and ethics in Paul (see the previous chapter).

Hence, because both words can be synonymous in contexts such as the one explored in the present chapter, *hypakoē pisteōs* can certainly be an appositional grammatical construction. However, the appositional genitive does not redefine obedience as a purely mental attitude as Garlington would have it; rather, it narrows down the meaning of obedience and faith to that sense in which both semantic fields overlap.<sup>310</sup> The type of *pistis* that overlaps in

305 When he lays out his presuppositions (Garlington 1991a, 10–11), Garlington describes the OT-meaning of faith as more than belief, as always consisting of works, as a combination of trust and obedience. However, he appears to assume that the NT-meaning lacks the ethical component.

306 Garlington 1990, 210. Cf. at 208: 'In effect therefore the obedience which consists in faith cannot be abstracted from the (ethical) obedience demanded by the gospel.'

307 Davies 1990, 28.

308 Davies 1990, 29.

309 Davies 1990, 30.

310 Douglas A. Campbell (2005, 187) draws attention to this overlap in meaning as well.

meaning with obedience can be described by words such as faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty, and allegiance: it designates the proper response to Christ as Lord of all and as God's gift. It constitutes the human side of the reciprocal bond of trust. If we interpret *hypakoē pisteōs* along these lines, then a translation like 'faithful obedience' or 'obedient faithfulness' seems to be a more accurate rendering.

A third noteworthy study of the meaning of *hypakoē pisteōs*, one which arrives at a somewhat more exceptional interpretation, is offered by Gerhard Friedrich. Friedrich's interpretation of *pistis* has more ethical content than Garlington's and Davies's: 'Faith is not a psychological process; it includes action as its effect.'<sup>311</sup> However, his interpretation of *hypakoē* is more disputable. One of his articles from 1981 is titled 'Should *hypakoē pisteōs* be translated as "obedience of faith"?' ('Μαὶ ὑπακοή πίστεως mit "Glaubensgehorsam" übersetzt werden?'). Friedrich's answer is, as may be expected, 'no'. Instead, he suggests, it ought to be understood as 'message of faith' ('Glaubensbotschaft'). In line with his understanding of *akoē* (see §7.4.2), he pleads for a rendering of *hypakoē* as 'message', a sense which seems prior to the meaning of 'obedience', that was first used as such in the Septuagint (2 Sam 22.36: καὶ ἡ ὑπακοή σου ἐπλήθυνέ με). Friedrich argues that such a reading solves two problems that arise when *hypakoē pisteōs* is understood as a genitive of apposition (or in Friedrich's terms: *genitivus epexegeticus*): 1) it would be pleonasmic, for then *hypakoē* would suffice, and 2) it is hard to translate without the addition of a verb.<sup>312</sup> This second argument seems irrelevant for understanding the Greek, whereas the first lacks understanding of how language works. The fact that both words can be synonymously used does not mean that a language user can use either and be done with it, as Mark Nanos also seems to think when he discusses this phrase.<sup>313</sup> As I just indicated, by means of a genitive case the

311 Friedrich 1981, 119: 'Glauben ist nicht ein psychischer Vorgang, sondern schließt die Konsequenz des Handelns ein.'

312 Friedrich 1981, 119, 'Wenn beide Worte ὑπακοή und πίστις dieselbe Bedeutung haben, dann läge Röm 1.5 ein Pleonasmus vor', and at 120, 'Es ist ferner zu beachten, daß Röm 1.5 bei einem Verständnis von πίστεως als Genitivus epexegeticus die Übersetzung der Stelle Schwierigkeiten bereitet.'

313 Nanos 1996b, 224, n. 164: 'While faith and obedience are parallel terms they do maintain some distinction that this conclusion [i.e. *hypakoē pisteōs* as appositional genitive] fails to uphold. Why bother with the phrase if Paul's point is the faith of the faith? In *Romans* 15.15 ('your obedience is known to all') *hypakoē* is used separately, and thus less refined, although even here there is an echo of *pistis* from *Romans* 1.8 ('your faith is proclaimed throughout the world').

sense of a phrase can be narrowed down. In this case, obedience is characterized by the reciprocal, relational implications of *pistis*, and *pistis* is further explicated by the ethical, political thrust of obedience.

Nevertheless, an important contribution by Friedrich lies in the mapping of the meanings of *hypakoē* in the Septuagint. For not only is it used there in the sense of ‘message’ (‘Botschaft’, ‘Mitteilung’, ‘Bescheid’), it can also mean ‘attentive, active hearing’ (‘das intensivere, aktivere Hören: Gehör schenken, anhören’), ‘answering, address’ (‘antworten, zureden’).<sup>314</sup> In fact, as others have also noticed, the meaning of ‘to hear’, ‘to obey what one hears’ is the more prototypical of these, as it is used in texts as central to Judaism as the Shema.<sup>315</sup> This way, Friedrich’s own research confirms the meaning of ‘response’ instead of ‘message’: it is the attentive, active reaction to the good news. This reaction is expressed as faithfulness to the faithful God; therefore it can be adequately designated by Paul as *hypakoē pisteōs*.

In the Benedictine tradition, such an attentive response is indeed meant by the Latin *obedientia*. Hence, if in a modern context obedience may sound too much like unreciprocal submission, a meaning excluded here by the addition of *pisteōs*, then ‘a response of faithfulness’ or ‘an answer of loyalty’ may be better translations. This is also confirmed from a Stoic perspective, in which there is no great difference between ruling and being obedient to a ruler. As Troels Engberg Pedersen pointed out, both imply willing the good, and hence ‘there is no room for any idea of force being applied on anybody’s part; on the contrary, the “obedience” is through and through self-willed since it springs from a grasp that one has oneself acquired.’<sup>316</sup> Indeed, we already quoted from an early Stoic source, probably Chrysippus, on the common law of right reason: ‘when all actions promote the harmony of the spirit dwelling in the individual man with the will of him who orders the universe.’<sup>317</sup> Likewise in Paul, being ‘obedient’ comes down to being an unforced participant in the realm of faith under the just rule of Christ. Confirming my review of *pistis/fides* language in imperial times, *hypakoē pisteōs* is a dedication to the ruler’s good cause and thereby to the good in general (cf. §7.3.5).

Looking at the direct and wider context of *Romans*, ‘obedience’ or ‘response of faithfulness’ also seems preferable over ‘message’. Would Paul summarize the aim of his mission in *Romans* 1.1–5 as proclamation of the gospel alone, or does it incorporate a public response of loyalty by the nations? What would

<sup>314</sup> Friedrich 1981, 121.

<sup>315</sup> *Deuteronomy* 6.4–9. See Nanos 1996b, 222, who refers to Dunn 1988b, 17.

<sup>316</sup> Engberg-Pedersen 2000, 76, referring to Chrysippus in SVF 3.615.

<sup>317</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.88 (Zeno). See §3.3.5 *supra*.

honour Christ's name more? Furthermore, in the juxtaposition of Adam and Christ (Rom 5.19), it is Adam's response of disobedience (διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνός) that is contrasted to Christ's response of obedience (διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἐνός), not Adam's lack of a message. Moreover, the well-known obedience of the Roman addressees is praised by Paul, and explicated as being 'wise in what is good, and guileless in what is evil' (Rom 15.15), so it is obviously ethical in nature. It is this obedience, not a message, which Paul aims to win by proclaiming his gospel (Rom 15.18).

By means of a whole set of rhetorical questions, Paul even envisions a chain of actions leading from 'sending', to 'proclaiming', to 'hearing', ultimately to 'being faithful to':

The scripture says, 'No one who is faithful to him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' But how are they to call on one (ἐπικαλέσωνται) to whom they are not faithful (εἰς ὃν οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν)? And how are they to be faithful to one of whom they have never heard (πῶς δὲ πιστεύσωσιν οὐδ' οὐκ ἤκουσαν)? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' But not all have obeyed (ὑπήκουσαν) the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message (τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν)?' So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ (ἄρα ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀκοὴ διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ). (*Romans* 10.11–17)

Paul explains the citation from *Isaiah* (53.1) as a matter of not obeying or not responding properly (ὑπήκουσαν) to a message—in the citation *akoē* cannot indicate hearing, though there is a wordplay between both meanings in this passage.<sup>318</sup> He thereby effectively explains the verb ἐπίστευσεν as obeying or responding properly. Thus, rather than 'believing' a message heard, what is at stake is whether or not people respond with loyalty and faithfulness. Only then can they rely on a *kyrios* to come to their aid when he is called upon (ἐπικαλέσωνται). Naturally, we cannot call upon someone we do not believe to

318 On this wordplay, cf. Williams 1989, 87: 'Paul is playing upon the double sense of ἀκοή ("what is heard/hearing") as he moves from the meaning of the term in the *Isaiah* quotation ("what was heard") to the meaning he wishes to highlight ("hearing").'



be alive, but that is not the point here: it is about the response of faithfulness to a faithful leader which establishes a reciprocal relationship of trust between both parties.

The Graeco-Roman sources discussed in this chapter confirm such an interpretation. *Pistis/fides* and *hypakoē/obsequium* are used together as near-synonyms in contexts of political conflicts and power struggles. Plutarch wrote that commander Titus Flaminius gained the faithfulness of all people (πίστιν ἐν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις), which led to the obedience of everything to the Romans: ‘everything became subject to them’ (πάντα αὐτοῖς ὑπήκοα γενέσθαι).<sup>319</sup> In the ‘year of the four emperors’, some years after Paul’s death, *fides* and *obsequium* (loyalty, allegiance, obedience) to one of the contenders for the imperial throne became a hotly debated topic. Submission or obedience and loyalty or faithfulness is the response required and sought by a Roman commander. However, obedience and faith could also be contrasted. Flatterers were said to substitute ‘cringing obsequiousness for loyalty (*fides*)’.<sup>320</sup> A faithless leader can be obeyed but he does not inspire loyalty. According to the *Octavia*, this was where Nero got it wrong: he only wanted his subjects to obey him, whereas he should have sought their loyalty (*fides*).<sup>321</sup> By adding *pistis/fides*, the existence of a reciprocal relation of trust and trustworthiness seems to be implicated, including the loyalty of a commander towards his troops or even towards hostile people.

As we saw in the section on the anti-imperialistic interpretation of Pauline faith (§7.2.2 and §7.2.3), some exegetes would argue that Pauline *pistis* is a radical alternative to Roman *fides*. As regards the phrase *hypakoē pisteōs*, Christian Strecker observes that this phrase in *Romans* is ‘a kind of messianic *deditio in fidem*’.<sup>322</sup> Kathy Ehrensperger on the other hand recognizes the similarity but adds that it ‘could not have been more different’ from ‘the Roman request for “obedience *in fidem*” (ὑπακοήν πίστεως) from the nations’.<sup>323</sup> She explains how Paul chooses vulnerability of leaders over power play and how the nations, after they promised this obedience, were not coerced into sameness with Jews, but rather respected in their diversity.

319 Plutarch, *Titus Flaminius* 12.5. See §7.3.4 *supra*.

320 Seneca, *On Benefits* 6.30.3–5. See §7.3.3 *supra*.

321 Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia* 449–452, 456–457. See §7.3.5 *supra*.

322 Strecker 2005, 245.

323 Ehrensperger 2013, 173. She continues: ‘in terms of structure, there was no army or economic power that could have coerced those called into the relationship with the God of Israel through Christ; and in terms of content instead of a request to become the same there was the opposite.’

These are valid distinctions. Yet, the question is whether there is an intended allusion to the specific discourse of military surrender, or even more specifically, *deditio in fidem*, in the first place. The Greek variant of *deditio* was *epitropē* (ἐπιτροπή), Gruen notes, not *hypakoē*, and, as Friedrich pointed out, *hypakoē* was first used as a substantive in the Septuagint and not used as such in pagan Greek predating early Christian sources.<sup>324</sup> Hence, the verbal reference to specific Roman tactics is minimal. But more importantly, as we have seen (§7.3.4 and §7.3.5) Roman *fides* was never pure submission to force, as it included the faithful protection from the side of the superior party. Moreover, its abuse by commanders such as Coriolanus and Sulla was heavily criticized. Smart rhetoric even allowed for the Roman fondness of *pistis* to be used to counter their imperialistic urges, as Diodorus of Sicily demonstrates. The anti-imperialistic reading is very helpful in that it is a highly contextual approach to Paul's message. When it comes to interpreting *pistis* and *hypakoē pisteōs*, however, they offer merely a simplification of a rich discourse on political virtues and how they ought to be enacted.

I would argue that the discourse highlighted by the combination of *hypakoē* and *pistis* is a broader one, including relationships between just leaders and foreign people, or good patrons and their clients, as well as between the abusive power of the Roman armies and its victims. In the latter case, however, the *pistis* or *fides* of the commanders is often questioned by Roman sources, for it did not live up to its full, transethnic and transjuridical potential. By combining *hypakoē* and *pistis*, Paul seems to emphasize that the nations are in a position of answering the divine promise of patronage with trust and loyalty.<sup>325</sup> With this *pistis*, the *ethnē* gratefully reciprocate God's gift of a trustworthy leader, Christ.

#### 7.4.4 *One Who without Works Has Pistis in Him Who Justifies the Ungodly (Rom 4.5): Good Faith as Transjuridical Response to God's Transethnic Benefaction*

I devoted some space in chapter 3 to 'justification by faith' and how this concept may be illuminated by Graeco-Roman discourses on the eschatological reappearance of Faith and Justice and the internalization and universalization of law as 'unwritten law' in philosophical discourses. As for the

324 Gruen 1982, 61; Friedrich 1981, 120–121.

325 Though I did not address this aspect here (but see §3.4.1 and §6.4.2 *supra*), it is thus very much directed at collectives. Cf. for a different point of view Hay 2006, 63: 'When Paul speaks of "the obedience of faith" and of disbelief in the gospel as disobedience to God (...), he implies that God calls in the kerygma and that individuals are responsible for their answers.'

question whether Paul argues against moralism or particularism (the ‘old’ versus the ‘new’ perspective on Paul), I argued that both are so intertwined we should rather speak of a nexus of moralistic particularism and ethnocentric moralism (see §3.4.4). The boast about self-righteousness is at the same time a boast about God’s election. This chapter brings in another, supplementary perspective, that of benefaction, patronage, and politics.<sup>326</sup> What is the effect of this perspective on the question of what Paul argued against by juxtaposing faith with works?

The perspective of benefaction particularly comes to the fore where justification is presented as a gift, as opposed to due wages:<sup>327</sup>

Now to one who works (ὧ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ), wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due (ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα). But to one who without works (τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ) trusts him who justifies the ungodly (πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιούντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ), such trust is reckoned as righteousness (λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην). (*Romans* 4.4–5)<sup>328</sup>

This passage is part of Paul’s ‘exegesis’ of *Genesis* 15.6: ‘Abraham trusted God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Rom 4.3: Ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραάμ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην) which forms the backbone of what is now known as the fourth chapter of *Romans*. The function of the whole passage on Abraham I take to be a further developed answer to the question ‘do we then overthrow the law by this faith?’ (Rom 3.31). Not only is faith a type of unwritten law which takes all written law to a next level (see §3.4.2 and §3.4.4), but, moreover, by separating faithful Abraham, the main ancestral figure in the Jewish Scriptures, from ‘Scripture as Mosaic law’, Paul shows that

326 A recent monograph on faith in *Romans* 4 also takes the perspective of patronage into account: Tan 2018. In contrast to the present study, however, Tan relies on secondary sources (i.a. Barclay and Morgan) to describe this discourse and his overall approach is focused on the reconstruction of how the rhetorical structure addresses social struggles between Judean and non-Judean Christians in the primary intended audience.

327 Cf. the antithesis in *Romans* 11.6: ‘But if it is by a gift, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise the gift would no longer be a gift’ (εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις. Here, the ones receiving this gift are compared to the Israelites ‘who have not bowed the knee to Baal’ (Rom 11.4: οἵτινες οὐκ ἔκαμψαν γόνυ τῇ Βάαλ), i.e. those who are loyal to God in an enduring *pistis* relationship.

328 The NRSV translates the verb πιστεύω as ‘trusts’ and the noun πίστις as ‘faith’, which somewhat mystifies the coherence here, wherefore I adapted the translation at this point.

ultimately faith takes precedence over the written, Mosaic law.<sup>329</sup> Paul's interpretation emphasizes that the awarding of righteousness took place without works (4.5), and before Abraham was circumcised (4.10), so that he could become 'the ancestor of all who have *pistis* (πατέρα πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων) without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them' (4.11). In explaining what this *pistis*, this faith or faithfulness, encompasses, Paul repeatedly connects it to the promise of God (ἡ ἐπαγγελία: vv. 13, 14, 16, 20), a promise that he would be 'the father of many nations' (4.17: πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν).

This focus on the scope God's promise, reaching towards the inclusion of many nations, suggests that Paul is here interested in the collective-universal potential of *pistis*. At least, this is how it is emphasized from the angle of the New Perspective. By contrast, in the traditional ('old' or 'Lutheran') perspective, this passage is explained as distinguishing between individual routes to salvation: between pure grace based on faith and earning salvation by moral works. In this case, Paul argues against self-righteous moralism, and the faith of Abraham stands for the 'work-less' faith of the believer. If we read it with the discourse on benefaction, patronage, and politics in mind, the clear-cut division between these two perspectives disappears. Against this background, three important things stand out.

Firstly, as we saw before regarding *Galatians* 3.5 (in §7.4.2), 'working' seems to function in Paul's argument as something which turns the divine gift of righteousness into a business transaction. To reciprocate divine favour with works is to consider the gift personally paid for and to render God a merchant: it is this balanced, calculating, and exclusive reciprocity which Paul so sharply opposes. In the above passage (Rom 4.4–5), the subject of the first occurrence of the verb 'to reckon' (λογίζεται) is 'wages' (4.4: ὁ μισθός), and this is contrasted with the second object, 'his good faith' (4.5: ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ). Both concern the 'goods' transferred between two parties (faith is not an empty hand). The nature of the goods exchanged, however, determines the nature of the relationship as one of either short-term business or long-term benefaction. As the ideal benefactor, God does not seek a swift material return but only a lasting response of faithfulness so that a lasting relationship can be established. Instead of 'works', which represent an actual, external return, one you can boast about before people (cf. Rom 4.2) and which in effect ends the relationship, what people owe God is the interior return of a stable *pistis*, trust and

329 Cf. Young 2015, 43: 'As such, this speaks to Paul's claim in *Romans* 3.31 that his gospel upholds the law: the law itself establishes how the Judean god may righteous people, especially gentiles, apart from the law.'

loyalty.<sup>330</sup> Here, the semantic colouring of *pistis* as a long-lasting interior attitude in patronage-relationships is highlighted.

Secondly, there is the role of the law. Where does the law come in, if we follow this pattern of business exchange versus benefaction? Seneca also connects the realm of business to the realm of contracts and external insurances: people ‘would rather compel good faith than expect it’ (*cogere fidem quam expectare malunt*).<sup>331</sup> This juxtaposition of the sphere of faith and the sphere of formal contracts was already present in the Fides-cult: in contrast to the judge Jupiter, Fides presided over that which was not yet formally pinned down (see §7.3.1). Since as a virtue it pertains to the moral, not the juridical sphere, it is especially relevant in cases where the law does not apply (see §7.3.2). *Fides* as a moral quality was intimately connected to promises, for verbal agreements depend on one’s trustworthiness and the other’s trust (see esp. §7.3.4). *Fides* can even be used to signify the promise itself. Yet, unlike juridical contracts, it remained fragile and always involved a certain risk. The conception of *pistis* as the foundation of justice in Graeco-Roman sources shows us the logic behind Paul’s reasoning for his Roman audience. Clinging to a promise is indeed a just act and defines one as a just person, since justice is the fabric out of which healthy societies are made. More strongly put, if a person could not trust in the trustworthiness of the other beyond what can be enforced by law, full justice would not be possible.<sup>332</sup> This thought is central to the discourse I have discussed in this chapter.

In Paul’s reasoning, the faith Abraham showed also preceded and transcended the level of formal arrangements. All Abraham had was a promise, grounded in the faithfulness of God, to depend on. Yet he remained loyal, as a

330 Cf. *Romans* 11.6: ‘But if it is by a gift, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise the gift would no longer be a gift’ (εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις). Here, the ones receiving this gift are compared to the Israelites ‘who have not bowed the knee to Baal’ (Rom 11.4: οἵτινες οὐκ ἔκαμψαν γόνυ τῇ Βάαλ), i.e. those who are loyal to God in an enduring bond of *pistis*, not a fickle allegiance or temporary transaction.

331 Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.15.2.

332 Based on this Graeco-Roman inclusion of *pistis* in what justice is about, I agree with Anthony Thiselton, who states that ‘faith may now be seen not as a merely external means which somehow ‘procures’ justification, but as part of what justification is and entails. In Wittgenstein’s terms, to say ‘justification requires faith’ is to make an analytical statement about the grammar or concept of justification. It is like saying, “Green is a colour”, or “Water boils at 100°C”. It does not so much state a condition, in the sense of qualification for justification, as state something more about what justification involves and is.’ (Thiselton 1977, 100) See also Philo’s discussion of Gen. 15.6: ‘And it is well said “his faith was counted to him for justice” (Gen 15.6), for nothing is so just or righteous as to put in God alone a trust which is pure and unalloyed.’ (Philo, *Who is the Heir?* 94).

voluntary act of trust. The *pistis* in question is Abraham's trust in God that he will 'hold up to his end of the bargain' and this *pistis* seems at the same time to be a fulfilment of Abraham's own end of that same bargain, his good faith. Since Abraham trusts God's trustworthiness, God's righteousness is accredited to him: that is, he could become part of the just, heavenly society. This reciprocal trust-relationship is what made him righteous, not the keeping of the law, or its symbol, circumcision, the ultimate seal, reification, or confirmation of a treaty.

Hence, Paul's argument continues with the ingenuous question whether Abraham was considered righteous before or after being circumcised. Here, Abraham's trust is actually called '*pistis*-with-a-foreskin' (Rom 4.12: τῆς ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ πίστεως), which is often lost in translation. The internal, fragile response of *pistis* to the promise of God is contrasted with the external, solid response of circumcision, which by its confirmative nature renders faith in God's promise superfluous:

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law (διὰ νόμου) but through the righteousness of faith (διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως). If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void (κεκένωται ἡ πίστις καὶ κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία). For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith (ἐκ πίστεως), in order that the promise may rest on grace (κατὰ χάριν) and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ) (for he is the father of all of us). (*Romans* 4.13–16)

The sphere of juridical contracts, designated by terms such as law, works, circumcision, and violations is here contrasted with the sphere of benefaction, to which grace, faith, and the promise belong. Faith or trust is fragile, since it is not bound by a contract but based on a promise given as a gift (*kata charin*). Yet, it ensures a powerful relationship open to those who do not adhere to the Mosaic law. When Paul juxtaposes faith and the law, it is this transjuridical orientation of *pistis* that is highlighted.

Thirdly and finally, we have seen that in Roman virtue ethics and identity narratives, *pistis/fides* was considered a bridging virtue that extends beyond and ranks above one's obligations to family, lovers, and friends. Both Aeneas and Regulus function as prototypes of Roman *fides*, understood as a sacred duty to their word and calling, which they deem of greater importance than

loyalty to their loved ones (see §7.3.2). Moreover, in the discourse on ideal Roman patronage, the *fides* of patrons towards clients ranked above their obligations to relatives (see §7.3.3). Likewise, in Abraham, who was promised that in him ‘all the nations of the earth shall be blessed’ (LXX Gen 18.18: πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς), Paul finds the ideal example of an ancestor whose legacy extends beyond his formal descendants.<sup>333</sup> And the means of participating in Abraham’s ancestry is precisely *pistis*: the ultimate bridging quality.

In fact, we have seen that *pistis* not only transcends the precise bounds of treaties and the obligations to relatives but also helps to overcome particular, ethnic systems of law and establishes a bond with enemies. As a social virtue, *fides* is not bound or guaranteed by particular systems of law, but it extends beyond it: ‘no law bids us keep faith even with an enemy’ (*nulla lex iubet fidem etiam inimico praestare*), but in these cases ‘the conventions of human life, that are stronger than any law (*consuetudo vitae humanae omni lege valentior*), show us the way.’<sup>334</sup> This is also evident from Roman identity narratives, such as the one pertaining to the dealings with the Faliscans and their schoolmaster (see §7.3.2). According to Livy, the Faliscans were ‘challenged by faith’ (*fide provocati*) and preferred this *fides* of the Romans to their own legislation: ‘we shall be better off under your government than under our own laws’ (*melius nos sub imperio vestro quam legibus nostris*).<sup>335</sup> *Pistis/fides* is hence the ultimate bridging quality, which extends beyond one’s own people and friends towards enemies, eventually aiming to include these enemies in your sphere of influence by making them part of a reciprocal relationship characterized by trustworthiness and trust, protection and loyalty. The Romans believed that to extend trustworthiness (*fides*) to enemies was a sacred duty and, ultimately, the most efficient means to ensure their loyalty (*fides*) and include them in their realm.

Similarly, in Paul’s line of thought, the sphere of juridical contracts serves to exclude certain ‘descendants’ and results in an ethnic boast, whereas the sphere of benefaction allows for the inclusion of all, including the ‘ungodly’. Throughout this passage on Abraham, the inclusion of the ‘ungodly’ (4.5), ‘the uncircumcision’ (4.9), ‘all who believe’ (4.11), ‘the world’ (4.13), and ‘many nations’ (4.17, 18) is a recurring theme. And the same theme of the inclusion of the unrighteous out-group is picked up again after the scriptural *exemplum* of Abraham, now with particular focus on how Christ effectuated this inclusion:

333 The idea that Abraham was the ‘father of a multitude of nations’ was perhaps mediated by later Hellenistic Jewish interpretations of Abraham like *Sirach* 44.19–21.

334 Seneca, *On Benefits* 5.21.1. See §3.3.5 *supra*.

335 Livy, *History of Rome* 5.27.12–14.

Therefore, since we are justified by faith (δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως), we have peace with God (εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν) through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access [by faith] (τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχίκαμεν [τῇ πίστει]<sup>336</sup>) to this grace in which we stand (εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἐστήκαμεν); and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. (*Romans* 5.1–3)

There are good reasons for reading the first instance of *pistis* here as Christ's faithfulness, as Stephan Young has pointed out.<sup>337</sup> Yet, in line with my argument in the previous chapter, I would rather opt for a more ambiguous meaning which captures the idea of participating in and imitating Christ's trust in God and his faithfulness by trusting in him. In this passage, moreover, there is another semantic domain at play, indicated by words such as 'peace', 'access', 'grace', and 'standing'.

The passage states that Christ is the one who provided access to the good grace of God, to peace with God, to the ones who previously were not granted. It is a grace in which one, according to Paul's 'intriguing metaphor',<sup>338</sup> can 'stand'. This confirms the idea of a sphere or realm of grace and peace to which admission is to be granted. Again, Paul emphasizes that this admission was granted, strangely enough, to 'the ungodly' (5.6: ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν), 'sinners' (5.8: ἔτι ἀμαρτωλῶν ὄντων), and 'enemies' (5.10: ἐχθροὶ ὄντες). The *charis*, the gift of righteousness and peace with God is granted to enemies. These foreign people are offered heavenly citizenship by a new 'lord' (κύριος) and 'saviour' (σωτήρ) (cf. Phil 3.20). Put in Roman terms, this gift is offered to those people outside the *ethnos* that are loyal (on which see §3.4.2 above) and appreciative of their benefactor's good faith. It is thus evident that God's gift is a transethnic gift, meant to reach out to those way outside of familiar circles and formal arrangements. The reason why faith can make this inclusion happen is evident

336 Several manuscripts (including the original Sinaiticus and codex Ephraemi Rescriptus) include τῇ πίστει or (in a corrector's hand of the Sinaiticus, in the Alexandrinus and in copies of the Vulgate) ἐν τῇ πίστει. The words are absent from i.a. Vaticanus and Claromontanus.

337 Young 2015. According to Young, the view that *pistis* in this passage refers to the Christ-follower's faith in Christ has 'attained an assumed and axiomatic status', even amongst proponents of a subjective genitive interpretation of *pistis Christou* (35). Young's own alternative based on a 'rereading' of *Romans* 3.21–4.25 is that at *Romans* 5.1, 'Paul strategically explains how gentiles have access to the power and blessings of a foreign deity, the Judean god' (p. 31). While Young does not (re)read any extrabiblical sources to arrive at this conclusion, it is mostly in accordance with my analysis.

338 McFarland 2015b, 116.



from the Graeco-Roman political perspective: *pistis/fides* often functioned as a social virtue which transcends ethnic boundaries.

There are more arguments why a context of political benefaction is at play here. The language in this section is charged with political notions. The word introduced for this change in the relationship between God and these ‘enemies’ is ‘reconciliation’ (καταλλαγή). ‘For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life’ (Rom 5.10). The surprising truth is that Paul hardly ever uses the language of ‘forgiveness’ to describe the change in divine-human relations, as was famously noted by Krister Stendahl.<sup>339</sup> ‘Reconciliation’ seems to be the preferred alternative. In a study of this word in the context of Graeco-Roman polis-diplomacy, Cilliers Breytenbach argues that Paul, as well as some other Jewish authors, transferred the term ‘reconciliation’ from one domain, namely politics, to another: religion, more specifically, relationships between the human and the divine.<sup>340</sup> As I argued above (§2.2.2), Greek and Roman religion was to a large extent politicized, as indicated by the scholarly term ‘polis religion’. This transferral is thus a conceivable and relatively minor development.

In the combination of the terms ‘reconciliation’ and ‘faith’, however, we encounter a more specific semantic domain from which Paul draws: that of political benefaction and patronage. Like a cosmic commander, Christ—and in his footsteps, Paul—travelled to enemy territories to offer God’s gracious gift of reconciliation and ultimately access to the divine sphere of peace and glory.<sup>341</sup> As I already mentioned, Paul described his ministry in terms of being an ‘ambassador’ or ‘diplomat’ (πρεσβεύομεν) who brings ‘a message of reconciliation’ (τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς) (2 Cor 5.18).<sup>342</sup> Our trust in Christ is the first step in this human-divine reconciliation process: the relationship is further restored by a renewed, publicly acknowledged commitment to God and the divine cause. Both aspects, the divine and human re-enactment of faith(fulness), are perfectly expressed by *pistis*.

One element that is perhaps less evident from this specific Graeco-Roman discourse of benefaction and imperialism is the element of transformation. In

339 Stendahl 1963, 202. The one exception is a quote from LXX *Psalms* 31.1 in *Romans* 4.7, the text under consideration in this subsection.

340 Breytenbach 2010, chapter 8: ‘Salvation of the reconciled (with a note on the background of Paul’s metaphor of reconciliation)’. Cf. his earlier study *Versöhnung: eine Studie zur paulinischen Soteriologie* (1989), esp. 40–83.

341 Cf. Harrison 1999 on Christ as ‘cosmic Saviour-Benefactor’ like Augustus in *Romans* 5.

342 Cf. for more reconciliation language the subsequent verses: 2 *Corinthians* 5.19–20.

the passage under discussion, the ‘ungodly’ are ‘justified/righteoused’ by God. I have already discussed the transformative role of *pistis* in the context of righteousness by looking at broader concepts such as the measure of faith (chapter 2) and internal law (chapter 3) and by looking at moral reform specifically by first becoming deeply persuaded (chapter 5) and by imitating Christ (chapter 6). From the perspective of the present chapter’s discourse, there is also some transformational potential. From a political point of view, the ‘enemies’ which have been offered Roman *fides* are transformed into good subjects or friends of Rome (see §7.3.2). From the perspective of benefaction, unworthy beneficiaries could possibly be turned into worthy ones by repeated benefactions (see §7.3.6). Still, this important aspect of Pauline *pistis* is more profoundly understood within the narratives of the internal law and *homoioōsis theōi*.

The reading of *Romans* 4–5 against the background of Graeco-Roman discourses of benefaction and patronage combines elements from the old and new perspectives on Paul. From the old perspective, it takes up the idea that ‘works’ are ostentatious goods offered in return for received gifts by which the gift seems to be deserved or at least paid for: benefaction is turned into a business transaction. Instead, loyalty and being of good faith is the proper return, a return that acknowledges the gift and establishes a durable patron-client relationship. It is moreover both an amplification and a substantiation of the New Perspective’s focus on the inclusion of the nations. More than this perspective, it shows how the interior/transjuridical and the bridging/transethnic are mutually reinforcing and not mutually exclusive concepts. The sphere of the law can only regulate external obligations (juridical), and it can only include the people in possession of the law (ethnic). The sphere of faith concerns an internally motivated commitment in an enduring relationship (transjuridical), and it can be accessed by foreign people too (transethnic). Only then does it show its ultimate bridging potential. *Pistis* as a civic-religious virtue reaches beyond both the formal and the familiar, beyond both the juridical and the ethnic.

## 7.5 Conclusion

Whereas some have understood Paul’s terminology of ‘faith’ in the context of Roman imperialism, and others his conception ‘grace’ in the context of the Graeco-Roman practice of benefaction, this chapter suggests that it is more fruitful to interpret their combined usage within the combined discourse of patronage. For in the context of both imperialism (foreign politics) and

benefaction (domestic politics), patronage was the primary social model that shaped non-familial relationships in the first-century Graeco-Roman world.

Throughout the source-texts that participate in this larger discourse, *pistis/fides* is considered a virtue essential to enabling a just community in the fabric of Graeco-Roman society, as it was seen to offer an interconnectedness and stability beyond what laws can provide. Moreover, the public virtue of *pistis/fides* reached further than any particular system of law, as it ideally creates trustworthy alliances even between enemies across national boundaries.

Hence, I argued that it was because of its transjuridical and transethnic nature that *pistis/fides* offered the early Christian movement the perfect alternative to Jewish law, since through *pistis* in the divine leader and saviour Jesus, people of all ethnicities could become God's people. Paul's good news thus concerned the faithfulness of God, demonstrated in Christ, as one who now offered admission into the 'realm of grace' to all who were once godless, but who would now in return pledge their commitment, their faithfulness. Expressed in the words of this discourse, Paul announced the possibility of aligning oneself to a powerful and trustworthy patron, whose only condition is the establishment of the reciprocal trust-relationship itself.

More concretely, I suggested ways to understand Pauline phrases that partake in this 'public' semantic domain in similar terms: 'proclaiming good faith' (instead of 'proclaiming the (Christian) faith'), 'hearing which results in faithfulness' (instead of 'the message of faith'), and 'a response of loyalty' (instead of 'obedience of faith'). Paul's problem with 'works of the law' also appeared to be well-attuned to the Graeco-Roman discourse on benefaction I discussed, namely to contemporary philosophical critiques of people turning benefaction into a business transaction. According to Paul, his adversaries treated God's offer of patronage in a similar fashion by boasting about their ostentatious returns, their 'works', while the only fitting return is a prolonged allegiance so that an enduring relationship of trust may ensue.

Thus, the Graeco-Roman discourse of patronage helps us to see how Paul's antithesis between faith and the law functions to combat boasting in self-righteousness and boasting in belonging to God's chosen nation at the same time. *Pistis* is Paul's transjuridical and transethnic alternative: it fosters a political allegiance to Christ based on wholehearted internal commitment (without external, ostentatious works), open to all ethnicities (without particular works of the Jewish law). It is not a matter of either/or. In line with our conclusion of chapter 3, this important aspect of the antithesis between the 'Old' and the 'New Perspective' is thus largely dissolved against the background of this one discourse.

The anti-imperial potential of Paul's message should therefore not be sought in the creative and somewhat concealed reconfiguration of the words used: *pistis* is not Paul's benign alternative to the harsh reality of violently compelled, unconditional loyalty to the empire. Instead, the Roman narrative and practice of patronage as a whole, characterized by key terms such as 'favour', 'power', 'promise', and 'good faith', provides a more comprehensive discourse to explain the early Christian message as a call to be faithful to Christ. This 'call to faith' surely creates a tension of loyalties, yet it was probably not conceived as an encoded call to revolt.

## Pistoi, Hagioi, and Apistoi: Faith as Philosophical-Religious Group Identity

### 8.1 How to Make More Semantic Sense of the Reverse of Pistis

In the previous chapters, little attention has been given to the instances in Paul's letters in which he talks about his community members as *hoi pistoi* or *hoi pisteuontes*, 'the faithful' or, as it is more often translated, 'the believers'. These designations are widely recognized as having both an affirmative and a delineating self-defining function: *pistis* is used as a social identity marker, and it also functions as boundary marker.<sup>1</sup> It is precisely in the prominence of *pistis* language for the early Christian self-understanding that parallels from contemporary groups are harder to find.<sup>2</sup> As in the previous chapters, therefore, I will survey comparative usage in pagan discourses in order to see how Paul's language converges with or diverges from that of his contemporaries.

So far, I have distinguished six semantic domains that serve as a map on which Paul's usage of *pistis* language can be traced, which range from cosmic-religious, to mental-persuasive, to social-political colourings. This chapter functions as a counterbalance: if we take a look at Paul's self-designations (the *pistoi/pisteuontes*) and other-designations (the ones without *pistis*: the *apistoi*), can we discern similar semantic depth? There is a tendency in scholarship to understand *pistis* designations as social boundary markers without such a more precise content. However, even though I have placed this chapter in my part 3, 'a *pistis* society', because it is related to social identity, my main contention in this chapter is that other semantic domains are always at play together with this 'social dimension'. As we shall see, being a *pistos* or *pisteuōn*

- 
- 1 Dunn 1983, 113; Schliesser 2011, 31 ('nach innen verbindendes und zugleich nach außen abgrenzendes Kennzeichen christlicher Identität'), cf. Schliesser 2017b, 3, 22, 47; Wolter 2017, 357 ('Der Glaube reißt nicht nur alte Grenzen ein, sondern er richtet auch neue Grenzen auf, nämlich die Grenzen zwischen den "Glaubenden" (den οἱ πιστεύοντες) und den "Ungläubigen" (den ἄπιστοι)'); Spaeth 2017, 397 ('Paulus sieht im Glauben an Jesus Christus das Identität stiftende Merkmal für den Einzelnen und die Gemeinde').
  - 2 Wolter 2017, 349: 'In der außerchristlichen Literatur der Antike ist diese Verwendung von οἱ πιστεύοντες als Gruppenbezeichnung völlig unbekannt.' Below (§8.3.1), I argue for a gradual development towards such usage, yet the prominence of the term among the early Christian movement indeed appears to be an innovation to some degree.

can take on meanings such as ‘having been persuaded’ (cf. chapter 5), ‘upholding the virtue of faithfulness’ (cf. chapter 6), or ‘remaining loyal to a particular leader or god’ (cf. chapter 7). Eventually, in a linguistic development of which at most the early outlines may be discerned in Paul and in some of his pagan contemporaries as well, all these nuances come together. Thus, being *pistos* or *pisteuōn* gradually becomes a term indicating one’s insider-status to a specific religious-philosophical movement (cf. chapter 2) as distinguished from certain *apistos* outsiders.

The dominance of faith language in the Christian movement, particularly the self- and other-defining usage I discuss in this chapter, is sometimes blamed for its exclusivist outlook. Mark Seifrid contrasts love and *pistis* in this respect and describes the latter’s ‘dark’, excluding potential as follows:

While ‘faithfulness’ certainly serves to nurture community, it is not clear that it is said to form community. It operates, or at least tends to operate, within defined social relationships (marriage, family, household, village, ethnic group) in which mutual duties are fairly well understood. That means, however, that ‘faithfulness’ may bear the dark side of exclusivity, the rejection of strangers or foreigners, who do not find a place in the usual order of things. (...) Furthermore, most of the social relationships where πίστις and *fides* were expected were hierarchical. Then as well as now, this expectation of faithfulness or loyalty was subject to abuse. (Seifrid 2018, 254–255)

Such stark contrasts seem to beg for refinement: as we have already seen in the previous chapter, *pistis* (or *fides*) was the bridging virtue par excellence, exceeding familial relationships and extending to enemies. In fact, it is precisely in relationships with those outside one’s sphere of influence that *pistis* is essential, whereas throughout early Christian literature, people are not called to ‘trust’ one another as much as to ‘love’ one another.<sup>3</sup> Still, there is some excluding potential here as well. Similar to English, the Greek morphology also has a prefix which produces the negative of a word: the *alpha privans*. In this way, *hoi pistoi*, believers or faithful ones, can be transformed into *hoi apistoi*, disbelievers or faithless ones. And when it comes to these other-designations,

3 Cf. Morgan 2015, 504: ‘Community members are not, in the New Testament, exhorted to trust one another routinely as fellow-community members (as, for instance, they are regularly exhorted to love one another), but to *pisteuein* only in God, Christ, or those to whom God has entrusted the gospel or given *pistis* as a fruit of the spirit.’

Paul's language sounds pretty exclusivist indeed, such as in the rhetorical question 'what is the harmony between Christ and Beliar, or what does a *pistos* share with an *apistos*?' (2 Cor 6.15).

The verb *apisteō*, the noun *apistia*, and the adjective *apistos* together occur forty-two times in the corpus of the New Testament. Of these, nineteen are found in the undisputed Pauline letters, of which fourteen are in the letters to the Corinthians. These fourteen cases all concern the substantivized usage of the adjective, *hoi apistoi*, whereas the other five are nouns and a verb, all found in *Romans*. All of Paul's *apistoi* designations (the adjective used as a designation) are thus found in the Corinthian correspondence. This is noteworthy, and it should prompt us to consider possible explanations.

A main question propelling this penultimate chapter is whether the people Paul calls *hoi apistoi* are actually 'unbelievers' in the sense of general outsiders. In present-day, Western discourses and thanks to the influence of centuries of Christian cultural dominance, being a 'believer' is the opposite of being an 'unbeliever', whereby the latter is equated to being an outsider in the religious tradition one speaks of or even an outsider to any religious commitment. 'Unbelievers' or 'disbelievers' may be used in a pejorative sense by people inside a tradition to vilify others (like 'infidels'), though more often it denotes 'the outsider' in a more neutral, anonymous, or general sense as non-believers. In both cases, the use of the term is a general social-religious category, emptied of heavy content or specific reference. It is this 'neutral' social-religious usage that I believe cannot yet be found at the time in which Paul was writing (see §8.3.1 below for a more refined categorization of designations).

I argue in this chapter that *apistia* language in Paul's letters is as contextually determined as his *pistis* language and denotes specific categories of people and thought he encountered. The general consensus in scholarship, however, is that *apistoi* are neutral non-Christians, whose only characteristic is defined by their lack of a specific kind of early Christian faith. For example, Tobias Wieczorek has argued in a recent monograph that as there is no specific semantic orientation for *apistoi* to be found in Graeco-Roman sources Paul merely used it as the opposite of *pisteuontes*.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the *apistoi* designation 'does not have anything to do with any ascribed false belief or disbelief,

4 See Wieczorek 2021, 37: 'Es ließ sich jedoch in den Texten der Umwelt nicht feststellen, dass die Abgrenzung einer Person als ἄπιστος von einer bestimmten semantischen Ausrichtung geprägt wäre. Es liegt also kein geprägter Begriffsinhalt vor, den Paulus aufnehmen oder übergehen könnte. (...) Das heißt, dass Paulus mit der ἄπιστοι-Bezeichnung weniger über die Bezeichneten aussagt, als über ihren defizitären Unterschied gegenüber seinen eigentlichen Adressaten, den πιστεύοντες.' I argue for more specific semantic orientation in Graeco-Roman discourses in §8.3 below.

it simply indicates a lack of the belief of the believers', wherefore Wieczorek prefers the translation of 'non-believer' over 'unbeliever' or 'disbeliever'.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to interpretations and translations such as these, that represent the majority of scholarship, I suggest we consider the possibility that the negative designation *apistos* simply did not yet designate the general, neutral 'other' for Paul and his first-century audience.<sup>6</sup> Instead, it denoted specific deviant behaviour that threatened the community from within or it labelled uncommitted others at the community's borders.

This point, that the Corinthians *apistoi* are in fact social insiders has also been made and convincingly argued in a 2018 article by T.J. Lang.<sup>7</sup> There are differences, though, in how this chapter interprets each of the Pauline occurrences of *apistoi*, as will be indicated below. Overall, Lang is less interested in the differences in semantic domains at play at each occurrence, but regards *apistoi* as a 'specialised use' within the Corinthian sociolect, referring to 'a well-known group within the Corinth ecclesial network'.<sup>8</sup> As a consequence of my discourse-analytical approach, I tend to steer away from pinpointing all-too-specialized, 'sociolect' language use. Such an interpretation would again lay an essentially polysemous lexeme upon the Procrustean bed of unambiguity. Instead, I focus more on differentiating between usages (in different domains and discourses) of the lexeme, both in pagan sources (§8.3) and in Paul's letters (§8.4). This allows us to see why the label is appropriate in many different settings and why the people implied receive different responses from Paul.<sup>9</sup>

As this chapter demonstrates, the precise semantics of each occurrence of *apistoi* depend on contextual markers to an important extent. In some cases,

5 Wieczorek 2021, 198. In German: 'Es geht nicht um einen ihnen zugeschriebenen falschen Glauben oder Unglauben, sondern darum, dass sie nicht den Glauben der Glaubenden haben. Das heißt, dass sie nicht die Glaubenden und eben deshalb die Nichtgläubigen sind.'

6 Interesting enough, Wieczorek also notes (at 37–38) that this usage of *apistoi* for the entirety of outsiders cannot be found in contemporary sources and that such social usage is a novelty in Paul's letters.

7 Lang 2018. Cf. also my 2013 conference paper on the Corinthian *apistoi*, presented at the conference 'Disbelief in Antiquity: An Interdisciplinary Conference': Oxford, June 22–24, 2013.

8 Lang 2018, 984. Cf. at 993: 'the label ἄπιστοι obtained a special sense within the Corinthian community.'

9 Cf. on the multivalence of *apistos* also Downing 2010, 159: 'Clearly, at 1 Cor 7.12–13, we are obliged to translate ἄπιστος as "unbeliever", for here no "unfaithful" outcomes of unbelief are at stake; and perhaps at 2 Cor 6.14 Paul also talks of believer and unbeliever (as commentators seem to prefer), even though it would afford more consistency with the former passage if separation were here ordered for unfaithful behaviour (cf. 1 Cor 5.6), not for the "unbelief" that earlier (1 Cor 7.12–13) was said to constitute no reason for parting.' This is an excellent point, even though I would not side with him on choosing 'unbeliever' at 1 Cor 7.12–13, nor would I agree with the 'commentators' on 2 Cor 6.14: see resp. §8.4.4 and §8.4.5 below.



Paul's *apistoi* are 'unpersuaded ones', cognitively reserved people, living in the periphery of the Christ-community, potentially to be won over to trusting the Christ-message. Alternatively, in other cases, they represent 'unfaithful', polytheistic idol-worshippers who have not committed to living their lives in allegiance to and imitation of Christ. Even though these labels may well indicate a more particular social group (as Lang argues and as I will explore in §8.4.5 below), the semantic range of the designation *apistoi* is important for understanding the precise 'lack of *pistis*' at play in each passage. Moreover, the noun *apistia* and the verb *apisteō* that Paul uses in *Romans* need to be taken into consideration. In these contexts, I will argue that the *apistia* language can be accounted for from the social-political perspective I laid out in chapter 7. With these words, Paul denotes those fellow-Jews who dispute God's offer of *pistis* to all nations through Christ. Overall, I argue, the people identified by means of *pistis* or *apistia* language are never simply 'believers' versus 'unbelievers' in a modern, sociological, and generalizing sense.

In the next section (§8.2), I discuss two works, one from the classical and one from the theological field, that together illustrate the majority view of *apistoi* as general religious outsiders. Tim Whitmarsh's monograph on atheism in antiquity, which ultimately hopes to rehabilitate atheism as a movement with ancient roots, depends on an overall us-versus-them frame of thought: the unbelieving atheists versus the believing (and inherently intolerant) theists (see §8.2.1). Early Christians especially are suspected of excluding all disbelievers, which are all-too-easily equated with proto-atheists by Whitmarsh. By contrast, in the pagan and Christian sources I discuss in this chapter, *apistoi* will be shown to be specific, rather than general, 'others', such as the Epicureans who reject (and thus 'distrust') divine providence. Whitmarsh's argument, that Paul of Tarsus was influential in coining us-versus-them language by means of the *pistis* lexeme, is not unlike that of New Testament scholar Paul Trebilco (see §8.2.2). In his research into early Christian self-identifications, he proposes that the label of 'believers' created its natural counterpart for everyone else. While this duality may have eventually arisen, we shall see that such an overall duality of *hoi pistoi* versus *hoi apistoi* is not accounted for in contemporary pagan material, nor is it warranted by the context of these designations in Paul's letters.

Section 8.3 takes up the notion of (dis)trust or (dis)belief in Graeco-Roman religious and philosophical self-identification and polemic. Even though the early Christians were the first to so markedly employ *pistis* vocabulary as a self-designation for their movement, there are occasional attestations of it as labels or group-designations in contemporary Jewish and pagan literature, to which the first subsection is devoted (§8.3.1). If we broaden the usage to include not

only clear, nominal self- or other-designations, but also looser labels for people and their behaviour, we gain insight in who were regarded as an '*apistos* other' in Paul's time. An overview of *apistia* in Plato's dialogues (8.3.2) demonstrates the importance of the semantic domain of persuasion in philosophical discourses and sets the stage for later developments in philosophical discourses. An important Hellenistic-Roman discourse (discussed in §8.3.3 and §8.3.4) which stands out is the polemic against philosophical adversaries, Epicureans and Academics in particular, who were seen as distrustful sceptics because of their claim to a superior knowledge. 'Distrust' in these discourses includes not only epistemological-persuasive scepticism, but also a 'religious' position on the lack of involvement of the gods in human affairs: they mistrusted divine providence and divine involvement.

The analysis of Graeco-Roman material provides us with a framework from which Paul's use of *pistis* in self- and other-designations can be reconsidered: why did he choose this specific designation and how does it serve its purpose in its specific social and literary contexts? In the final section of this chapter (§8.4), I argue that the *pistis* designations started off as bridging, inclusive markers, serving to overcome the Jew-Greek divide (see §8.4.1). Yet, it continued to develop, particularly in Corinth, into a deviantizing, socio-religious boundary marker, serving to set the Corinthians apart from influences Paul deemed unwelcome. In the Corinthian letters, the subject matter in general and the direct context of the *apistoi* designations in particular have to do with how to create, maintain, or foster certain boundaries between the Christ-community and its neighbours. *Apistoi* thus referred to people inside or at the borders of the community that lacked a proper commitment to this community and its God: they either remained as yet unconvinced by the Christ-message (see §8.4.2), or they did not yet behave accordingly (see §8.4.3), or they continued to partake in the worship of other deities (§§8.4.4–5). In §8.4.5, I submit that such an *apistos* attitude may be due to Epicurean teachings, according to which such exclusivist commitment was deemed unnecessary and among whose adherents participation in polytheist cults remained the norm. The function of the *apistoi* designation for Paul was thus to shape the community's identity in the direction he perceived as right by sharply rejecting this behaviour and deviantizing these people.

## 8.2 Denouncing All Outsiders or Criticizing Particular Antagonists? Us-Versus-Them Thinking by Pagans and Paul

In this section, I critically discuss two central monographs, one by a classicist and one by a New Testament scholar, on the identity of 'disbelievers'. First, we have a look at Tim Whitmarsh's history of classical atheism in which he offers a tribute to all 'disbelievers' as pagan, anti-theistic outsiders (2016). Second, I will engage with Paul Trebilco's survey of early-Christian self-designations, in which he describes *apistoi* as an innovative, neutral outsider-designation for non-Christians (2012, cf. 2014). Even though both works are quite distinct in their scope and theme, both share the thesis that Christianity in its earlier stages developed the language of 'believers' versus 'unbelievers' in order to create a clear, social boundary between themselves and everybody else. It is this thesis that I am questioning in this chapter, specifically as it relates to Paul's use of *apistia* and *pistis* language. As we shall see, Paul's *pistis* and *apistia* designations do not imply a simple social binary, but are best understood as referring to specific groups characterized by specific virtues or vices.

### 8.2.1 *Confusing Modern Disbelief and Ancient Apistia in Evaluating Pagan Atheism*

In his 2016 monograph *Battling the Gods*, Tim Whitmarsh presents us with an overview of atheism in classical antiquity in order to show that it was by no means 'a modern invention, a product of the Enlightenment' but rather 'at least as old as the monotheistic religions of Abraham' (4). He thus confronts the 'modernist mythology' that the 'battle with the gods' is a relatively recent development. His agenda can thus be summarized as a wish to legitimize the position of atheism in the intellectual landscape: 'the deep history of atheism is then in part a human rights issue' (7). I have chosen to discuss this work critically in the present study because it is symptomatic in its assumptions that atheism is the categorical antonym of religion—monotheistic religion in particular—in the same way as the disbeliever is viewed as the ultimate 'other' of the believer. These binary either-or schemes, I argue, do not do justice to the nuances and criticisms within ancient and modern religiosities and beliefs.

As for his understanding of religion, Whitmarsh's entire narrative seems driven by the wish to sharply distinguish 'the religion of the Greeks and Romans' from monotheistic religions—so much so, in fact, that he purposefully or inadvertently downplays the intolerance of the first, while the latter is

turned into an intolerant, homogenous caricature.<sup>10</sup> According to Whitmarsh, Greek religion was ‘an expression of these multiple regional identities, (...) there was no desire or attempt to impose theological orthodoxy’ (20). Consequently, ‘the job of the priests was to sacrifice, not to pronounce on ethical or spiritual issues’ (21). Furthermore, according to the author, it was the lack of sacred scripture which facilitated ‘naturalistic explanations’ (39), an achievement which is to my knowledge often connected to ‘monotheistic’ repugnance of magic and animism.<sup>11</sup> While Whitmarsh grants that theomachy, the trope of battling with the Gods in ancient myth which gave the book its name, always ends in the challenger being put in his place, he asserts that this theme is ‘not just about duty and devotion. This was not a Protestant culture demanding absolute obedience’ (45). The general outcome of these comparisons with monotheistic religions is a picture of Greek and Roman religion as ‘open-minded’.<sup>12</sup> They leave you wondering whether Whitmarsh has any clue of the manifold insights and practices of monotheistic traditions (if it is at all helpful to lump these together) or of the diverse approaches to it by religious scholars. His statement that, notwithstanding personal experiences, religion is ‘at the structural level an allegory of political power’ suggests a reductionist perspective.<sup>13</sup>

10 The Greek legislation against and prosecution of ‘impious’ philosophers receives ample attention, but these cases are downplayed as ‘rarities’ in a system that approximates ‘the centralized sacro-political empires of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds’ (123). Roman ‘religious’ intolerance such as the proscription of the Bacchus cult in 186 BC and the expulsion of philosophers in 161 BC is not mentioned at all. For a more nuanced view with more examples, see Engels & Van Nuffelen 2014a, 13. And see Fuchs et al. 2019, with as conclusion in the ‘afterword’ (1169): ‘In each case discussed in this section, we can see how heterogeneity is being produced and suppressed in mono-religious *and* multi-religious contexts.’

11 Whitmarsh mentions that Anaxagoras was put on trial for denying the divinity of the heavenly bodies (64): a similar denial appears to be the punch line of *Genesis* 1 in response to the surrounding polytheism, triggering, as Max Weber famously phrased, the ‘Entzauberung der Welt’.

12 To name a few examples, a discussion of texts challenging the gods’ existence in Greek tragedy is followed by a rhetorical question: ‘Is there any synagogue, mosque or church where the ideas of Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris are expounded seriously and constructively?’ (114). Not only do I know from experience that such churches are not ‘extremely rare’, it seems to me that ‘to subject the nature of the gods to radical questioning’ is not ‘blasphemous’ but rather the core business of theology, and examples of this abound precisely in ‘sacred text’ (114).

13 In addition, ‘our’ modern concept of religion is defined as ‘the institutional apparatus promoting a particular way of worshipping the gods’ (180) and the prosperity of atheism since the Enlightenment is phrased in terms of the social necessity ‘to claw intellectual

But it is not only modern, monotheistic religion that is portrayed in this way; ancient religion seems to be regarded through a reductionistic or modernistic lens as well. In this area, the main contrasts with my own approach become evident. Whitmarsh continuously contrasts philosophy and religion, materialism and the gods. Greek religion is predominantly seen in its civic embeddedness and limited to cult practice, informed by a dose of myth. 'As a rule', Whitmarsh states, 'Greek religion had very little to say about morality and the nature of the world' (52). Philosophy is left out of his concept of 'religion' altogether. This is all the more striking since a well-documented ancient model for ways of knowing and speaking about the divine, the *theologia tripartita*, suggests that together with myth and civic ritual, philosophy was part and parcel of ancient 'theology' (see chapter 2 above). Moreover, recent studies emphasize the existence of pagan monotheism (monotheism was not a Christian prerogative), the totalizing elements in philosophical reflection upon religion, and the entanglement of philosophy and religion in a religious-philosophical continuum with the ideal of godlikeness gaining prominence across different schools.<sup>14</sup> Whitmarsh's take on ancient religion does not address either these first-order perspectives or these recent developments in the academic study of Hellenistic-Roman philosophy and religion.

Most candidates for atheism Whitmarsh discusses are philosophers. In chapter 4, for instance, the Pre-Socratics are praised as naturalists because of their materialism—a dangerous equation in my view, since they were also pre-Platonists in the sense that they did not understand matter as the opposite of 'form' or, in modern terms, the 'supernatural'.<sup>15</sup> According to Whitmarsh, however, the pre-Socratic concept of God is not a 'god of the gaps' but an 'intrinsically scientific concept' and hence 'not really a god at all' (65–66).<sup>16</sup> When it comes to Herodotus's conception of divinity, Whitmarsh rejects explanations that rest 'too heavily on an anachronistic science/religion distinction' (81). Yet

---

and moral authority away from the clergy and reallocate it to the secular specialists in science and engineering' (205).

14 See on the first issue particularly Athanassiadi & Frede 1999, on the totalizing tendencies in philosophical reflection on religion Van Nuffelen 2011 (see §2.2.2 *supra*), on the religious-philosophical continuum Hirsch-Luipold, Görgemanns & Von Albrecht 2009 (see also §1.4.2 and §2.2.2 *supra*), and on godlikeness e.g. Erler 2002a (and §6.3.4 *supra*).

15 I owe this acute observation to a review by Albert Joosse (2016, 226, in Dutch).

16 Cf. for a different view on the Pre-Socratics Boys-Stones 2009, 3: 'Occasionally, it is true, reservations are expressed about *particular religious practices*; but even these presuppose the perspective of the religious insider. Far from attacking religion, they question activities and attitudes that risk bringing it into disrepute.'

such a distinction seems heavily ingrained in the author's own system: 'Herodotus typically uses "god" not as a religious category—as an anthropoid being or as an object of cult—but as an extension of his rationalistic system, as a figurative way of expressing the hidden coherence of things' (81). Similarly, by distancing Socrates from the 'theistic' Plato, he turns the first into a modern areligious humanist with the 'ultimate message' that 'you make your own principles and you live by them' (137). This depiction seems to be at odds with scholarship that focuses on the integration of Socrates' religious and philosophical views.<sup>17</sup> He thus allows rationalism to completely hollow out religion, turning the latter into a mere figure of speech. Religious positions such as pantheism, panentheism, deism, and any self-critical form of theism are left out, leaving only the two extreme options of 'deity-max' and 'atheist/naturalist' (59).

A by-product of this somewhat narrow, black-and-white understanding of religion is that Whitmarsh labels everything that smells even remotely like an anomaly or like criticism of the mainstream religious tradition 'disbelief' and 'atheism' indiscriminately.<sup>18</sup> Whitmarsh embraces the sceptic Academy for their collections of arguments against theism, notwithstanding their conservative religious praxis (see §8.3.3–4 below). He considers questioning the validity of prophecy an 'antireligious theme' instead of a proper theological quest. At the same time, he leaves out countless similar critical voices from within monotheistic traditions. In fact, it turns out that for many of his 'atheistic' texts, biblical analogues can be found. Anaxagoras' denial of the divinity of heavenly bodies sounds a lot like the same denial in the opening chapter of *Genesis*, yet Whitmarsh judged that his concept of *nous* was of an altogether different character than 'the Yahweh of Genesis or the Allah of the Qur'an' (65). The passage deemed 'one of the most explicit atheistic utterances of all in ancient culture', from Euripides' *Bellerophon*, concerns the problem of good things happening to evil men, yet this is a problem which is also addressed at length in Jewish wisdom literature (e.g., *Ecclesiastes* chapters

17 Particularly Babut 1974, 59–74, and more recently, McPherran 2010.

18 Cf., for a different approach Benitez & Tarrant 2015, whose case studies lead them to (at 221–222) question 'the standard dichotomy between those who follow reason and those who follow religion, the former being "philosophers" and the latter being poets, religious writers, and others whom Aristotle called "lovers of myth" (*philomythoi*, *Metaphysics* 982b17). The distinction does not suit the majority of Presocratics, including Xenophanes, and is misleading in the case of Plato. It is utterly false in the intellectual world of the second century CE. In general, outside Aristotelian and Epicurean traditions, philosophers seldom saw themselves as making any comprehensive attack on Greek religious heritage.'

8–9). If anti-providential historiography indeed implies atheism (the thesis of his chapter 13), then what about the divine resistance against human kingship in the Hebrew Bible and in Second Temple period eschatology? According to Whitmarsh, theomachy was considered ‘wrong’ by the Greeks ‘not because it contravened any heaven-sent rule-book but because it was (at least in myth) a horrible misjudgement of the odds’—the same can be said about Job’s theomachy in Hebrew Scripture, ending with the proclamation of divine superiority. The pagan theme of theomachy is explained by Whitmarsh as an endeavour to approach godliness and described as ‘not inherently blasphemous’—neither was Jacob’s fight with ‘God’. All these Jewish examples of self-critical theology pose a problem for Whitmarsh’s general thesis of exclusivist, intolerant monotheism.

When it comes to the character of the early Christian movement, Whitmarsh dismisses the accusation of atheism against it as a later Christian invention.<sup>19</sup> However, there were good reasons for calling the early Christians atheists as they ‘disbelieved’ and rejected much of the dominant polytheist dogma and praxis.<sup>20</sup> Paul, who may well be considered critical of mainstream Greco-Roman religion, is briefly mentioned once: not because of this criticism, but rather because of his ‘attempt to reinforce group cohesion by stigmatizing those outside’ (214). Whereas Whitmarsh does not mention any particular passage here, *2 Corinthians* 6.11–7.1 with its black-and-white ‘believer’ versus ‘disbeliever’ scheme would probably fit this argument, if interpreted within Whitmarsh’s paradigm. This brings us to the main question of this chapter, namely the question of to whom the word *apistos* in Paul’s letters refers. Did it indeed function as a common, stigmatizing label for all outsiders, similar to what we generally mean with our word ‘disbelievers’?

Whitmarsh’s genealogy of the word *atheos* offers an interesting parallel for our search for the meaning of *apistos*. He notes that whereas in archaic Greece, *atheos* meant ‘godforsaken’, ‘godless’, even ‘barbaric’, it became a label for specific individuals who lacked commitment to the gods in classical Athens (116). This ‘invention of atheism’ was ‘rooted in a politically influenced desire to stigmatizee [*sic*] certain individuals’ (124). He moreover argues that another

19 In an endnote, he explains that in the second century, Lucian’s character Alexander associates Christians with atheism not because they were indeed considered atheists, but because they were ‘lumped in with Epicureans, who were certainly thought of as (philosophical) atheists’ (277, n. 9). This passage, however, at the very least suggests that Christians were guilty of a similar crime by association. See §8.3.1 *infra*.

20 See e.g. Larry Hurtado (2016), a monograph whose title, *Destroyer of the Gods*, suggests some inspiration from Whitmarsh’s.

transition in meaning took place around the time of the Christianization of the Roman empire: 'it came to mean simply the absence of belief in the *Christian* god' (238). Instead of referring to a specified intellectual position on or practice concerning the divine, it was beginning to be used for 'universal enemies' (239). Only then did atheism, Whitmarsh maintains, become 'the "other" of true belief' and 'the inverse of proper religion' (27). He concludes that 'the violent "othering" as atheists of those who hold different religious views was overwhelmingly a Judeo-Christian creation, which was then projected back onto the polytheists' (240).<sup>21</sup> Whitmarsh thus connects polarizing religious language to religiously motivated violence: 'that distinctively monotheistic sense that there can only be one true religion has a tendency to foster sharp divisions between communities, and indeed a sense of the inevitability of violence between them' (239).<sup>22</sup>

Whitmarsh seems to overlook, however, that 'atheist' was already a negative label for those who did not properly believe in or worship the *Athenian* gods in Socrates' days.<sup>23</sup> 'True religion' was perhaps more broadly understood in these polytheistic circles, but it did have its boundaries and these boundaries were violently upheld in certain political climates. Lucian has Alexander label as 'atheists', 'Christians', and 'Epicureans' those who do not 'have faith in the God' (οἱ (...) πιστεύοντες τῷ θεῷ), the god in question being Zeus's grandson Glycon, represented by Alexander himself (on this text, see §4.2.2 above and §8.3.1 below). Here the label 'atheists' seems to denote religious rivals who come to 'spy upon our rites'. The common ground in the usage of *atheoi* through different periods, then, seems to be that it denotes specific 'others' who are perceived as threatening the religious identity of the ingroup, be it a polytheist, henotheist, or monotheist identity.

So, if not the number of gods, what change did occur which influenced the eventual shift in meaning of *atheos*? A determinative difference seems to be that the political perspective of the known world had expanded to universal proportions after the classical period: correct theology and worship was no longer a matter of polis; by the fourth century AD it had become a matter of

21 According to Whitmarsh, the first to use this new meaning, denoting people who 'did not believe in him [i.e. God] in the right way' was Philo of Alexandria (at 239).

22 Cf. p. 26: 'Monotheism, on the other hand, puts up firm barriers between insider and outsider: the one god demands absolute loyalty.'

23 As noted in the review by Richard Janko (2016), with a reference to Euripides, *Bacchae* 995, where Pentheus is called 'godless, lawless, unjust' (ἄθεον, ἄνομον, ἄδικον) for not recognizing the newly arrived god Bacchus. See also §8.3.2 below for some thoughts on the accusations against Socrates.



empire. At that point, one religious ingroup had come to represent the major, privileged part of the known world, perceived as one sphere of influence and concern. This is why the outgroup could easily be ‘universalized’ as the ultimate religious other. In this scenario, neutrality is not an option; everyone is either a theist in the sense of one upholding proper religious convictions and engaging in proper religious actions, or an atheist.

If this hypothesis holds, similar mechanisms may logically be in play when it comes to the denotation of *apistoi*. Like its positive counterpart *pistoi*, it is a polysemous substantivized adjective with meanings ranging from a moral/social vice, being ‘faithless’, ‘unreliable’, or ‘unfaithful’ and acting accordingly, to a cognitive attitude of ‘disbelieving’, being ‘distrustful’, ‘sceptical’, or ‘unconvinced’. Both main meanings may in principle refer to either universal outsiders or specific antagonists on the borders of the ingroup. In this chapter, however, in the hope of providing some terminological clarity, I commonly use ‘disbelievers’ for denoting the neutral-social usage of general outsiders devoid of specific moral or cognitive criticism. The difference between the two may gain conceptual clarity by this representation (figure 5).

From what we have seen from Whitmarsh’s thesis, even though he does not discuss Paul or any particular Jewish or Christian author at any length, we may conjecture that he would expect to find the encompassing us-versus-them scenario of Model B. In this chapter, by contrast, I will defend the first of these models (Model A) as the most probable depiction when it comes to the Pauline usage of *apistoi*. Even though the scale of the empire was a relevant perspective for Paul, his influence and concern was limited to those particular ‘uncommitting’ or ‘disloyal’ people who had a direct impact on the gospel as it was lived inside his communities. In other passages in his letters,

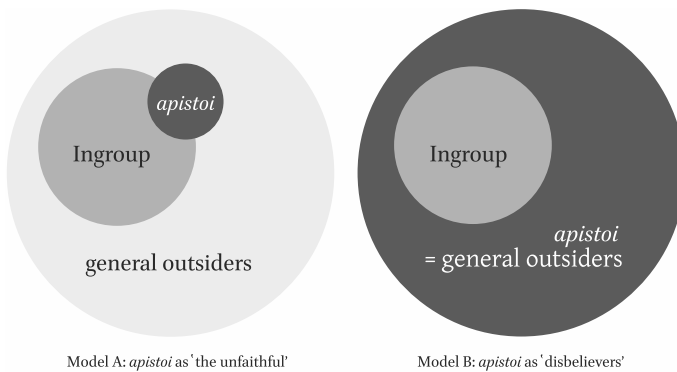


FIGURE 5 The identity of the *apistoi* according to two different models

Paul seems to be anxious not to withdraw from the world and not to alienate general outsiders, and he even advocates adapting to their customs to some extent (e.g., 1 Cor 5.10; 1 Cor 7.12–13; 1 Cor 9.21, texts that I will return to below). Model B, it seems to me, represents a later semantic development that took place after the first century within a changed religious and political situation.

Even biblical scholars, however, whom you might expect to be more ‘monotheism-minded’, commonly opt for Model B as the correct depiction of Paul’s usage. In the next subsection, I discuss some main tenets of New Testament research, in particular the work of Paul Trebilco on self- and other-designations, which also appears to endorse Model B.

### 8.2.2 *Confusing Modern Non-belief and Ancient Apistia in Evaluating Paul’s Other-Designations*

An important step in the mapping of self-designations and other-designations in the New Testament has been undertaken by Paul Trebilco. In his 2012 monograph, the first entirely devoted to this subject, he discusses seven major self-designations in separate chapters, amongst which is ‘chapter 3: the believers’ (68–121) on the designations *hoi pistoi* and *hoi pisteuontes*. A subsequent article (2014) focuses on the Pauline creation of insider-outsider boundaries by the usage of *hoi apistoi*, ‘the unbelievers’, and *ta ethnē*, ‘the nations’ or ‘gentiles’. Trebilco draws from social identity theory and social linguistics to emphasize the interplay between the designations in use and actual social practice (5–9). Building on these theories, one of his main conclusions as regards the function of the believer and disbeliever designations is that ‘the Pauline language of *hoi pisteuontes* and *hoi apistoi* clearly fulfils this sort of role in boundary formation for the group and is part of “propaganda strategy”’. This begs the question what boundaries are at stake: between what sort of people and for what reasons?

Trebilco argues that the positive believer designations are inclusive designations with ‘overtones of universality’ (2012, 74). With and without the accompanying form of *pas* (πᾶς), ‘all believers’, they serve to deconstruct existing boundaries, those between Jews and Greeks (in response to the Jewish worldview) (2012, 73) and those between the wise and the foolish (in response to the non-Jewish worldview) (2012, 82). The negative designations, however, function according to Trebilco so as ‘to reconstruct a boundary but in a different place, (...) it is the “believers-unbelievers” boundary’ (2012, 85). Trebilco cites John W. Taylor:

It does not appear that ἄπιστος was used to indicate religious, philosophical or ethnic outsiders before its appearance in 1 Corinthians. (...) It seems most likely that Pauline use of οἱ πιστεύοντες, designating those

who have received the gospel as believers, generated its own logical opposite. (Taylor as cited in Trebilco 2012, 83)<sup>24</sup>

Building on this, Trebilco concludes that while the positive designation of ‘believers’ had its roots in the Septuagint and in the Jesus traditions prior to Paul, ‘disbeliever’ language is an innovation by the Pauline movement, without precedent in Graeco-Roman or Jewish sources.<sup>25</sup> According to Trebilco, the centrality of the notion of faith ‘created its own logical opposite’ and this opposite incorporated all outsiders ‘almost by definition’ (2012, 83). This innovation is pinpointed by Trebilco to have taken place ‘between writing *Thessalonians* and *Corinthians*’ (2014, 189). In his letters to the Corinthians, ‘Paul was not simply content to use generic labels for outsiders’, and *apistoi* was coined ‘theologically driven by the fact that *pistis* has become an essential definition of what it is to be an insider’ (2014, 190). This new boundary was particularly helpful since Paul was ‘of the view that the Corinthians are involved in the surrounding culture in unhelpful ways’ (2012, 85).

I want to question these claims concerning the meaning, origin, and function of *apistoi* in three related respects. 1) Should *apistoi* be interpreted as (general and neutral) ‘unbelievers’? 2) Was its usage as such an innovation? 3) Is the social boundary created by Paul’s usage of *apistoi* really one between insiders and ‘surrounding culture’ or ‘all outsiders in general’ (2014, 188)?

First, there is the meaning of *apistoi*. From the beginning of his analysis of *hoi apistoi*, Trebilco posits a distinction between a Graeco-Roman, a Jewish, and a Pauline usage. Whereas the first two are said to comprise meanings like ‘mistrustful, faithless, incredulous, incredible, not to be trusted, unfaithful’, he considers only two main meanings of the word when it comes to the New Testament. Basing his argument on the BDAG, he states: ‘In the NT, ἄπιστος means ‘unbelievable, incredible’ and ‘without faith, disbelieving, unbelieving’ (2014, 187). In a footnote (2014, 187, n. 9), he acknowledges another meaning of ‘unfaithful’ in the parable of the faithful and the unfaithful slave (Luke 12.35–48) and in a catalogue of vices in *Revelation*, where *apistoi* are named next to the cowardly, the polluted, murderers, etc. (Rev 21.8). In the parable in *Luke*, the first slave is called a faithful manager (12.42: ὁ πιστὸς οἰκονόμος), while the latter one is said to be put ‘with the unfaithful’ (12.46: μετὰ τῶν ἀπίστων)—indeed, not ‘with the unbelievers’. This is also evident from the

24 Cf. p. 120. Trebilco refers to the unpublished PhD dissertation ‘Paul’s Understanding of Faith’ by John W. Taylor (2004a, 123–124).

25 Trebilco 2012, 83: ‘The use of the term “unbelievers” is thus a new and innovative use of language.’ Cf. Trebilco 2014, 188–191.

parallel text in *Matthew* 24.51, where the faithful (*pistos*) slave is contrasted to the bad (*kakos*) slave, who is put ‘with the hypocrites’ (μετὰ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν). This word, hypocrites, suggests an identity of false insiders, not general outsiders.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, notwithstanding these uses of *apistos* as ‘unfaithful’, Trebilco does not seem to prefer the reading of ‘the unfaithful’ in his overall interpretation of *apistoi* in the New Testament and opts instead for ‘unbelievers’, together with most modern translations.

The word ‘unbelievers’ is in itself problematic, for it leads to incredible exegeses, such as the implication that unbelievers do not believe in anything.<sup>27</sup> The passages in *1* and *2 Corinthians* in which the designation is used, moreover, all imply a specific persuasive, ethical, or religious deficit on the side of the *apistoi*, as I will argue in detail below (§8.4). Apart from his interpretation of the Pauline passages, Trebilco also appears to take *apistoi* in *Titus* 1.15 to refer to general outsiders, whereas the next verse clearly states that ‘they profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions’. In other words, this is about Jews or pagan Christ-followers who do not live up to their confession and act unfaithfully to God. In general, then, *apistoi* is understood by Trebilco in a non-specific manner as referring to all who do not share the *pistis* that is so important to the early followers of Christ.

Second, as for the innovativeness of the term, used in this fashion, the Graeco-Roman sources I discuss below (§8.3) will show that the development in usage to describe specific philosophical-religious antagonists had already set in, whereas the development to use it to describe all outsiders had not yet taken place. The fact that, as Trebilco notes, Paul does not use *apistoi* to denote outsiders in other letters such as *1 Thessalonians* is then not so remarkable.<sup>28</sup> The instances in *1* and *2 Corinthians* do not diverge from preceding usage and can all be taken to refer to specific groups of people in the vicinity of the Pauline communities who threatened the integrity of the ingroup (see §8.4). To locate this development in the few years in between *1 Thessalonians* and *1 Corinthians* is thus uncalled for.

A third question relates to what happens on a sociological level when Paul labels people *apistoi*. Trebilco’s insights from social identity studies

26 Pace Bultmann 1968, 204–205, esp. n. 234.

27 Wolter 2017, 349: ‘Und weil die Menschen, die der Gruppe der πιστεύοντες angehören, ihre Gemeinsamkeit und Unterscheidung von anderen darin finden, dass sie “glauben”, werden alle anderen, die das nicht tun, zu “Ungläubigen” (ἄπιστοι: (...)). Sie glauben also nicht lediglich etwas anderes, sondern sie glauben gar nicht.’ He substantiates this claim by pointing to the lack of an object in the genitive case.

28 See Trebilco 2014, 189: ‘There were a number of occasions then when Paul could have called outsiders οἱ ἄπιστοι in this letter but does not.’

and labelling theory are highly relevant here, yet these insights can be variously applied to the situation with different outcomes as to the identity of the ones being labelled. Trebilco refers to the sociological phenomenon of ingroup-outgroup stereotyping, establishing and reinforcing group cohesion by demarcating ‘us’ and ‘them’ by means of a group-specific social dialect (2012, 83–83; 2014, 185–186).<sup>29</sup> However, social scientists have recently called into question the tendency among social identity theorists that ‘intra-group consensus is presupposed’ as ‘the group definition—and hence group behaviour—is taken as monolithic’.<sup>30</sup> In line with this renewed attention for intragroup divisions, I would suggest that there is another specific model relevant here, namely the process of ‘deviantization’, which is ‘a summary term for the social construction of stigmatized people, behaviours, and situations.’<sup>31</sup> John Barclay was a pioneer in using this process as a lens for understanding early Jewish and Christian social dynamics. He notes:

One may read the whole of *1 Corinthians* as an attempt by Paul to define the boundaries of the Christian community in Corinth, and an integral part of that effort involves Paul labelling as deviant those he considers should be excluded from the church. (Barclay 1999, 134)

I would suggest that *apistos* is one of Paul’s labels for such deviants.

According to social identity theory, the need to pinpoint certain prototypical group members as deviants arises out of concern for the ingroup: ‘evaluations of normative and deviate group members are motivated by the need to maintain a positively distinctive ingroup identity.’<sup>32</sup> When there is a lack of ingroup uniformity, this mechanism to derogate ingroup deviants intensifies.<sup>33</sup> In the academic discipline of conflict studies, deviance has come

---

29 For a basic overview of the mechanisms of social categorization, see Forsyth 1999, 385–393.

30 Sani & Reicher 2000, 97, as referred to in Esler 2003, 27.

31 Dotter 2015, 114.

32 Hogg, Fielding & Darley 2005, 196. The authors name various reasons for seeking a deviant identity, people may want to exit the group, seek distinctiveness or may wish to transform the group or steer it in new directions (p. 194). The latter option seems to be the most likely one for Paul’s deviants.

33 Hogg, Fielding & Darley 2005, 196, referring to Marques et al. 2001. Labelling is a common mechanism in such deviantizing processes: ‘Groups that want to marginalize and ultimately eject or exterminate certain individuals or subgroups often engage in order to successfully label these unsuspecting individuals as evil traitors, deviants, unbelievers, revisionists, and so forth’ (at 194).

to be understood as ‘the name of the conflict game in which individuals or loosely organized small groups with little power are strongly feared by a well-organized, sizable minority or majority who have a large amount of power.’<sup>34</sup> From this perspective, we do not speak of deviants when the more powerful outgroup is perceived as a threat. A subtler approach is offered by sociologist Nachman Ben-Yehuda, who distinguishes between different types of deviance, involving different threat levels to the group’s cohesion based on the location of the deviants:

A challenge coming from outside a particular symbolic-moral universe is easier to deal with, basically because it may be interpreted to represent a different and alien symbolic-moral universe. A challenge from the periphery, or from the centre, to the centre within the same symbolic-moral universe is usually perceived as far more threatening. (Ben-Yehuda 1992, 78)

This distinction corresponds nicely to the one between ‘general outsiders’ and the ‘particular antagonists’, the latter being located in the periphery or perhaps even the centre of the ingroup. General outsiders, by contrast, belong to a different ‘symbolic-moral universe’ altogether and can hence be more easily discarded. Whether or not we can consider these general outsiders ‘deviants’ or not, they pose less of a threat. By simply considering *apistos* a label for the outgroup in general, Trebilco misses this essential distinction.

The theological consequence of neglecting the distinction between peripheral ingroup antagonists and outsiders in general is that, particularly in 2 *Corinthians* 6.11–7.1, the text I will discuss in detail below (§8.4.5), Paul seems to be advocating a stark, us-versus-them perspective or even a withdrawal from society. After all, as he exclaims, ‘what agreement does Christ have with Beliar or what does an *apistos* share with a *pistos*?’ (2 Cor 6.15), which is then underlined by the quotation from Isaiah, ‘come out from them, and be separate from them’ (2 Cor 6.17). The language of radical demarcation and alienation is so unlike the apostle as he presents himself to us elsewhere that some have interpreted the passage as an interpolation (for a discussion, see §8.4.5). This tension with more inclusive Pauline language, however, is not perceived as such by Trebilco. His general assessment is that in the Pauline letters ‘what is said about those who are designated as *hoi apistoi* is surprisingly positive’ (2014, p. 193) and that Paul did not coin *apistoi* ‘to vilify or demean

---

34 Lofland 1969, 14.

outsiders' (2014, p. 193).<sup>35</sup> The tirade against *apistoi* in 2 *Corinthians* 6, 'rather shows that there are limits to the openness and social engagement that Paul is advocating towards unbelievers' (2014, p. 193). This argument seems to be somewhat euphemistic and relies on the familiarity of the Corinthians with what is at that point, as we shall see, a significantly new meaning of *apistoi* as denoting all outsiders in general.

The tendency to gloss over Paul's words in this passage is, as we shall also see, common amongst commentators. The alternative solution, that Paul is here verbally deviantizing particular antagonists, may present us with a less agreeable personality, but offers a more agreeable synthesis in Paul's usage of *apistoi*. If *pistis* terminology is needed in this early phase to overcome differences and include all common social opposites of Jew and Greek, male and female, slave and free (as Trebilco also holds), then it is unlikely to have been used from the start to create a new universal binary divide. In that case, Paul would have been undermining the very purpose of his use of *pistis* as an inclusive, bridging self-definition to create yet another main dualism of believer and unbeliever. Potential converts would then be vilified as 'being in darkness' and 'servants of Beliar' on the outset of his mission amongst the non-Jewish nations.

As we will see below (§8.4), the passages themselves give us enough clues to embrace a more likely scenario, in which Paul is creating much more specific boundaries vis-à-vis a varying company of unpersuaded or unfaithful people in the periphery of the communities he cared for. First, however, I want to turn to this study's Greek and Roman sources to contextualize Paul's usage of *pistis* language as a social and religious designation.

### 8.3 Identifying the Faithless: Social-Religious Usage of *Pistis* in Graeco-Roman Discourses

In scholarly literature on *pistis* in pagan, classical sources, the meaning of its negation is often left out or is only compendiously discussed.<sup>36</sup> Exceptions

35 Cf. Trebilco 2012, 83, n. 71: 'Although clear boundaries are drawn around *πίστις* or its absence, we should not think that "unbelievers" are completely shunned by the group or excluded from gatherings; see 1 Cor 7.12–15; 14.22–24; also 1 Cor 10.33; Gal 6.10; Col 4.5–6; 1 Thess 3.12; 4.11–12; 5.15.'

36 Hatch (1917) and Ljungman (1964) do not discuss any of the *apistia* texts. Lindsay (1993) does discuss these texts in separate paragraphs, but focusses solely on the difference between Josephus and the NT in light of the ratio between profane and religious use.

include Reitzenstein, who identifies a variety of mystical sources in which *apistia* functions prominently.<sup>37</sup> His main thesis, however, is that *pistis* in these Hellenistic sources, which I will comment on below (in §8.3.1), is a ‘volitional act’, based on personal mystical experiences, and as such stands in opposition to ‘philosophical conviction.’<sup>38</sup> Instead, we will see that the mystical and the philosophical appear to be more closely aligned. Another helpful survey on the religious use of *apistia* in non-Jewish literature in comparison to the Septuagint has been undertaken by Antonella Bellantuono. She discusses passages from Herodotus, Euripides, some inscriptions, the Derveni papyrus, and one passage by Plutarch. I return to some of these texts and her useful conclusions in this section, yet there is still a lot of textual territory to cover within the Hellenistic-Roman period, including interesting philosophical discourses.<sup>39</sup>

Whereas the opinions on what exactly the divine encompassed varied considerably, we do not find many self-proclaimed atheists or ‘disbelievers’ in the period under scrutiny. Instead, in this period, the title of *apistos* was a polemical label used to vilify philosophical opponents.<sup>40</sup> Although there are some exceptions, this was not so very different in the classical period, particularly if we distinguish the denial of a god’s (or any gods’) existence from the refusal to acknowledge, respect, or worship a particular deity.<sup>41</sup> The latter type of atheism, resulting from a challenging attitude commonly referred to as *hybris*, was

37 In English translation, Reitzenstein 1978, 293–295; in German, Reitzenstein 1920, 94–96, in the form of an endnote on ‘Der hellenistische Begriff πίστις’. The main text is an edited lecture given in 1909.

38 See Reitzenstein 1920, 10: ‘daß der Glaube (πίστις, *fiducia*) an diese Götter ein persönlicher Willensakt ist, eine göttliche Kraft, die, auf persönliche Erfahrung im Mysterium begründet, ausdrücklich aller philosophischen Überzeugung entgegengestellt wird.’

39 Another publication worth mentioning is Zola Marie Packman’s comparison of *apistia* language in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon (Packman 1991, 414), in which she notes a gradual transference from *apistia* as an inappropriate response to a report (the persuasive semantic domain in my mapping) to ‘the area of trust’ and ‘relationships of power’ (the social-political domain). These sources, however, predate my selection, and moreover, the focus in this chapter is the social-religious domain.

40 In his analysis of atheism in antiquity, Jan Bremmer notes that ‘[i]n the first two centuries of our era, atheism had mainly become a label to be used against philosophical opponents but not to be taken too seriously.’ See Bremmer 2007, 20.

41 Cf. Drachmann’s somewhat surprised conclusion on atheism in the ‘sophistic’ and Hellenistic periods (2005, 119): ‘Now it is of peculiar interest to note what small traces of pure atheism can after all be found here, in spite of all criticism of the popular faith.’ And see Versnel 2011, 292 (‘the explicit refusal of worship is an unknown phenomenon in the archaic and classical periods’), and at 292, n. 182 (‘Challenge directed to the gods as expressed in the myths of Tantalos, Niobe, Arachne and Marsyas are of a decidedly different nature and allude to the sin of *hybris* and its consequences rather than to lack of belief in the existence of the god.’)



a popular theme in myth and literature. Yet while the existence of atheism or disbelief in the strict sense, that is denial of the existence of gods, was rare in the days of the early empire, the accusations of these conditions flourished. Sceptical, disbelieving attitudes towards myth, oracles, philosophy, or divine providence were all labelled atheistic.

The survey of the *apistia* vocabulary in Plato's works below will show that apart from myth, philosophy itself and even gods may be objects of 'distrust' (see §8.3.2). A pervasive sense that the gods cannot be trusted, though, was less common.<sup>42</sup> Only *Tuchē* (Fortuna) is depicted as unstable and therefore untrustworthy, which is why Plutarch can remark that in contrast to her reputation, she has now 'abandoned her untrustworthy and unstable globe' (ἀπέλιπε τὴν ἄπιστον καὶ παλίμβολον σφαίραν) when entering Rome, 'intending to stay'.<sup>43</sup> Apart from *Tuchē*, those yet aspiring to be made divine could be met with some disbelief. Seneca imagines the late Emperor Augustus in the counsel of the gods as being highly sceptical of his successor Claudius's divine potential:

Who will worship this person as a god (*hunc deum quis colet*)? Who will believe that he is a god (*quis credet*)? So long as you make gods like thus (*dum tales deos facitis*), no one will believe that you are gods (*nemo vos deos esse credet*). (Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 11.4)

Here, the use of the verb *credo* comes close to the modern equivalent of 'belief in (a) god', in the sense of 'believing in the existence of (a) god', demonstrating that also in antiquity this verb is very much at home in a religious context.

A more common 'object' of distrust in Graeco-Roman sources are fellow humans. Dio Chrysostom devotes one of his orations to the subject of *apistia*, and what follows is a long list of pessimistic lamentations on betrayals of trust. Slaves, children, women, men, even friends are rarely trustworthy:<sup>44</sup>

42 See also Morgan 2015, 169: 'It is often observed that we rarely find thoroughgoing atheism expressed in the classical world. If anything, thorough mistrust of the gods or of the bases of divine-human *pistis/fides* is even rarer. (...) Whatever doubts or fears are expressed about divine-human *pistis/fides*, Greeks and Romans are in practice extraordinarily reluctant to step outside their assumption that the gods are trustworthy.'

43 Plutarch, *On the Fortune of the Romans* 318A. Cf. for the globe as an attribute, see Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 63.7: 'the sphere [betokens] that change of fortune is easy, for the divine power is, in fact, ever in motion.'

44 See Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 74.10.

Accordingly those who wish to live at peace and with some degree of security must beware of fellowship with human beings, must recognize that the average man is by nature prone to let others have a share in any evil, and that, no matter if one claims a thousand times to be a friend, he is not to be trusted (μηδὲ ἂν μυριάκις λέγῃ φίλος εἶναι πιστεύειν). For with human beings there is no constancy or truthfulness at all (βέβαιον οὐθὲν οὐδὲ ἀληθές). (Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 74.4)

Even though this particular treatise text has not yet received any attention in the previous chapters—it would have suited the topos of the trustworthiness of the wise person discussed in chapter 5—we already encountered many occurrences of *apistia*, *apistos*, and *apisteō* in diverse semantic domains. From laments over the lack of trustworthiness on earth (chapter 3) to scepticism towards sensible data (chapter 4), and from unconvincing arguments and unreliable dispositions (chapter 5) to the ultimate vice of non-Romans (chapter 7). As this variety of usages demonstrates, *apistia* and its cognates take on a breadth of meanings equal to the positive variants of *pistis* language. When we proceed to the Pauline material (in §8.4), we will have to bear in mind this range of possible contexts and senses.

What is left for us to discuss in this section is the specific usage of *pistis* vocabulary and its negatives in Graeco-Roman material as a means to identify one's own or the other's position socially and/or religiously. Paul evidently used it in such a manner ('all the *pisteuontes*', 'do not be mismatched with *apistoi*'), yet can we find equivalent usage among pagan contemporaries? And if so, are these *apistoi* specific others who exhibit specific sceptical, disloyal, or uncommitting behaviour, or do they represent the general category of outsiders? In this section, I start with a chronological survey of sources (both Jewish and non-Jewish) to figure out whether there are relevant parallels to or a traceable development towards Paul's use of *pistis* in group designations (§8.3.1). Thereafter, the focus is on specific discourses in philosophical literature in which *apistia* is used in contexts relating to the divine: first in Plato's works (§8.3.2), then in interphilosophical polemic against Epicureans (§8.3.3) and in treatises by Stoics and Academics (§8.3.4).

### 8.3.1 *In Search of Pistis and Apistia Designating an Ancient Group's Religious Identity*

This subsection deals with the question of whether and to what extent the religious identity of the self or the other were designated along the lines of *pistis* and *apistia*. Were groups or individuals portrayed as disbelievers or unfaithful, and if so, was this label considered an absolute, nominal category in its own

right, used to designate and construe a particular outgroup? Or, vice versa, was its positive, *pistis*, used to name an ingroup or a group of adherents in a particular movement? And to what extent was such a movement concerned with religion?

There is a gradual development from calling a person or group 'faithful towards x' or 'believer(s) in y' as a normal descriptive predicate to using these terms as a name disclosing a group identity and from such nominal usage to employing the antonym to designate all others anywhere.<sup>45</sup> Before turning to the sources to analyse *pistis* and *apistia* designations and religious usage, it is useful to have something of a stratification to classify them, so first I offer my own rather intuitive map of designative language.

Take, for this purpose, the action of cleaning one's windows. The people performing this action are 'people who clean their windows' in a descriptive, non-absolute manner (1: 'specific description'). If they perform this type of action often, they may be called 'clean' as something of an absolute character trait (2: 'absolute trait'). This usage is absolute, as the reference to the object of the cleaning (the windows) is subsumed in the shorter designation, but it is still descriptive as well: 'he is very clean'. Moralizing treatises may set 'the clean' against 'the unclean' in a generalized fashion (3: 'general moral antithesis'), yet these 'clean' or 'unclean' are abstractions, not nominal designations. Depending on the social importance of the action and its distinctiveness, a nominal use may eventually arise when a certain person or group earns the epithet 'the cleaning one(s)', or be referred to as 'the cleaner(s)', or 'the clean' (4: 'nominal designation'). Particular contacts who are not yet part of this group may be labelled 'unclean' to establish clear ingroup boundaries (5: 'label for deviants'). The original content of this attribute may eventually be no longer foregrounded in its meaning: it has become a general, social label for insiders (6: 'general label') that may be used regardless of any reference to actual cleanliness in the direct context: 'The cleaners won the soccer match.' And thus, finally, from an insider's perspective, the defining 'quality' and hence the name of

---

45 A group-designation can also be divided in categories. Trebilco offers a three-fold categorization: 'insider language for self-designation', 'outward-facing self-designations', and 'outsider-used designations'. The first two are self-designations: while the first is for internal use, the second is for presenting the group(members) vis-à-vis outsiders. The third kind consists of the language used by outsiders to denote the group(members), which can be coined by the outsiders, or by the group itself, and subsequently taken up by outsiders. For my own purposes I would like to add the category of 'insider language for other-designation'. The type of use of *pistis* and *apistia* we are looking for here could belong to any of these categories, for all are expressions of identity-construing designations. See Trebilco 2012, 10.

any non-member of this group could then easily become ‘non-cleaners’, as a more general, neutral, and generic term for all outsiders (7: ‘description of outsiders’).

I will argue below that in Paul’s extant letters, we find usage up to 4 and 5, indicating specific faithful and unfaithful people, but never usage 6 or 7, indicating all insiders or outsiders whereby the specific ‘(dis)trusting’ or ‘(un)faithful’ attribute has moved to the background in ordinary usage. The question at hand, therefore, is if, when, and where we can trace these different stages of designative language with regard to *pistis* in Graeco-Roman sources.<sup>46</sup> Along the way, we shall gain insight into the diversity of cognitive, persuasive, ethical, and religious colourings of *pistis* designations.

The earliest examples of a substantivized use of *pistos* are those in which it forms an epitheton. For instance, in Sophocles’s tragedy *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Creon is—in this case ironically—called ὁ πιστός, ‘the trustworthy’: ‘Creon the trustworthy (Κρέων ὁ πιστός), Creon, my old friend, has crept upon me by stealth, yearning to overthrow me.’<sup>47</sup> On a fourth-century BC inscription from Epidaurus, there is a record of a particular person who did not believe in Asclepius’s power to heal his paralyzed fingers: he ‘disbelieved the cures’ (ἀπίσκει τοῖς ἰάμασιν).<sup>48</sup> When, in a vision, Asclepius appears to him and heals him, he was given the new name Apistos, ‘Incredulous.’<sup>49</sup> This nickname is not found elsewhere, yet it shows that the adjective may also carry the meaning of a sceptical attitude.<sup>50</sup> Of course, this ‘unbeliever’ is far from a religious outsider, it is a general trait (usage 2) turned into a nickname.<sup>51</sup>

In the Orphic (yet also Heraclitan) treatise recorded in the Derveni papyrus (discussed in §4.3.1 above), *apistia* comes close to describing the mind-set of

46 This section is concerned with literary sources in the TLG database, but it is good to add that within documentary papyri, evidence for a religious usage (indicating a human-divine attitude) is lacking. See Arzt-Grabner 2017, 242–243.

47 Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 384–386.

48 IG IV2 1 121, line 24 (PHI Greek Inscriptions). Cf. on this inscription Versnel 2011, 292, n. 183; Solin 2013, 28–29, 36–37; Bellantuono 2018, 411.

49 IG IV2 1 121, lines 31–33 (PHI Greek Inscriptions): ‘ὅτι τοῖνυν ἔμπροσθεν ἀπίστεις αὐτο[ῖ]ς οὐκ ἔοῦσιν ἀπίστοις, τὸ λοιπὸν ἔστω τοι, φάμεν, “Ἀπιστος ὄν[ομα]!”

50 Cf., on the rareness of this name, Solin 2013, 29: ‘Hier handelt es sich um einen deutlichen Fall eines nachträglich zugelegten Spitznamens, der von den Priestern der Propaganda wegen gewählt wurde; ob der Mann ihn dann in seinem späteren Leben als seinen eigentlichen Namen geführt hat, ist natürlich ungewiss—ein solcher Name wäre ganz ungewöhnlich, und ist in der Tat in der griechischen Anthroponymie nirgendwo mit Sicherheit bezeugt.’

51 See also Trebilco 2014, 188: ‘However, this is a form of curse on one who doubts, rather than a designation for all outsiders.’

a group of insiders. Tim Whitmarsh even goes so far to call it ‘the earliest reference in Greek to the idea of religious belief as the foundation of a religious community, and to the labelling of outsiders as disbelievers’, which amounts to my usage 7.<sup>52</sup> The text is indeed heavy with the *pisteuō*-/*apisteō* dichotomy and contains phrases such as ‘why do they disbelieve (τί ἀπιστοῦσι)?’ and ‘overcome by fault and by pleasure as well, they neither learn, nor believe ([οὐ] μανθ[άνο]υσιν [οὐδέ] πιστεύουσι)’. As it also mentions Hades and oracles, and considering the discussion of Orphic myths in the text, it is also safe to say that the context here is religious.<sup>53</sup> In addition, it may be helpful to acknowledge the presocratic epistemological-philosophical discourse it partakes in, as I laid out in chapter 4, suggested by the close connection between *pistis* and ‘learning’ or ‘knowing’ in this passage. However, if Betegh is right that the allegorizing account of an Orphic cosmogony was written to make it intellectually acceptable and up-to-date to philosophical currents of the period, then the aim of the treatise does not accord with a strategy of labelling outsiders.<sup>54</sup> The author was then interested in reaching a wider audience with a message more appealing than, as Whitmarsh puts it, ‘that only they and their sect had the true understanding of the nature of the divine and that all others were disbelievers.’<sup>55</sup> According to the author, those who ‘disbelieve’ need to ‘learn’ or ‘know’ properly, as Paul also implies when he advises that prophecy may be helpful for uninitiated and ‘distrustful’ (*apistoi*) people (1 Cor 14, see §8.4.3 below). As for the linguistic developments in using self- and other-designations, this author does not go so far as to use substantivized labels, but sticks to abstract nouns and normal verbs, which are used absolutely without specifying an object of trust or belief. Thus, *pistis*-*apistia* language is not yet used here in identity marking designations, but remains in the sphere of an absolute trait (usage 2).

In Polybius's *Histories* (second century BC), several examples of substantivized adjectives can be found. We encounter *hoi pistoi* in combination with a defining genitive, but still without any hint that it refers to a specific group, to an insider-identity:

52 Whitmarsh 2016, 115–116.

53 Cf. also Bellantuono 2018, 412: ‘Whatever the exact interpretation of the oracle might be, it is beyond doubt that the words of the word group ἀπιστ- are used once again in a religious context, especially in a debate about believing or not believing in the oracles as well as the post mortem fate of humans.’

54 Betegh 2004, 239.

55 Whitmarsh 2016, 116.

The most loyal of the friends of Antiochus (οἱ μὲν οὖν πιστοὶ τῶν φίλων) were against letting the young prince go when they once got him into their hands. (Polybius, *Histories* 8.23.3)

The added genitive ‘of the friends’ clearly indicates that ‘the faithful’ does not designate a particular group known for its loyalty, but that it serves to describe a quality of certain friends, a quality highlighted by the immediate context, as these faithful friends did not condone the prince’s release. Similarly, the participle can be substantivized without referring to a particular group identity, as this example (see §7.3.4) from Diodorus Siculus (first century BC) shows:

Agathocles, the dynast of Syracuse, who was holding a fort of the Messenians, promised to surrender the position on receiving from them thirty talents; but when the Messenians gave him the money, he not only failed to keep his promise to those who had put faith in him (οὐ μόνον διεψεύσατο τοὺς πιστεύσαντας τῆς ἐπαγγελίας), but he also undertook to capture Messene itself. (Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 19.65.2)

Even though the participle *pisteuontes* functions alone here, the precise reason and object for the Messenians’ trust are provided by the sentence: they trust Agathocles for keeping his promise. ‘Those who trusted (him)’ (τοὺς πιστεύσαντας) is simply a variant designation for the Messenians within this context. The focus is on their specific act of faith here, not on a trait that is important for their identity in general, setting them apart as ‘the believers’.

The earliest actual examples of an absolute usage of *hoi pistoi* as a more general group designation can be found in the Septuagint. I will not offer an extensive overview of *pistis* usage across all books, as that falls beyond my delineation of sources (see §1.5 above). In any case, some excellent surveys have been written already, so I have chosen to focus on the most interesting cases when it comes to designations and religious group identity, keeping an eye out for phrases and contexts matching Paul’s.<sup>56</sup>

In the Song of Moses in *Deuteronomy*, God is praised for being faithful, righteous, and holy, but when Israel turned away from God and ‘sacrificed to demons’ (32.17) God said ‘I will turn away my face from them, and I will show what will happen to them at the end, for it is a perverse generation, sons

56 Teresa Morgan devotes a chapter to the *pistis* language in this corpus: Morgan 2015, 176–211. For *apistia* in the Septuagint as compared to contemporary pagan sources, see Bellantuono 2018.

who have no faithfulness in them' (32.20: οἷς οὐκ ἔστιν πίστις ἐν αὐτοῖς).<sup>57</sup> This faithlessness is explicitly connected to their idolatry, also in the next verse. The same may be said about the following text from *Isaiah*, which offers a prophecy against Damascus. Whereas one day, they will 'trust (πεποιθῶς) in the One who made him' and not 'trust (πεποιθότες) in the altars nor in the works of their hands' (LXX *Isaiah* 17.8), now:

Because you have abandoned God your savior and have not remembered the Lord your helper, therefore you will plant an unfaithful plant and an unfaithful seed (διὰ τοῦτο φυτεύσεις φύτευμα ἄπιστον καὶ σπέρμα ἄπιστον). (LXX *Isaiah* 17.10)

Hence, a lack of faith in the One God is said to lead to 'faithless offspring'. The language is descriptive and not nominal, but the importance of trust and faithfulness towards God instead of idols is an important theme. In 2 *Reigns*, a 'wise woman' on the wall of Abel (and) Baithmacha asks the besieger Joab why he would destroy 'what the faithful of Israel (οἱ πιστοὶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ) had established.'<sup>58</sup> This is a descriptive self-designation that moves into the direction of nominal usage (usage 4). In *Proverbs* and *Psalms*, we encounter some more substantivized adjectives (*ho pistos*):

The faithful has the whole world full of money (τοῦ πιστοῦ ὅλος ὁ κόσμος τῶν χρημάτων); but the faithless not even a farthing (τοῦ δὲ ἀπίστου οὐδὲ ὀβολός). Faithful lips (χείλη πιστά) will not suit a fool (ἄφρονι); nor false lips the righteous (οὐδὲ δικαίω χεῖλη ψευδῆ). (LXX *Proverbs* 17.6a–7)

In this section of *Proverbs*, made up of sets of loosely connected sayings, different standard ethical designations are used antithetically. Such designations pitting the 'good/wise' person against the 'bad/foolish' person include *noēmōn* versus *aphronōn* (17.2), *kakos* versus *dikaios* (17.4), *phronimos* versus *aphrōn* (17.10), and *noēmōn* versus *aphrōn* (17.12). And in the first of these particular sayings, 'the faithful person' is set off against 'the faithless person' as regards the material consequences of such (im)moral behaviour. Faithfulness is not a group identity here, but a standardized persona (usage 3), not unlike those

57 LXX *Deuteronomy* 32.4: θεὸς πιστός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀδικία, δίκαιος καὶ ὄσιος κύριος. Cf. for God being *pistos* cf. LXX *Deuteronomy* 7.9. On God averting his face in *Romans* 1 in light of the Song of Moses, see §3.4.1 above.

58 LXX 2 *Reigns* 20.18.

Epictetus puts forward, as we shall see shortly. Even more interesting is a psalm in which *hoi pistoi* designates a group (usage 4):

My eyes would be on the faithful in the land (ἐπὶ τοὺς πιστοὺς τῆς γῆς), so that they might sit with me. If one walked in a blameless way, he would minister to me. (LXX *Psalms* 100.6 / Ps 101.6)

In the eight verses of this psalm, it is quite evident that the *pistoi* are the morally righteous: those with ‘innocence of heart’ (100.2: ἐν ἀκακίᾳ καρδίας) who do not consider ‘an act against the law’ (100.3: πρᾶγμα παράνομον). Moreover, the psalm is all about remaining separate from any evil-doers: ‘I no longer know the wicked’ (100.4: τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐγίνωσκον), ‘I have hated those who practise transgressions’ (100.3: ποιούντας παραβάσεις ἐμίσησα), and ‘with a haughty eye and insatiate heart—with him I would not eat (τούτῳ οὐ συνήσθιον)’ (cf. 1 Cor 5.11). The climax follows in verse 8: ‘Morning by morning I would kill all the sinners in the land in order to destroy from the Lord’s city all who practice lawlessness (πάντας τοὺς ἐργαζομένους τὴν ἀνομίαν).’ Evidently, the ‘wicked’ of this psalm are those *inside* the community, who act unlawfully or unethically and thus defile the community as a whole. A similar sentiment to ‘drive out the wicked’ is found in Paul’s dealing with the Corinthian Christ community (see §8.4.3 below).

In all these cases across the Septuagint, *pistis* language is used to describe what is ethically or relationally going wrong, often between God and his people and sometimes between God and other nations, and/or to describe the ideal situation, in which case the *pistos* person is the ‘proper insider’. The language is meant as a mirror to examine proper religious or sometimes interpersonal conduct. Whether the people it concerns and/or the book’s audience can indeed be counted among ‘the faithful’ is precisely the matter at stake.

For an even more explicit and repeated use of *hoi pistoi* and, moreover, *hoi pisteuontes* in direct opposition to ‘the impious’, who are characterized by *apistia*, we must turn to one of the later additions to the Septuagint, the *Wisdom of Solomon*. This work was written originally in Greek, probably in Alexandria in the early Roman period (first century BC). In a great number of parallel phrases in the third chapter, diverse designations are pitched against each other: on the one side ‘those who trust in him’, ‘the faithful’, ‘his holy ones’, and ‘his chosen ones’, and on the other side ‘the ungodly’, ‘those who disregard the righteous and forsake the Lord’, and ‘the one who disdains wisdom and instruction’:

Those who trust in him (οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπ’ αὐτῷ) will understand truth: and the faithful will remain with him in love (οἱ πιστοὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ



προσμενοῦσιν αὐτῶ); because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones (ἐν τοῖς ὁσίοις αὐτοῦ), and he watches over his chosen ones (ἐν τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς αὐτοῦ). But the impious (Οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς) will receive punishment in accordance with the way they reasoned (καθὰ ἔλογίσαντο); those who neglected the righteous person and revolted from the Lord (οἱ ἀμελήσαντες τοῦ δικαίου καὶ τοῦ Κυρίου ἀποστάντες). For the one who disdains wisdom and instruction (σοφίαν γὰρ καὶ παιδείαν ὁ ἐξουθενῶ) is wretched; and their hope is vain, and their labors are unprofitable, and their deeds useless; their wives are foolish and their children evil; their offspring accursed. (*Wisdom* 3.9–13)

So, what does *hoi pistoi* designate here? It is not completely clear whether these people are described as ‘faithful in love’, but it seems more natural to, along with the NETS translation, read ‘the faithful’ absolutely, whereby ‘in love’ is the state of ‘remaining’ with God. The direct parallel is *hoi pepochotes ep’ autōi*, ‘those who trust in him’: the participle of *peithō*, ‘to persuade’, can take the meaning of ‘to trust’ in the passive perfect (see on the connection between *pisteuō* and *peithō* §5.1 above). Just as in the Derveni papyrus, with its epistemological-religious overtones (see esp. §4.3.1 above), the connection of *hoi pistoi* with truth, wisdom, and education stands out. Yet here, this epistemological-persuasive domain is paired with the religious-cultic connotation of being holy and elected—a combination of semantic domains that we will review in light of Paul’s usage below.

The religious semantic domain is also very much present in another passage, where the participle of *pisteuō* is used as a designation, again in parallel to *hoi pepochotes* (14.24) and *dikaioi* (14.23) and in opposition to *hoi adikoi* (16.24):

For creation, serving you who made it, strains itself for punishment against the unrighteous and relaxes in kindness on behalf of those who trust in you (τῶν εἰς σὲ πεποιθότων). Therefore at that time also, changed into all forms, it served your all-nourishing bounty according to the wish of those who were in need in order that your sons, whom you loved O Lord, might learn that it is not the varieties of fruits that nourish human beings, but your word preserved those who trust in you (τὸ ρῆμά σου τοὺς σοὶ πιστεύοντας διατηρεῖ). (*Wisdom* 16.24–26)

The use of the substantivized participle *hoi pisteuontes* is not absolute here, as it sometimes is in Paul’s letters, for the complement *soi* provides an object of their trust. Yet it is important to note that putting one’s trust in the God who

provides is presented here as a fundamental religious attribute for all people. The *Book of Wisdom* thus offers the best parallel so far to the early Christian self-designation of *hoi pistoi* as opposed to the ‘unrighteous’. This use of the *pistis* word group fits in the ethical and religious semantic domain.

An ethical-religious colouring is consistent with the rest of the treatise. Apart from these specific group designations, *pistis* language is used to describe a nexus of virtuous behaviour and entrusting oneself faithfully to God. The ‘faithfulness’ (*pistis*) of a eunuch is described in ethical-religious terms as one ‘who has done no lawless deed with his hands nor thought evil things against the Lord’ (*Wisdom* 3.14). The verb is used twice, once to express how people ‘entrust’ their souls to a piece of wood (*Wisdom* 14.5: ἐλαχίστῳ ξύλῳ πιστεύουσιν ἄνθρωποι ψυχᾶς), representing a ship that brings one safely through the waves, just as those who took refuge in Noah’s ark brought righteousness back into the world (*Wisdom* 14.6–7). The ‘religious virtue’ of faithfulness is the ultimate goal for all human beings and may be achieved after a step-by-step conversion:

You spare all things, because they are yours, O Sovereign Lord, you who love human beings. For your incorruptible spirit is in all things. Therefore you reprove little by little those who fall into error, and by reminding them of the things through which they sin you warn them in order that, being freed from wickedness, they may believe in you, O Lord (πιστεύσωσιν ἐπὶ σέ, Κύριε). (*Wisdom* 11.26–12.2)

Even though the usage here is certainly ‘religious’, the idea that ‘believing’ is an issue here, as the NETS translation suggests, seems to be a little anachronistic: ‘entrust themselves to you’ or ‘put their trust in you’ is more in alignment with the other occurrence of the verb (in 14.5). Large parts of the treatise deal with this question of the (lack of) righteousness of people in relation to God’s righteousness and love of all human beings.

The same work also provides us with several (five) occurrences of *apistia* language, all of which appear to express a lack of faith in divine intervention. Two of them are part of a recollection and celebration of the role of personified Wisdom in many famous identity-shaping narratives from *Genesis* and *Exodus*. Wisdom rescues many a ‘righteous man’. In contrast to her saving of the righteous Lot (whose name goes unmentioned yet whose identity can be deduced from the context), what remains of his wife is ‘a stele of salt standing as a monument to an unbelieving soul (ἀπιστοσύνης ψυχῆς μνημεῖον)’. The participle ‘unbelieving’, in this case, refers to the reason of Lot’s wife for looking back upon Sodom (see Gen 19.26), yet may be explained as either unbelief

in its destruction and/or in the angels' prophecy of its destruction and/or in God's power and intention to do so. This latter option does not so much arise out of this particular context, but out of the use of *apistia* language in the rest of the book. The Egyptians, who initially and after all other nine plagues refused to let the Israelites go, also acted out of 'mistrust':

For although they disbelieved everything because of their magical practices (πάντα γὰρ ἀπιστοῦντες διὰ τὰς φαρμακείας), at the destruction of their firstborn, they acknowledged your people to be a divine son (Θεοῦ υἱὸν λαὸν εἶναι). (*Wisdom* 18.13)

The 'everything' that is the object of *apisteō* here probably refers to the earlier signs of God's power, which the Egyptian priests could magically mimic. Likewise, the power of God, manifested on earth, is also the object of '(a lack of) faith' in two other passages with *apistia* language.<sup>59</sup> Already in the opening lines, *apisteō* is used as a more general designation of people with a distrusting or unfaithful attitude towards God, testing God's power:

Love righteousness, you who judge the earth; think about the Lord in goodness, and seek him with sincerity of heart; because he is found by those who do not test him (τοῖς μὴ πειράζουσιν αὐτόν), he reveals himself to those who do not distrust him (ἐμφανίζεται δὲ τοῖς μὴ ἀπιστοῦσιν αὐτῷ). For crooked thoughts separate from God, and his power, when it is tested, convicts the foolish (δοκιμαζομένη τε ἡ δύναμις ἐλέγχει τοὺς ἄφρονας), because wisdom will not enter a soul that plots evil or reside in a body involved in sin. (*Wisdom* 1.1–4)

Evidently, being *apistōn* amounts to testing God by persisting in evil conduct: it is a test in the sense that it tests whether God's divine justice will intervene. Further on in this treatise, the author offers what we might call a 'theodicy' (one not unlike Paul in *Romans* 3): he explains that the absence of divine

59 This is consistent with *pistis* usage in the Pentateuch. The question whether the Egyptians will believe Moses is the topic of conversation between God and Moses in *Exodus* 4 (verses 1, 5, 8–9 in the LXX all have *pisteuō* in the future tense) and the pillar of cloud is sent so that the people see God speaking to Moses and trust him forever (LXX *Exodus* 19.9: σοὶ πιστεύσωσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). Cf. LXX *Numeri* 14.11: 'And the Lord said to Moses, "How long is this people going to provoke me, and how long are they not going to believe me amidst all the signs that I have performed among them (οὐ πιστεύουσίν μοι ἐν πάσιν τοῖς σημείοις)?"'

retribution is not only a matter of philanthropy, but a matter of divine righteousness in itself:

But being righteous, you manage all things righteously (δικαίως δὲ ὦν δικαίως τὰ πάντα διέπεις), considering it alien to your power to condemn (καταδικάσαι ἀλλότριον ἡγούμενος τῆς σῆς δυνάμεως) anyone who does not deserve to be punished. For your strength is the beginning of righteousness, and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all. For you show your strength when people distrust the completeness of your power (ἰσχὺν γὰρ ἐνδείκνυσαι ἀπιστούμενος ἐπὶ δυνάμεως τελειότητι), and you rebuke any insolence among those who know it. (*Wisdom* 12.15–17)

This ‘distrust in the completeness of (God’s) power’ is the type of *apistia* that is consistent with the Epicurean variety, as I will further explore below (in §8.3.3). In these texts from *Wisdom*, Antonella Bellantuono finds a specific religious meaning of *apistia* that it shares with a variety of earlier, pagan Greek sources (she discusses Herodotus, Euripides (the *Ion*), the Derveni papyrus and two inscriptions), more specifically a usage connected with the ‘questioning of divine power’.<sup>60</sup> She concludes her article with the succinct definition that *apistia* ‘alludes to the personal denial of the influence of a god on human life by putting into question the divine power revealed by means of words, oracles, and dreams.’<sup>61</sup>

In addition to this remarkable continuity with pagan usage, however, the *Book of Wisdom* offers, as I have pointed out, more explicit usage as a designation. Moreover, we can find in *Wisdom* an important Jewish narrative, connecting *apistia* with the worship of idols:

Then it was not enough to go astray concerning the knowledge of God [by making idols], but through living in great strife through ignorance,

60 See Bellantuono 2018, 413: ‘the specific religious connotation of the word group ἀπιστ-, “to not believe in a god’s power or revelation” is not an invention of the Septuagint. (...) These various attestations show a common use of the lexemes related to the divine power, in particular when the trustworthiness and the authority of a deity is at stake, namely in an oracle context.’ The importance of the specific context of oracles for understanding pagan *pistis* language is also emphasized by Schunack 1999. Still, the notion of (dis)trusting divine providence or power covers a wider yet internally cohesive discourse.

61 Bellantuono 2018, 414–415. This is consistent with an understanding of the *pistoi* as those who remain faithful to God through hardships and persecutions, as Teresa Morgan emphasizes as regards *pistis* language in this work. See Morgan 2015, 191–194 on *Wisdom*, also discussed approvingly in Alexander 2018, 282.

they call such great evils peace. For whether performing ritual murders of children or secret mysteries or frenzied revels connected with strange laws, they no longer keep their lives or their marriages pure, but they either kill one another by treachery or grieve one another by adultery. And all things are an overwhelming confusion of blood and murder, theft and deceit, corruption, unfaithfulness (*ἀπιστία*), tumult, perjury, turmoil of those who are good, forgetfulness of favors, defilement of souls, sexual perversion, disorder in marriages (*γάμων ἀταξία*), adultery and debauchery. For the worship of idols that may not be named is the beginning and cause and end of every evil. (*Wisdom* 14.22–27)

For our comparison with Paul's usage of this word group (see esp. §8.4.4 and §8.4.5), it is good to note this meaning of *apistia* as a typical pagan vice (among many others), springing from pagan idolatry.

Based on all of these passages from *Wisdom*, we can try to gain some clarity on the question whom the author thinks of when speaking of *apistountes*: insiders (Jews) or outsiders (non-Jews)? According to Teresa Morgan, it is in *Wisdom* that 'being *apistountes*, faithless, becomes a generic term for the wicked, or even more generally, the Other—non-Israelites such as the Egyptians' and is thus 'likely to be one of the roots of the New Testament use of *hoi apistol*.'<sup>62</sup> As the opposite of being *pistos* is described in terms of having 'revolted from the Lord', this category does not seem to necessarily consist of pagans yet may well pertain to or include what the author regards as 'unfaithful Jews' (usage 5), those who have become involved in idolatrous behaviour. Benjamin Wright suggests that 'the emphasis on idolatry in the book might well reveal an anxiety that some Jews would succumb to what the author found the most pernicious aspects of Hellenistic culture.'<sup>63</sup> Frank Zimmermann, who dates the book a little earlier in 100 BC, also comes to this general interpretation: 'The book specifically directs its polemics against the faithless among the Jewish population, who have lost faith in their religion, betook to the ways of the gentiles and had intermarried.'<sup>64</sup> If this is correct, then this rich comparative material might just as well lead us into the direction that Paul used *apistia* language to express similar concerns of 'intermarriage' and partaking in idolatry by unfaithful insiders (see esp. §8.3.4).

Let us move on to some more pagan sources containing *pistis* designations. The next 'candidate' is a hymn to the goddess Isis, the half of which that sur-

62 Morgan 2015, 204.

63 Wright 2014, 57.

64 Zimmermann 1966, 12.

vives was recovered as part of the collection found at Oxyrhynchus. Its text is estimated as dating back to the reign of Augustus. The hymn contains the phrase: ‘you are seen by those who invoke you faithfully’ (ὁρώσι σε οἱ κατὰ τὸ πιστὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι).<sup>65</sup> In his notes on ‘the Hellenistic concept of *pistis*’, Richard Reitzenstein writes concerning this particular line, ‘the characterization of the believers as *pistoi* appears to be presupposed in the Isis hymn.’<sup>66</sup> Even though I sympathize with Reitzenstein’s effort to point out that *pistis* ‘is not totally absent’ from pagan religion, to move from the prepositional phrase *kata to piston* to speaking of ‘believers’ as *pistoi* stretches the language too far.<sup>67</sup> What can be argued based on this source is that *pistis* played a role in the worship of deities like Isis and is evidently a religious notion here: being ‘faithful’ to a deity. Furthermore, it may be argued that this phrase emphasizes the boundary between those worshippers who are true to this goddess and those who only ‘casually’ invoke her assistance. For, as this treatise is syncretistic and quite henotheistic in tone—Isis is ‘the greatest’ and is worshipped under different names everywhere—only the initiates show proper fidelity.<sup>68</sup> A cosmopolitan playing field and interreligious competition may thus increase the need to set boundaries between the faithful and the unfaithful.

More and perhaps more relevant comparative pagan material may be found moving on to the second century AD, where Epictetus, Plutarch, and Lucian provide some interesting occurrences of *pistis* used as a group designation. As we already saw (esp. in §8.3.2, §5.3.6, and §6.3.2), for Epictetus, being *pistos* is an essential part of being a good person, whereby he builds on earlier Stoic thought on the sage, whose mind and mentality is stable and trustworthy.<sup>69</sup> This explains why it is in his orations that we encounter many instances of *ho pistos* and *ho apistos*,<sup>70</sup> meaning something like ‘the faithful person’, as an ethical category (usage 3: ‘general moral antithesis’), such as:

So modest acts preserve the modest man, whereas immodest acts destroy him; and faithful acts preserve the faithful man while acts of the opposite character destroy him (τὸν δὲ πιστὸν τὰ πιστὰ καὶ τὰ ἐναντία ἀπολλύει).

65 *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* 1380, line 152, published in Grenfell & Hunt 1915, 198.

66 Reitzenstein 1978, 293.

67 Reitzenstein 1978, 293.

68 Cf. Versnel 2011, 289: ‘Cosmopolitan pretensions and claims to universal worship are characteristic of great Hellenistic gods, especially of Isis.’

69 Cf. e.g. Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.3.4; 4.9.17.

70 Cf. the use of *pistos* in this substantivized manner in Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.28.23; 2.4.3; 2.22.20; 3.7.36; 3.23.18; 4.1.161; *Enchiridion* 24.5.

And again, acts of the opposite character strengthen men of the opposite character; shamelessness strengthens the shameless man, faithlessness the faithless (τὸν ἄπιστον [ἀπιστία]), abuse the abusive. (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.9.11–13, see §6.3.2 *supra*)

Being ‘faithless’ or ‘mistrustful’ is here by no means the only destructive vice: for Epictetus it is one of a handful of vices whose opposite virtue is fundamental for leading a good, virtuous life. Still, based on passages like this one, Will Deming suggests that Epictetus’s usage of *pistos/apistos* is ‘suggestive’ for understanding Paul’s (particularly in 1 Cor 7) as both indicate insiders and outsiders: the Corinthians ‘used *pistos* and *apistos* in both Stoic and Christian senses in distinguishing themselves from non-Christians.’<sup>71</sup> I agree with Deming when he argues that from the perspective of the Corinthians ‘Christian’ and ‘Stoic’ meanings of the terms were not so different. But instead of regarding *pistos* and *apistos* as sociological designations, as he appears to do, I argue that these terms distinguish between different types of insiders (the faithful and the unfaithful), which may even be closer to Epictetus’s ethical usage (see esp. §8.4.3 below on Paul’s ethical usage of *apistoi*).

The question for us nevertheless remains whether we can speak of nominal usage (usage 4) in Epictetus. Epictetus’s language use is not unlike Plato’s when he speaks of ‘any untrustworthy person’ (πᾶς ὁ γε ἄπιστος) in a general sense:

Of all the goods, for gods and men alike, truth (ἀλήθεια) stands first. Thereof let every man partake from his earliest days, if he purposes to become blessed and happy, that so he may live his life as a true man so long as possible. He is a trusty man (πιστὸς γάρ); but untrustworthy is the man who loves the voluntary lie (ὁ δὲ ἄπιστος ᾧ φίλον ψεύδος ἐκούσιον); and senseless is the man who loves the involuntary lie; and neither of these two is to be envied. For everyone that is either faithless or foolish is friendless (ἄφιλος γὰρ δὴ πᾶς ὁ γε ἄπιστος καὶ ἀμαθής). (Plato, *Laws* 730c)

Plato speaks here of untrustworthiness as a general trait as well. As we noted in earlier chapters (see §4.3.2 and §5.3.6), it is interesting for our purposes that being *pistos* or *apistos* is described in epistemological (lying, lacking knowledge and truth) terms while being the prerequisite for good relationships. Yet these descriptions of ‘the (*a*)*pistos* person’, even if they are more central to Epictetus’s thought in comparison to other contemporary authors, are still

71 Deming 1995, 142.

ideal and abstract instead of nominal: they do not denote an actual group of individuals.

The first occurrences of *pistis* and *apistia* terms which come close to offering a nominal description of a specific religious ingroup (usage 4) in non-Jewish, pagan literature do not surface before the second century AD. It is noteworthy that such usage occurs in philosophical, religious, and often also ‘mystical’ contexts, in authors such as Plutarch, Lucian, and Apuleius.

Plutarch is a (first- to) second-century author whose usage of *pistis* language is discussed quite extensively already in this book. In this chapter, I explore whether this language concerns people’s religious identity, and as we shall see below (§8.3.3–4), *pistis* and *apistia* indeed play a major role in his understanding of what involves a healthy religious attitude. When it comes to absolute and nominal usage of *pistis* language to designate a particular religious group (usage 4), Plutarch’s vast oeuvre does not offer much evidence. There is one possible candidate, though. In his treatise *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance* (one of Epicurus’s arguments against the involvement of the gods in human affairs), the character Plutarch argues for the survival of the soul. First, he asks whether God would put so much effort in making and nurturing humans with this divine element in them, only to let it be suddenly extinguished upon death. He continues:

But if you will, leave the other gods aside, consider whether in your opinion our own god of this place [i.e. Delphi] (τουτοῦ τὸν ἐνταυθοῖ τὸν ἡμέτερον), knowing that when men die their souls perish immediately, exhaled from the body like vapour or smoke, nevertheless prescribes many appeasements of the dead and demands for them great honours and consideration, deluding and cheating those who put faith in him (ἐξαπατῶν καὶ φενακίζων τοὺς πιστεύοντας). For my part, I will never give up the survival of the soul. (Plutarch, *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance* 560C–D)

What it is, exactly, that the *pisteuontes* here put their faith in is not quite as clear as this translation suggests. Just as viable as the god of Delphi (as this translation suggests) is reading it as having faith in the survival of the soul, or in the rituals for the dead, as that is the issue here. It is precisely this lack of clarity on the object, though, that shows that the participle is used in a practically absolute manner. Still, it does not necessarily denote merely sociological ‘adherents’ of the god (usage 6), as the context offers plenty of specific persuasive-religious senses to the verb *pisteuō*. We will return to this fascinating case of ‘faith in the afterlife’ in Plutarch’s works below (§8.3.4).



Lucian of Samosata is a second-century author whose works include two interesting *pistis* designations in passages we already came across earlier (esp. in §4.2.2/§8.2.1 and §5.3.3 above). The first of these is from the satirical biography of Alexander: Lucian describes how this man introduces a new mystery festival, by first expelling ‘any atheist or Christian or Epicurean to spy upon the rites (κατάσκοπος τῶν ὀργίων)’.<sup>72</sup> By contrast, all ‘those who believe in the god’ (οἱ δὲ πιστεύοντες τῷ θεῷ) are to perform the mysteries. Notwithstanding its satirical tone, the language use offers important insights into the development of using *pistis* language in group designations. The clear contrast between the *atheoi* and the *pisteuontes* demonstrates that here, *pisteuontes* are the insiders who are not merely interested in the cult, but true, faithful initiates of the cult.<sup>73</sup> The context is similar to that in the Pauline text on the *idiōtai* and *apis-toi* who are present at a community meeting (1 Cor 14.22–25), even though Paul not only allows them to stay but regards their presence as an opportunity to persuade them and let them join in worship of the one God (see §8.4.2 below). Lucian’s *faithful* insiders, though, are ‘faithful to the god’ (πιστεύοντες τῷ θεῷ). Such a supplement in the dative case is also present in the case of the second *pistis* designation, in a passage from *The Runaways*. The Cynics are here compared to Aesop’s ass dressed up as a lion, upon which Lucian remarks, ‘the beast, I doubt not, had his faithful followers’ (καί πού τινες καὶ ἦσαν ἴσως οἱ πιστεύοντες αὐτῷ).<sup>74</sup> Even though *pisteuō* may simply refer to people ‘believing’ the masquerade of the Cynics, it is a possibility that Lucian uses *pistis* vocabulary here to express the group of people that has committed to a philosophical or religious movement. Unlike Paul’s designations, though, the object is expressed for the sake of clarity, and this lack of absolute usage shows that for Lucian, *pisteuontes* was not a clear and well-known cultic-religious designation by itself.

Apuleius is a mid-second-century Latin author in whose *Metamorphoses* the Isis cult plays an important part. The protagonist Lucius is transformed into an ass but later transformed back when he partakes in a holy procession of Isis—and eats roses. In light of this amazing sign of the goddess’s power, the priest exclaims: ‘Let the unbelievers see; let them see and recognize their

72 Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet* 38.

73 The participle could alternatively express both the initiates’ persuasive belief of the veracity of his performance and their faithful commitment to Alexander. Cf. Morgan 2015, 144: ‘the implication is both that those who stay are believers, in the sense that they do not think Alexander is a fake, and that they are putting their trust in—in the sense of making a commitment to—the god Alexander invokes.’

74 Lucian, *The Runaways* 13.

errant ways' (*Videant irreligiosi, videant et errorem suum recognoscant*).<sup>75</sup> The *irreligiosi* here seem a lot like *atheoi* in Lucian's *Alexander*: those present at a cultic celebration but not initiated into the cult themselves, lacking as yet the proper insight or knowledge. There is also some *fides* vocabulary associated with the Egyptian cults in Apuleius's work, namely at the point when Lucius receives a nightly vision to also be initiated in Osiris's cult: 'Then I was illumined by the nocturnal mysteries of the foremost god, and in full confidence practised the holy service of this kindred religion (*plena iam fiducia germanae religionis obsequium divinum frequentabam*).'<sup>76</sup> This may however just as well be a non-marked use of *fiducia*.

Finally, it is good to include here two remaining testimonies to an increase in the use of faith in socio-religious contexts: one from the *Corpus Hermeticum* and one from the *Sibylline Oracles*. Both texts, however, are from collections whose precise date and origins remain to some extent elusive and may already have been influenced by Christian language use (in the specific passage of the *Oracles*, this is evidently the case as this was added by a Christian editor). Hence, they are less helpful as a means to estimate the innovative nature of Paul's language use.

The Hermetic treatise 'On understanding and sensation' (CH IX), points to the distinction between material people without understanding, whose seed is from demons and essential people with understanding, whose seed stems from God.<sup>77</sup> It ends with the conclusion that *pistis* is a divine gift, necessary for 'understanding' and the final step in arriving at 'truth'.

If you are mindful, Asclepius, these things should seem true to you, but they will be beyond belief if you have no knowledge (ἀγνοοῦντι δὲ ἄπιστα). To understand is to believe (τὸ γὰρ νοῆσαι ἐστὶ τὸ πιστεύσαι), and not to believe is not to understand (ἀπιστῆσαι δὲ τὸ μὴ νοῆσαι). Reasoned discourse (ὁ γὰρ λόγος) does <not> (οὐ) get to the truth, but mind is powerful (ὁ δὲ νοῦς μέγας ἐστὶ), and, when it has been guided by reason up to a point, it has the means to get <as far as> (φθάνει μέχρι) the truth. After mind had considered all this carefully and had discovered that all of it is in harmony with the discoveries of reason, it came to believe (ἐπίστευσε), and in this beautiful belief (τῇ καλῇ πίστει) it found rest. By an act of god (ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ), then, those who have understood (τοῖς ... νοήσασι)

75 Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.15.

76 Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.28. Cf. Reitzenstein 1978, 294: 'The substantive in Apuleius xi 28 appears to attest to the usage in the language of the Isis mysteries.'

77 *Corpus Hermeticum* 9.5.

find what I have been saying believable (πιστά), but those who have not understood do not find it believable (μὴ νοήσασι δὲ ἄπιστα). Let this much be told about understanding and sensation. (*Corpus Hermeticum* 9.10)<sup>78</sup>

Not unlike the passage from the Derveni papyrus, *pistis* language in this text partakes in an epistemological discourse on reaching divine truth: this happens when the mind (*nous*) starts ‘to have faith’ (*pisteuō*) and goes beyond what reason (*logos*) can achieve. Instead of faith being a human level of knowledge, though, *pistis* is only available ‘through God’, marking the religious context as well. Whereas this passage lacks any actual designations, it abounds in *pistis* terminology. These terms serve to epistemologically substantiate religious ingroup boundaries, separating those with knowledge, understanding, and faith from those without either of these. In Hermeticism, however, eventually the few persuaded initiates are meant to save all humanity.<sup>79</sup>

In book 8 of the *Sibylline Oracles*, in part of the collection composed and/or edited by Christians, we find an acrostic poem (lines 217–250) on the words ‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, Cross’ (ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΕΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ). The poem relates a final judgement, and the fourth line reads ‘Faithful and faithless (πιστοὶ καὶ ἄπιστοι) mortals shall see God.’<sup>80</sup> Such a general opposition, in which all humanity is divided into the categories of ‘faithful’ and ‘faithless’, can indeed be interpreted as *apistia* language that denotes all insiders and outsiders more generally (usage 6 and 7). Even here, it may still be an example of deviantizing usage (usage 5), for the context is a divine judgment, and the purpose of the book seems to be to admonish (Jewish or Christian) readers to abstain from idolatry and remain faithful (lines 650–663). In the same book, however, the figure of Christ is described coming to creation: ‘he will give fair form to mortal flesh (φθαρτῇ σαρκὶ μορφῆν), and heavenly faith to the faithless (καὶ πίστιν ἀπίστοις οὐράνιον δώσει).’<sup>81</sup> The

78 Greek text Nock 1960, 100, translation Copenhagen 1995, 29. Cf. Reitzenstein 1978, 294, who rates this text as ‘the best documentation’ of pagan religious use of *pistis*. Reitzenstein also offers some textual variants: οὐ is an emendation by Scott, alternatively it may read μου or μοι; φθάνει μέχρι is emended from φθάνειν ἔχει <ἔως>; cf. Nock’s critical apparatus (1960, 100).

79 See *Corpus Hermeticum* 1.26 and Bull 2018, 202: ‘Hermes’ message is thus beneficial for humanity at large, but he became the guide of only a small group of worthy people, who see themselves as somehow set apart from society.’

80 *Sibylline Oracles* 8.220; translation Terry 1899, cf. Marcus Dods: ‘O God, the believing and faithless alike shall behold thee’.

81 *Sibylline Oracles* 8.259.

repeated use of these designations in such an absolute manner, in an evidently religious context, yet without any hint of explicit moralism or polemics towards insiders, suggests that whenever this part of the Oracles is to be dated, at that point, *apistoi* functions as a neutral outsider designation.

To conclude, based on all of the sources discussed in this subsection, we observe an increasing interest in distinguishing between proper adherents and uncommitted visitors of cults in the first and second century AD. This prompts a use of the *pistis* lexicon to designate ‘the faithful’: those who are committed to a particular god(ess). According to H.S. Versnel, this increase in faith language is connected to the increase of henotheism and the spread of foreign cults across the Roman *imperium*. ‘Apparently’, he argues, ‘the theme of the impious unbeliever becomes relevant only when it concerns either a god who still has to conquer a place in the cult, or one whose claims are substantially higher than those of the ancient gods of the polis, whose cult formed an unquestioned part of polis tradition.’<sup>82</sup> On the surface, this analysis fits the earlier interpretation of Christian faith language by Reitzenstein and Bultmann in terms of a ‘catchword’ for religious propaganda (see §1.3.1 and §5.2.1 above). The parallels put forward to substantiate their claim, however, are all from mystical (including Isis cults) and hermetic material. As this survey has shown so far, however, *pistis* designations were increasingly found in somewhat more common religious and philosophical contexts. Particularly in Plutarch, we see the mystical and the philosophical use of *pistis* coincide (see also §8.3.4). If *pistis* can be deemed propaganda, it is religious-philosophical in kind.

### 8.3.2 *Plato on Persuasive Apistia: Scepticism regarding Myth, Philosophy, and the Existence of the Gods*

When we have a look at all passages with *apistia* and cognates in Plato’s corpus, a first notable sense is that of being untrustworthy or treacherous, befitting the semantic domain of virtue (discussed in chapter 6 above). This may pertain to a coastal city that is made ‘faithless and loveless’ (*ἄπιστον καὶ ἄφιλον*) as a consequence of the trade by sea.<sup>83</sup> Yet more often human beings are portrayed as untrustworthy. In particular in the *Republic*, it is being ‘untrustworthy either as regards his oaths or other agreements’ that is one of the main traits that defines an unjust person, next to vices such as ‘temple robbery, theft, and treason’, ‘adultery, neglect of one’s parents, and failure to do service to the

82 Versnel 2011, 293.

83 Plato, *Laws* 705a.

gods'.<sup>84</sup> A little further in the same treatise, an unjust person is described as a friendless person, 'constantly lording it over one', and the dialogue partners agree that they are right 'in calling people like this untrustworthy' (ὄν τοὺς τοιούτους ἀπίστους καλοῖμεν).<sup>85</sup>

Still, the vast majority of occurrences of *apistia*, *apistos*, and *apisteō* in Plato pertains to the plausibility of arguments put forward in the dialogues and the trustworthiness of certain claims. These instances of *pistis* language belong to the semantic domain of persuasion (as discussed in chapter 5 above). An argument or opinion is deemed credible or, often, just the opposite:

I myself no longer have any point of doubt (οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἔχω ἔτι ὅπη ἀπιστῶ) at least as a result of our discussion. However, given the scale of what our discussion has been about and having a low opinion of our human weakness, I'm still compelled to keep some reservations (ἀναγκάζομαι ἀπιστίαν ἔτι ἔχειν) in my own mind about what's been said. (Plato, *Phaedo* 107b)

This passage shows that pleading *apistia* may involve a more complex position, for sometimes it is considered to be gone yet still present. One can be partly convinced while 'keeping some reservations', which is the equivalent here of 'still having *apistia*'. Within a dialogue, *apistia* may well serve as an invitation to expand on the argumentation. Even if the dialogue partners themselves are convinced of a certain position, popular disbelief weighs in, as in a prompt to further strengthen the proposal:

Socrates, everything else that's been said seems fine to me, but what was said about the soul arouses much disbelief in people (πολλὴν ἀπιστίαν παρέχει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις) that when it separates from the body it may no longer exist anywhere. (Plato, *Phaedo* 70a)

In contexts such as these, disbelief is a useful means to the higher end of attaining a more trustworthy level of knowledge. *Apistia* is here nothing close to a negative ethical designation (like 'faithless' or 'untrustworthy'). From a narrative perspective, this rhetorical usage of *pistis* language by means of provisory judgements provides a lively dialogue and serves to further the story towards more developed and believable solutions. From a semantic domain perspective, we see here the connection between *pistis* and *peithō* confirmed

84 Plato, *Republic* 443a–b.

85 Plato, *Republic* 576a–b.

also when it comes to their negatives: to have *apistia* is to remain (as yet) unconvinced.<sup>86</sup>

According to Plato's Socrates, it may even be required to distrust oneself in order to properly test one's convictions.<sup>87</sup> In a passage with a high density of *pistis* and *apistia* vocabulary in the *Republic* (450c–451a), we learn that the audience's trust could even be counterproductive. Socrates doubts whether his account is trustworthy (*Republic* 450c: *πολλὰς γὰρ ἀπιστίας ἔχει*), so one might well not trust it (*ἀπιστοῖτ' ἄν*) or be unpersuaded that it is the best solution (*καὶ ταύτῃ ἀπιστήσεται*). The interlocutor ensures Socrates that his audience is not distrustful towards him (*οὔτε ἄπιστοι*) and encourages him to elaborate on common ownership of women and children in the ideal city. Upon this, Socrates remarks that this would be fine, if only he were convinced himself that he knew what he was speaking of (450d: *πιστεύοντος μὲν γὰρ ἐμοῦ ἐμοὶ εἰδέναι ἃ λέγω*). For to lead others astray on things 'fine, good, and just' is something worse than murder (451a). As trust (*pistis*) may well be put in untrustworthy teachings yet lead to a detrimental result, distrust (*apistia*) in Socrates's uncertain account is the preferred option here.

According to Plato's *Apology*, trust in the wrong opinions led to Socrates's trial. The diverse accusations against Socrates include the charge of 'investigating the things below the earth and in heaven' (*Apology* 19c: *ζητῶν τὰ τε ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ οὐράνια*) and making bold statements about this, which led to a reputation of not acknowledging the gods (cf. 18c: *οὐδὲ θεοὺς νομίζειν*). Socrates states that the prosecutor named Miletus believed this longstanding reputation (*ἦ δὴ καὶ πιστεύων*) and based his accusation upon it. A second phrasing of the charges read 'corrupting the young and does not acknowledge the gods that the city acknowledges (*θεοὺς οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει οὐ νομίζοντα*), but other newfangled divinities (*δαιμόνια καινά*)' (24b–c). In reply to the second part of this charge, Socrates maintains that he is not completely atheist (26c: *οὐκ εἰμὶ τὸ παράπαν ἄθεος*), that this sounds more like the philosopher Anaxagoras, and that Miletus is frankly unbelievable (*apistos*): 'You're incredible, Meletus; what's more, it seems to me, you don't believe this yourself' (26c: *Ἄπιστός γ' εἶ, ὦ Μέλητε, καὶ*

86 For more examples of this usage of *apistia* in Plato's works, see *Theaetetus* 170c, *Theages* 130d; *Euthydemus* 295a, *Critias* 118c. For *peithō* and *pistis* language used interchangeably, cf. *Phaedo* 88c: 'after being very much won over (*πεπεισμένους*) by the earlier discussion, they seemed to have thrown us into confusion again and to have destroyed our conviction (*εἰς ἀπιστίαν καταβαλεῖν*).

87 See Plato, *Cratylus* 428d: 'My excellent Cratylus, I myself have been marvelling at my own wisdom all along, and I cannot believe in it (*καὶ ἀπιστῶ*). So I think we ought to re-examine my utterances. For the worst of all deceptions is self-deception.'

ταῦτα μέντοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς, σαυτῷ). Plato thus maintains that the question was whether or not Socrates's actions were in line with the religious affiliations of the *polis*, which also explains his preference in this work for *nomizō*, 'acknowledging' the gods (either in thought or action), rather than *pisteuō*, 'trusting' them.<sup>88</sup> It is noteworthy that Xenophon repeats similar charges with *nomizō* at the beginning of his *Memorabilia*, but also connects this verb with *pisteuō* in his attempt to exonerate Socrates. He reasons that Socrates relied heavily on the 'divine sign' (τὸ δαιμόνιον) in advising his friends, yet this reliance was in fact reliance on the gods:

Obviously then, he would not have given the counsel if he had not been confident that what he said would come true (εἰ μὴ ἐπίστευεν ἀληθεύσειν). And who could have inspired him with that confidence but a god (ταῦτα δὲ τίς ἂν ἄλλω πιστεύσειεν ἢ θεῶ;)? And since he had confidence in the gods (πιστεύων δὲ θεοῖς), how can he have disbelieved in the existence of the gods (πῶς οὐκ εἶναι θεοὺς ἐνόμιζεν)? (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.1.5)

According to Xenophon's take, then, to have confidence in a god (*pisteuō*) goes beyond yet presupposes belief in the god's existence. *Pistis* still belongs to a persuasive domain here, yet includes more religious notions of trust in divine disclosure of truth. The reciprocity that is assumed here of humans trusting the divine truth on the one hand and the gods being ultimately trustworthy on the other shows how even in cognitive contexts, there is relationality at play.

Whereas in Plato's *Apology*, *pistis* terminology consistently pertains to the semantic domain of non-religious persuasion, we will see that this is not always the case in Plato's oeuvre. Across various other treatises, persuasive 'disbelief' is sometimes directed at the divine or the metaphysical, as in discussions about the divine Creator-God in the *Republic*:<sup>89</sup>

88 Cf. Bellantuono 2018, 414: 'Hence, this word group ἀπιστ- has a different meaning from the verbs quoted above referring to political debates like νομίζω, a verb that is not used (see Plato, *Apology* 26c) to stress an opposition to any religious faith, but a sort of political heresy in relation to the religious stance of a given *polis*.' Cf. Schunack 1999, 302, who also contrasts it to *pisteuō*: 'Die Wendung von νομίζω θεοῦς, die nicht selten allzu pauschal als generelle Kennzeichnung griechischen Gottesverhältnisses angesehen wird, gehört in diesen Zusammenhang kultisch-öffentlich verfaßter Religiosität; sie bezeichnet verallgemeinernd, Götter zu "haben", die Gottheiten der Polis kultisch "in Brauch zu nehmen" und "anzuerkennen". On the inextricability of thought and action when it comes to this verb, see Bowden 2015, 335.

89 Cf. e.g., Plato, *Phaedrus* 245c, on believing an argument on a divinely inspired soul: 'our proof will not be believed by the merely clever (ἡ δὲ δὴ ἀπόδειξις ἔσται δεινοῖς μὲν ἄπιστος),

Since this same craftsman is able to make not only all artifacts there are, but also makes everything that grows in the ground and all living creatures, and that includes himself as well as the rest, and in addition to this, earth and sky and gods as well as everything in the sky and down below in Hades.' 'That's a thoroughly wonderful sophist (σοφιστήν) you're talking about,' he said. 'Don't you believe me (Ἀπιστεῖς)?' I asked. 'Yet tell me, would you say that such a craftsman as this doesn't exist at all, or could the maker [of] all these things exist in one respect, but not in another? (Plato, *Republic* 596c–d)

The reference to the speaker ('don't you believe *me*') is not in the Greek, and within this context the disbelief in fact consists of believing in the existence of a Demiurge. It may thus very well be an interesting case of expressing cognitive (dis)belief in the existence of a god by means of *pistis* language in classical pagan literature.

In the *Laws*, persuasive trust in the gods is even more explicitly part of Plato's language use. The Athenian stranger asks (at 966d): 'Are we assured, then, that there are two causes, amongst those we previously discussed, which lead to faith in the gods (ὅτι δὴ ἔστων τῷ περὶ θεῶν ἄγοντε εἰς πίστιν ὅσα δὴήλομεν ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν)?' The Athenian explains that two things lead to *pistis* concerning the gods: (1) the teachings on the divine soul by whose motion all being was generated and (2) the teachings on the ordering and motion of the heavenly bodies which created the cosmos. He argues that by studying these topics, as philosophers do, one need not become godless or atheist (ἄθεος), as people who in the past pressed charges of atheism (ἀθεότητας) suppose, for these two processes imply a divine will and purpose (*Laws* 966d–967d). In short, it is here stated that philosophy offers *pistis* (a state of being persuaded) concerning the divine, which is, in this context, the opposite of godlessness or atheism (a state of unpersuaded denial).

The connection between *pistis* and *peithō* is confirmed on a verbal level in cases where they are used as synonyms, such as in the following passage from the *Phaedrus*. I have included a larger passage here, because it discusses the interesting case of sceptic disbelief in myths and the alternative of trusting convention. In this passage, Phaedrus and Socrates speak about the myth that the god Boreas carried off Oreithyia at this precise spot (see 229b):

---

but will be accepted by the truly wise (σοφοῖς δὲ πίστι). First, then, we must learn the truth about the soul divine and human by observing how it acts and is acted upon.'



But, for Heaven's sake, Socrates, tell me; do you believe this tale is true (πείθει ἀληθές εἶναι)? Socrates: 'If I disbelieved, as the wise men do (Ἄλλ' εἰ ἀπιστοίην, ὥσπερ οἱ σοφοί), I should not be extraordinary; then I might give a rational explanation (σοφιζόμενος φαίην ἄν), that a blast of Boreas, the north wind, pushed her off the neighbouring rocks as she was playing with Pharmaceia, and that when she had died in this manner she was said to have been carried off by Boreas. But I, Phaedrus, think such explanations are very pretty in general, but are the inventions of a very clever and laborious and not altogether enviable man, for no other reason than because after this he must explain the forms of the Centaurs, and then that of the Chimaera, and there presses in upon him a whole crowd of such creatures, Gorgons and Pegas, and multitudes of strange, inconceivable, portentous natures. If anyone disbelieves in these (αἷς εἴ τις ἀπιστῶν), and with a rustic sort of wisdom, undertakes to explain each in accordance with probability, he will need a great deal of leisure. But I have no leisure for them at all; and the reason, my friend, is this: I am not yet able, as the Delphic inscription has it, to know myself; so it seems to me ridiculous, when I do not yet know that, to investigate irrelevant things. And so I dismiss these matters and accepting the customary belief about them (πειθόμενος δὲ τῷ νομιζομένῳ περὶ αὐτῶν), as I was saying just now, I investigate not these things, but myself. (Plato, *Phaedrus* 229c–230a)

*Apisteō* is used here as a paraphrase of not being convinced that something is true and in contrast to 'being convinced of customary belief' (πειθόμενος το νομιζομένον). Disbelief in traditional myth is here presented as the wise person's prerogative, as it requires leisure to offer rational explanations and, in Socrates's argument, it is deemed less important than the Delphic dictum 'know thyself'. Implicitly, the 'wise' sceptics do not come off particularly wise here; they are know-it-alls who think of clever explanations (σοφιζόμενος) yet who do not as yet know themselves. Disbelief is hence (unlike the previous passages) not a positive or neutral attitude here, as it is a position one should not assume lightly. It signals an obligation to think things through, which may turn out to be a waste of one's spare time. It is the sort of scepticism that is met with mild sarcasm.

Here, in Plato's works, we can discern the outline of a motive that will be played out time and again in later discourses among the Hellenistic schools: there is such a thing as too much scepticism, *apistia*, regarding what is commonly seen as true and valuable. And there is a justified trust, a *pistis*, in things

beyond the immediately sensible: in myth, in the teachings of philosophers, but also in the nature of the divine and divine providence.

In a passage we have already examined from the *Republic* (500d–e, see §6.3.5), we learn that a lack of trust among the people in a philosopher's ideas becomes problematic when such trust turns out to be necessary for realizing the ideal just state, modelled after the divine. In a passage from the *Timaeus*, where *pistis* means to trust and follow tradition, this *pistis* concerns the origin of the gods. Here, Plato offers the argument that humans ought to trust the testimony of the divinity's offspring:

Concerning the other divinities, to discover and declare their origin is too great a task for us, and we must trust (πειστέον) to those who have declared it aforetime, they being, as they affirmed, descendants of gods and knowing well, no doubt, their own forefathers. It is, as I say, impossible to disbelieve the children of gods (ἀδύνατον οὖν θεῶν παισὶν ἀπιστεῖν), even though their statements lack either probable or necessary demonstration; and inasmuch as they profess to speak of family matters, we must follow custom and believe them (ἐπομένους τῷ νόμῳ πιστευτέον). (Plato, *Timaeus* 40d–e)

Again, *peithō* and *pisteuō* are used interchangeably to express the need to trust and be persuaded by the descendants' testimony on their divine family members, as is custom or 'law' (*nomos*). There is no good reason for *apistia* when it comes to traditional religious views.

A more articulated version of this Platonic motive is found in the *Laws*. For while a lack of *pistis* may result in a sceptical position on divine existence or providence on the one hand, on the other side of the spectrum stands an equally false notion, namely that the gods are easily swayed by humans:

But I, who have met with many of these people, would declare this to you, that not a single man who from his youth has adopted this opinion, that the gods have no existence (ταύτην τὴν δόξαν περὶ θεῶν, ὡς οὐκ εἰσί), has ever yet continued till old age constant in the same view; but the other two false notions about the gods do remain—not, indeed, with many, but still with some,—the notion, namely, that the gods exist, but pay no heed to human affairs (φροντίζειν δὲ οὐδὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων), and the other notion that they do pay heed, but are easily won over by prayers and offerings (εὐπαραμύθητοι δ' εἰσὶ θύμασι καὶ εὐχαῖς). (Plato, *Laws* 888b–c)

Texts such as these show, as Lloyd P. Gerson argues, that Plato conceived of piety in terms of ‘some sort of interpersonal relationship between men and gods’.<sup>90</sup> Even though Plato uses no *pistis* language in this particular passage (which Plutarch does in describing the same topos, as we shall see in the next subsection), the argument that there are two deviations from the proper ‘notion about the gods’ finds an early and influential attestation here. According to Plato, one needs to stay clear of both too great a preoccupation with the gods and too small an expectation of their involvement. Centuries later, Plutarch will call this golden mean between what he understands as ‘superstition’ and ‘atheism’ *pistis*.

### 8.3.3 *Debating Epicurean Apistia: Trust in Sensations versus Trust in Divine Providence*

In the widespread social networks and larger political systems of the Hellenistic-Roman age, the correct attitude towards the gods is no longer a matter of polis politics. To describe the new situation of religion in this age, many recent studies use the model of a marketplace with diverse groups championing different gods or cults and competing with one another for adherents.<sup>91</sup> It is also in this competitive climate that the different philosophical traditions find themselves engaged in heavy polemics about the identity and role of the divine: diverging views are set aside as being godless, *atheos*, or faithless, *apistos*.

One group on the spectrum of philosophical movements was especially susceptible to the charge of atheism: the school of Epicurus. Even though the Epicureans did recognize the existence of divine beings, their gods dwelled at a safe distance from the earth and did not concern themselves with mortals: a teaching meant to free people from anxious superstition about divine involvement.<sup>92</sup> Even though Epicurus valued the community-building quality

90 Gerson 2002, 366, referring to the *Euthyphro* and this passage from the *Laws*.

91 See, for the metaphor of a marketplace, the work of John North (esp. 1992), and cf. Parker 2011, 241. For henotheistic (or ‘megatheistic’) competition amongst divinities, cf. the work of Angelos Chaniotis (esp. 2010) and for important reconsiderations of this model for ancient religion Engels & Van Nuffelen 2014b. Anders Klostergaard Petersen understands Pauline Christianity from this perspective (2017a, 238): ‘axial age forms of religion are typified by strong awareness of the existence of rivalling world-views that in terms of thinking need to be denigrated to substantiate the truth of one’s own world-view. This point hardly needs elaboration with respect to Paul.’

92 The question whether the Epicureans really believed in immortal beings living outside our world or whether they saw these gods as the visualizations of our own ideal life is still debated. See the two contributions by David Sedley and David Konstan in Fish & Sanders 2011.

of religious cults, because of their effort to be free from fearing the gods, Epicurean theology was 'in its core unreceptive' to the idea of religious truth.<sup>93</sup> In the tripartite terminology of my second chapter, Epicurus and his followers criticized mythical or poetic religion, not civic religion.<sup>94</sup> What made them so susceptible to charges of atheism was not their idea of the gods or religion per se, but particularly their denial of divine intervention in human affairs.<sup>95</sup>

Seneca briefly (and polemically) lists some main Epicurean teachings in his letters to Lucilius, whose interest in the Epicurean school provides a polemical frame for the entire collection of letters:

I am not speaking of that philosophy which has placed the citizen outside his country (*quae civem extra patriam posuit*) and the gods outside the universe (*extra mundum deos*), and which has bestowed virtue upon pleasure (*quae virtutem donavit voluptati*). (Seneca, *Epistles* 90.35)

We shall return to the first and third 'tenet of Epicureanism' below (in §8.4.5), as Paul also critiques similar patterns of thought. Yet, the second is particularly interesting for understanding *pistis* and *apistia* language in anti-Epicurean polemic. It summarizes what Epicurean theology looked like: their gods had no dealings with this world. This doctrine on divine non-intervention seems to have been well known, as a philosopher-rhetorician such as Maximus of Tyre could remark in passing that when it comes to Zeus as the earth's creator, 'up to this point I need no oracle, I believe Homer, I trust Plato (καὶ Ὁμήρω πείθομαι καὶ πιστεύω Πλάτῳ), and I pity Epicurus!<sup>96</sup> Trust in established philosophical-poetic authorities is here contrasted with Epicurean disbelief, which seems to have been an easy object of ridicule.

In the introduction of Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, Epicurus is accused of acknowledging the existence of gods only for the sake of avoiding resentment:

Epicurus however, in abolishing divine beneficence and divine benevolence, uprooted and exterminated all religion from the human heart

93 So Van Nuffelen 2011, 184, with a reference to Philodemus, *On Piety* 1.560.

94 Cf. Whitmarsh 2016, 180.

95 Van Nuffelen (2011, 185) adds that for Stoics and Platonists, their view of the gods was intertwined with their cosmology as a whole: 'The Epicurean espousal of a metaphysics of disorder was seen as questioning the very basis of a stable and well-ordered society. As such, Epicureanism was easily depicted as the antithesis of what Stoics and Platonists believed to be true and as falling outside the intellectual consensus.'

96 Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 41.2.

(*extraxit radicitus religionem*). For while asserting the supreme goodness and excellence of the divine nature, he yet denies to god the attribute of benevolence (*negat idem esse in deo gratiam*)—that is to say, he does away with that which is the most essential element of supreme goodness and excellence. (...) It is doubtless therefore truer to say, as the good friend of us all, Posidonius, argued in the fifth book of his *On the Nature of the Gods*, that Epicurus thought the gods did not exist at all (*nullos esse deos Epicuro videri*),<sup>97</sup> and that he said what he did about the immortal gods only for the sake of deprecating popular odium (*invidiae detestandae gratia*). (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.121,123)

The criterion of proper religion applied here by Cicero is the recognition of the divine quality to bestow favours—in one word, providence. An ungracious god is a god that is neither good nor excellent. Hence, he reasons, a disinterested, aloof, Epicurean deity is no proper deity at all.<sup>98</sup>

The importance of acknowledging the gods' involvement or providence is a theme that surfaces again and again in interphilosophical polemic. An account of what is the right religious attitude similar to Cicero's can be found in Plutarch, who discusses the deficit of atheism on the one hand and of superstition on the other (as we also described in §4.3.5). He defines the first as disbelief (*apistia*) in the existence and thus in the helpful qualities of the gods resulting in indifference, and the latter as an attitude that distrusts and fears the gods:

In fact, the atheist (ὁ ἄθεος), apparently, is unmoved regarding the Divinity (ἀκίνητος εἶναι πρὸς τὸ θεῖον), whereas the superstitious man (ὁ δεισιδαίμων) is moved as he ought not to be, and his mind is thus perverted. For in the one man ignorance engenders disbelief in the One who can help him (ἡ γὰρ ἄγνοια τῷ μὲν ἀπιστίαν τοῦ ὠφελούντος ἐμπεποίηκε), and on the other it bestows the added idea that He causes injury. (Plutarch, *On Superstition* 165C)

Plutarch's answer to the Epicurean stance on superstition, then, is that their 'cure' of *apistia*, here defined as indifference towards the divine, is just as objectionable as too great a preoccupation with the potential threat the gods

97 I made a minor amendment to the Loeb translation, which renders it as 'that Epicurus does not really believe in the gods at all'.

98 Cf. Dio Chrysostom's judgement (in *Orations* 12.36) that Epicureans are blind to the divine and 'look down upon the divine' (ὑπερφρονοῦσι τὰ θεῖα). Cf. on this passage §2.4.1 and §2.4.5 above.

pose. It is noteworthy that according to Plutarch, an attitude of *pistis* towards the gods implies the acknowledgement of divine interference. This is confirmed by the way in which Plutarch a little further on describes the superstitious man as someone who ‘wishes there were none, but trusts in them against his will; for he is afraid not to trust (πιστεύει δ’ ἄκων φοβείται γὰρ ἀπιστεῖν)’.<sup>99</sup> In modern psychological terms, the atheist’s attachment type is dismissive-avoidant, the superstitious’ attachment type is anxious-preoccupied: both are afraid to trust the gods properly.

Whereas this treatise is particularly concerned with addressing superstition, in explicitly anti-Epicurean treatises he emphasizes the greater threat of removing all trust in the gods’ involvement:

It is better that our opinion about the gods (ἡ περὶ θεῶν δόξα) should include an intermixture of a certain emotion that is part reverence and part fear, than that, by trying to escape this, we should leave ourselves no hope (ἐλπίς) of divine favour, no confidence in prosperity, and in adversity no refuge in the Divine (τὸ θεῖον). Now we should, I grant you, remove superstition (δεισιδαιμονία) from our opinion about the gods (ἡ περὶ θεῶν δόξα) like a rheum from the eye; but if this proves impossible, we should not cut away both together, and blind the faith that most men have in the gods (μηδὲ τυφλοῦν τὴν πίστιν, ἣν οἱ πλείστοι περὶ θεῶν ἔχουσιν). (Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1101B–C)

I have already argued above that Plutarch is not being fideistic here (see §4.3.5), and this is even more evident when we take the polemical nature of this work into account. Plutarch is arguing that Epicureans, with their wish to eradicate superstition, are throwing the baby (*pistis*) out with the bathwater. They ‘blind’ their ‘faith’ (which is something completely different from our notion of ‘blind faith’). *Pistis* in this context is not so much acknowledgement of divine existence (for an Epicurean would not deny that gods exist, he only denies the existence of a particular type of gods), but a healthy and hopeful reliance on divine care, comfort, and provision.

The same ‘golden mean’ approach to *pistis* in the divine also recurs in Plutarch’s works in contexts that do not directly oppose the Epicureans. Associated

<sup>99</sup> Plutarch, *On Superstition* 170F. Note the translation by William W. Goodwin (1874): ‘the superstitious would have none, but is a believer against his will, and would be an infidel if he durst.’ Here the verbs have been taken for anachronistic categorizations.

with superstition is a preoccupation with sacrifices, as a passage we already saw from *On Isis and Osiris* confirms: by having a correct opinion about the gods (here Plutarch uses *doxa* again, not *pistis*), one is more likely to earn their favour and 'avoid superstition which is no less an evil than atheism (κακὸν ἀθεότητος δεισιδαιμονίαν).'<sup>100</sup> We've also already referred to the episode in the *bios* of Camillus, where the Faliscan statue of Juno is said to have consented in a transfer to Rome, upon which Plutarch comments that 'in such matters, eager credulity and excessive incredulity (πιστεύειν σφόδρα καὶ τὸ λίαν ἀπιστεῖν) are alike dangerous'.<sup>101</sup> Too much *pistis* thus amounts to superstition, to believing incredulous accounts about divine interference. Too much *apistia* here refers to an unhealthy scepticism of the goddess's observable presence. Within this discourse, the words *pistis* and *apistia* are thus bound up with a particular image of the gods and their involvements on earth.

This stress on the importance of a basic level of trust in the beneficence of the gods is widespread in the diverse philosophical literature of first centuries. Even Pliny the Elder, whose view of God is not particularly traditional or mainstream, is reluctant to deny the divine all of its providential qualities. While he sympathizes with Epicurean religious scepticism, granting that it would be ridiculous for the Most High to interfere in mere mortal matters,<sup>102</sup> he does leave room for some sense of divine intervention.<sup>103</sup> He argues that that the belief in providence prevents humans from imitating beasts.<sup>104</sup> Like Plutarch, Pliny favours a 'golden mean approach' to piety: the two extremes of complete disrespect and shameful superstition are to be avoided.<sup>105</sup>

Still, Epicureans are not only accused of their indifferent and *apistos* attitude towards the gods; their own take on *pistis* is also criticized as dangerous

100 Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 355D, see §2.3.6 above.

101 Plutarch, *Camillus* 6.4, see §4.3.5 above.

102 See Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 2.7.20: 'That that supreme being, whatever it be, pays heed to man's affairs is a ridiculous notion. Can we believe (*credamus*) that it would not be defied by so gloomy and so multifarious a duty? Can we doubt it?'

103 Cf. Ferguson & Hershbell 1990, 2284: 'Yet Pliny's attitude towards the gods' providential intervention in human affairs is not Epicurean (2.5.26): he believes in their intervention.'

104 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 2.7.26: 'But it agrees with life's experience to believe that in these matters the gods exercise an interest in human affairs; and that punishment for wickedness, though sometimes tardy (...) that man was not born God's next of kin (*proximum illi*) for the purpose of approximating to the beasts in vileness (*ut vilitate iuxta beluas esset*).

105 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 2.7.20: 'It is scarcely pertinent to determine which is more profitable for the human race, when some men pay no regard to the gods at all (*aliis nullus est deorum respectus*) and the regard paid by others is of a shameful nature (*aliis pudendus*): they serve as the lackeys of foreign ritual, and they carry gods on their fingers.'

for traditional customs by proponents of competing schools. I already discussed the Epicurean aim of achieving a stable conviction, an attitude of *pistis*, based on sense-perceptions, which are, so the Epicurean teaching goes, always true (see §5.3.4). This trust in sense-perception was equally susceptible to criticism. Even though the interpretation of this thesis may be understood as a general statement of realism,<sup>106</sup> for the Epicureans, questioning one sense-impression would inevitably lead to questioning everything.<sup>107</sup> Conversely, according to their critic Plutarch, putting one's confidence in sensations of absurd phenomena in the end leads to questioning all faith in common sense and accepted traditions, as we read his polemic against Epicurus's disciple Colotes:

Things that no artful joiner, puppet-maker, or painter ever ventured to combine for our entertainment into a likeness to deceive the eye, these they seriously suppose to exist, or rather they assert that, if these did not exist, there would be an end of all confidence and certainty and judgement about truth (πίστιν οἴχεσθαι καὶ βεβαιότητα καὶ κρίσιν ἀληθείας); and by taking this stand they themselves reduce the world to the state where nothing is asserted or denied, bring fear into our decisions and misgiving into our acts as we reflect that action, accepted belief (νομιζόμενα), and the familiar and daily business of our lives rest on the same footing of sensation and confidence (ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς φαντασίας καὶ πίστεως ὀχεῖται) as those shapes of madness and whimsy that defy all custom and law. For by putting all in the same boat their theory does more to estrange us from established beliefs (τῶν νενομισμένων ἀφίστησι) than to give us confidence that the grotesques are real (προστίθησι τοῖς παραλόγοις τὴν πίστιν). (Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 1123C–D)<sup>108</sup>

Plutarch's connection between Epicurean trust in the senses and a basic sense of trust (*pistis*) in general daily opinions and actions is a clever move. It is rhetorically clever, for it depicts Epicureans as dangerous revolutionaries, despoiling all established tradition. It also shows us that what was at stake in this

106 Sextus Empiricus takes this thesis to mean that 'every presentation (πάσα φαντασία) arises from a real presented object and in accord with that object' (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.205).

107 E.g., Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.70

108 The translation of *pistis* in the final sentence is adapted (the Loeb translation has 'than convince us that the grotesques are real') in order to emphasize the wordplay: the idea is that we are not putting our 'confidence' in Epicurean 'confidence' because it destroys all 'confidence'.



interphilosophical debate is the proper object of *pistis*. According to Plutarch, it should not be vested uncritically in absurd perceptions, for then, all convictions and actions based on that same confidence (*pistis*) would be hanging in the balance.

These convictions are particularly the ones pertaining to the gods, as becomes clear from the context of the above passage. Here, Plutarch contrasts the Epicurean trust in sense-perception with their lack of belief in the traditional religious practices:

‘But it is impossible to refuse assent to plain evidence (τοῖς ἐναργέσι), since neither to deny nor to affirm accepted beliefs (τὰ πεπιστευμένα) is more unreasonable than to deny it.’ Then who is it that upsets accepted beliefs and comes in conflict with plain evidence (τίς οὖν κινεῖ τὰ πεπιστευμένα καὶ μάχεται τοῖς ἐναργέσιν)? It is those who reject divination and deny that there exists a divine providence or that the sun and moon are living beings, to whom sacrifice and prayer and reverence is offered up by all mankind. (Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 1123A)<sup>109</sup>

Colotes is here cited as rejecting Academic suspension of judgement: for Epicureans, this doctrine is at odds with ‘things that are trusted’ or ‘accepted beliefs’ (τὰ πεπιστευμένα). In reply, Plutarch offers his own interpretation of the Epicurean key terms indicating clarity and trustworthiness. To him, *enargeia* (clarity) refers to religious ‘accepted beliefs’ like divination and divine providence, arguing that their existence is plain to all—except, obviously, the Epicureans. Further on, Plutarch argues that suspension of judgement is an adult attitude guarding people against trusting the untrustworthy senses as Epicureans do:

And so this doctrine of withholding judgement (ὁ περὶ τῆς ἐποχῆς λόγος) is no idle tale, as Colotes thinks, (...) it is a settled state and attitude of grown men that preserves them from error and refuses to abandon judgement to anything so discredited and incoherent as the senses or to be

<sup>109</sup> Cf. also Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1089D: ‘It is this, I believe, that has driven them, seeing for themselves the absurdities to which they were reduced, to take refuge in the “painlessness” and the “stable condition of the flesh”, supposing that the pleasurable life is found in thinking of this state as about to occur in people or as being achieved; for the “stable and settled condition of the flesh” and the “trustworthy expectation” of this condition contain, they say, the highest and the most assured delight for men who are able to reflect (τὸ γὰρ εὐσταθὲς σαρκὸς κατάστημα καὶ τὸ περὶ ταύτης πιστὸν ἔλπισμα τὴν ἀκροτάτην χαρὰν καὶ βεβαιοτάτην ἔχειν τοῖς ἐπιλογίζεσθαι).’

deluded as these people are deluded who call the sensible the evidence of the unclear (οἱ τὰ φαινόμενα τῶν ἀδήλων πίστιν ἔχειν φάσκουσιν) although they observe that appearances are so untrustworthy and ambiguous (ἀπιστίαν τοσαύτην καὶ ἀσάφειαν ἐν τοῖς φαινομένοις ὀρώντες).<sup>110</sup> (Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 1124B)

Again, Plutarch argues that the Epicureans put their trust (*pistis*) in sensible phenomena, who are observably untrustworthy (*apistos*). The whole argument is a back-and-forth game in which the role and especially the object of *pistis* is redefined.

As we saw in chapter 4 (§4.3.4), Philo too involves the debate on the proper object of *pistis* in his discussion on Abraham. Abraham fled the Chaldeans who held ‘Epicurean’ views on the foundational importance of sense-perception, and became the first to trust in God, the ultimate cause of sensible and intellectual things.<sup>111</sup> Both ‘Middle-Platonic’ authors thus position *pistis* over against Epicurean trust in the senses alone.

Thus, we have seen that each of these two traditions, Academic Platonism and Epicureanism, connected the stance on the trustworthiness of the senses to what we might call traditional, religious convictions in its own way. For Plutarch, *pistis* is holding the sensible religious middle ground between too much and too little expectations of divine involvement on earth. For the Epicureans, a firm conviction (*pistis bebaios*) in the senses protects its practitioners against an unnecessary and harmful preoccupation with the divine (see also §5.3.4 above). More specifically, the knowledge that the gods were not particularly interested in human affairs liberates humanity from superstitious fear of the gods. From both angles, *pistis* is a healthy attitude. It is the proper object of *pistis* and the corresponding cognitive-religious conviction that is debated. When we turn to Paul’s language of *apistia* and *apistoi*, it is the infamous Epicurean *apistia* as regards divine providence that helps to explain

110 The Loeb translation seems to echo *Hebrews* 11.1 verbally, by translating οἱ τὰ φαινόμενα τῶν ἀδήλων πίστιν ἔχειν φάσκουσιν as ‘who call the seen the evidence of things unseen; yet there is no such parallel language use here.

111 See Philo, *On the Virtues* 212: ‘that there is no originating cause outside the things we perceive by our senses’ (οὐδὲν ἔξω τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἴτιον ὑπολαμβάνοντες εἶναι); Philo, *On the Virtues* 214: ‘Father of all things, conceptual and sensible’ (ὅλων πατὴρ νοητῶν τε αὐ καὶ αἰσθητῶν); Philo, *On the Virtues* 216: ‘he is the first person spoken of as believing in God (πιστεῦσαι λέγεται τῷ θεῷ πρῶτος), since he first grasped a firm and unswerving conception of the truth (ἀκλινη καὶ βεβαίαν ἔσχεν ὑπόληψιν) that there is one Cause above all (ἐν αἴτιον τὸ ἀνωτάτω).’

why Paul could so easily talk of ‘disbelief’ without a specified object (see esp. §8.4.1 below).

### 8.3.4 *Stoics against Academic Apistia: Philosophical Scepticism Together with Faith in the Divine Mysteries*

The subjects of ‘trust in sensations’ and ‘trust in the divine’ were also debated topics between Stoics and Academics, and both accuse the other of quasi-Epicureanism. According to Plutarch, trust or confidence in the senses is also at the basis of an important theory in Stoic thought, that of ‘common conceptions’. A nameless interlocutor opens his dialogue against this Stoic theory by addressing the Academic spokesperson Diadumenus thus:

You are in all likelihood quite unconcerned, Diadumenus, if anyone thinks that the speculations of your school are at odds with common conceptions (παρὰ τὰς κοινὰς φιλοσοφεῖν ἐννοίας). After all, you admit that you disdain the senses themselves (ὁμολογοῦντί γε καὶ τῶν αἰσθήσεων περιφρονεῖν); and from them have come just about most of our conceptions, the secure foundation of which is, of course, confidence in phenomena (τὴν γε περὶ τὰ φαινόμενα πίστιν ἔδραν ἔχουσαι καὶ ἀσφάλεια). (Plutarch, *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions* 1058F)

This Stoic theory of common conceptions is a liability, Plutarch holds, as it builds on the same foundation as Epicurean confidence, that is, sense perception. In this dialogue in particular, the Academic points out that the Stoics pick and choose and even endorse contradictory ‘common conceptions’. Thus, Stoic *pistis* in phenomena, even when mitigated by the notion of a ‘cognitive impression’ (see §5.3.6 above), received a similar critique as the Epicurean variant did.

When it comes to their image of the divine, Stoics were also accused of atheism (as I noted above: see §2.3.4), only for diametrically opposite reasons: their gods were too immanent and immersed in the human world for an Academic’s liking. In their view, myths were allegorized by the Stoics to the effect that gods became mere human qualities.<sup>112</sup> To the Platonic Academy, by contrast, suspension of judgement regarding sensory perception functioned as a guard against believing absurdities, while leaving room for and even strengthening

112 Cf. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.61 and 3.63; Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 757B–C. Cf. §2.3.4 above.

established religious convictions.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, it is evident from the importance of traditional beliefs in Plutarch's works and, moreover, from his appointment as a priest of Apollo that he was all but a thoroughgoing sceptic as regards the divine.<sup>114</sup> Even the most sceptic phase of Plato's Academy, the 'New Academy', is no longer considered anti-religious in more recent scholarly evaluations.<sup>115</sup> Rather than fighting religious convictions or questioning the existence of the gods, the sceptics questioned practically everything, and collected arguments in favour of any position. A sceptic polemic against the Stoics and their allegorized myths would make them seem like atheists, while a debate of a sceptic with an Epicurean would result in a contrary conclusion.

There are some passages from Plutarch that are interesting for their use of *apistia* in an explicitly religious context. In a letter we have encountered already (see §5.3.3), Plutarch consoles his wife after the death of their child and aims to strengthen his wife's faith in their philosophical and mystical beliefs in the face of Epicurean competition: 'I know that the teaching of our fathers and by the mystic formulas of the Dionysiac rites keep you from believing them (οἶδα ὅτι κωλύει σε πιστεύειν).'<sup>116</sup> Faith may thus be invested in rival worldviews, be they mystical or philosophical. Yet, there is also a more religious aspect to Plutarch's use of faith language in this letter. In the final section, Plutarch speaks of their faith in the blessed immortal life of the soul:

For the laws forbid us to mourn for infants, holding it impiety (οὐχ ὄσιον) to mourn for those who have departed to a dispensation and a region too that is better and more divine (βελτίονα καὶ θειοτέραν). [*lacuna in the text*] And since this is harder to disbelieve than to believe (ἐπεὶ δὲ [τὸ] ἀπιστεῖν χαλεπώτερόν ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἢ τὸ πιστεύειν), let us keep our outward conduct as the laws command, and keep ourselves within yet freer from pollution

113 Cf. Opsomer 1998, 178: 'Plutarch shares the Academic conviction that the philosophy of the Academy protects traditional faith: suspension of judgment (ἐποχή) is closely linked with reverential caution towards the divine (εὐλάβεια πρὸς τὸ θεῖον), which for Plutarch is clearly an Academic principle.' And cf. Opsomer 2013, 99: 'That is why the philosophy of the Academy, far from being sceptic in the modern sense of anti-religious, in fact protects traditional faith.'

114 I have already established that his natural philosophy encompasses the divine as well (see §4.3.5), for Plutarch's Platonic outlook ensured a relation between the sensible world and the metaphysical via the causal influence of the Forms.

115 Cf. Opsomer 1997, 18: 'The new understanding of the dialectical and polemical character of the Hellenistic debates leads to serious doubts about the alleged antireligious and anti-prophetic tendencies in Academic philosophy.'

116 Plutarch, *Consolation to His Wife* 61D.

and purer and more temperate (μᾶλλον ἀμείαντα καὶ καθαρὰ καὶ σώφρονα). (Plutarch, *Consolation to His Wife* 612A–B)

The tricolon of virtues at the end of this text offers a combination of terms denoting religious purity and the typical philosophical virtue of being *sōphrōn*, indicating a philosophical-religious semantic domain. Even if *pisteuō* and *apisteō* express persuasive faith in a blessed afterlife here, not trust in a god, the mixture of terms related to piety, purity, and the divine shows how a proper ‘conviction’ is constitutive for Plutarch’s religious group identity.

That this is not just any casual choice of words is confirmed by the recurrence of *pistis* language in religious contexts (with again contextual markers like ‘pure’, ‘holy’, and ‘soul’). In a fragment preserved in Stobaeus’s collection, Plutarch describes the transition of the soul after death, and compares the soul’s experiences with an initiate ‘into great mysteries.’<sup>117</sup> After wandering in darkness for a while, a ‘marvellous light’ approaches and it arrives at a land filled with holy songs and visions. Plutarch continues:

And amidst these, he walks at large in new freedom, now perfect and fully initiated (μεμυημένος), celebrating the sacred rites, a garland upon his head, and converses with pure and holy men (όσίοις καὶ καθαροῖς ἀνδράσι); he surveys the uninitiated, unpurified mob here on earth the mob of living men (τὸν ἀμύητον ἐνταῦθα τῶν ζώντων καὶ ἀκάθαρτον ἐφορῶν ὄχλον), who, herded together in mirk and deep mire, trample one another down and in their fear of death cling to their ills, since they disbelief in the blessings of the other world (ἀπιστία τῶν ἐκεῖ ἀγαθῶν). For the soul’s entanglement with the body and confinement in it are against nature, as you may discern from this. (Plutarch, *Fragment* 178 (apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.52.49))

Here, ‘disbelief in the good things over there’ leads to the misery of the living souls and the uninitiated, their entrapment in a condition of impurity, disharmony, and fear. It is not too far a stretch to infer that *pistis* in the world accessible through the mysteries (or through death of the body) thus leads to a holy, pure, anxiety-free existence. Having the proper *pistis* determines whether one is fully initiated into a religious group. This is a great example of *pistis/apistia* language used in pagan religious discourses, and that by an epistemologically sceptical philosopher.

<sup>117</sup> Plutarch, *Fragment* 178 (apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.52.49).

In scholarly evaluations of philosophy and religion in antiquity, the Academic stance has been taken as evidence of the wider phenomenon of ‘brain-balkanization’, as Paul Veyne dubbed it: ‘the ability to simultaneously believe in incompatible truths’.<sup>118</sup> In this schema, religious convictions and philosophical positions are at odds with each other, as if they take up different parts of the brain. In the introduction of his monograph on ‘philosophical readings of religion in the post-Hellenistic period’, Peter Van Nuffelen warns against applying this phenomenon to the whole intellectual situation of the Roman empire; the Stoic polemic suggests that brain-balkanisation was only a peripheral development in a specific school. He argues that there was philosophical fascination for religion as much as philosophical critique of religion. Therefore, ‘philosophy’s attitude towards religion should not (...) be reduced to criticism, possibly combined with fideism based on “brain-balkanization”’.<sup>119</sup>

In this Stoic polemic against the Academics, *pistis* language is used to question the tension between upholding traditional faith and questioning any epistemological foundations for belief. Among the orations of Epictetus, we find one entirely directed against the Epicureans and the Academics. In an ironical fashion, Epictetus impersonates an Academic philosopher, who answers Epictetus’s question about what piety and sanctity are according to him.<sup>120</sup> While this philosopher begins by promising he will prove that these are good things (ἀν θέλης, κατασκευάσω ὅτι ἀγαθόν), what follows is a tirade against religion:

The gods do not exist (ὅτι θεοὶ οὐτ’ εἰσίν), and even if they do, they pay no attention to men, nor have we any fellowship with them, and hence this piety and sanctity which the multitude talk about (τό τ’ εὐσεβές τοῦτο καὶ ὅσιον παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀνθρώποις λαλούμενον) is a lie told by impostors and sophists (κατάψευσμά ἐστιν ἀλαζόνων ἀνθρώπων καὶ σοφιστῶν), or, I swear, by legislators to frighten and restrain evildoers. (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.23)

Epictetus responds to this with dry humour: ‘Well done, philosopher! You have conferred a service upon our citizens, you have recovered our young men who

118 Veyne 1983, 67: ‘cette capacité de croire en même temps à des vérités incompatibles’. Cf. at 52: ‘une balkanisation des cerveaux’.

119 Van Nuffelen 2011, 7–8, esp. n. 22, quote at 8. His critique is not so much directed against Veyne as against Feeny 1998, 14–21.

120 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.22: τί λέγεις, φιλόσοφε; τὸ εὐσεβές καὶ τὸ ὅσιον ποῖόν τί σοι φαίνεται; Jan Opsomer argues that the Academic Epictetus had in mind could well have been Plutarch himself: see Opsomer 1998, 233; Opsomer 1997, 18–21.

were already inclining to despise things divine.' Epictetus employs essentially the same argument here to discredit the Academics, as we saw in Plutarch's rebuke of the Epicureans: scepticism will ultimately lead to a loss of piety. When it comes to the divine, Academic scepticism is Epicurean atheism in disguise.

The loss of piety is not the only argument Epictetus puts forth against the Academics. He also identifies a deeper problem, namely the inherent discrepancy between an attitude of doubt regarding any form of knowledge and an appeal to trust authority, including their own:

Again, if a man comes forward and says, 'I would have you know that nothing is knowable, but that everything is uncertain' (ὅτι οὐδέν ἐστι γνωστόν, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀτέκμαρτα); or if someone else says, 'Believe me (πίστευσόν μοι), and it will be to your advantage, when I say: One ought not to believe a man at all (οὐδέν δεῖ ἀνθρώπῳ πιστεύειν)'; or again, someone else, 'Learn from me, man, that it is impossible to learn anything; it is I who tell you this and I will prove it to you, if you wish,' what difference is there between these persons and—whom shall I say?—those who call themselves Academics? 'O men,' say the Academics, 'give your assent to the statement that no man assents to any statement; believe us when we say that no man can believe anybody (συγκατάθεσθε ὅτι οὐδεὶς συγκατατίθεται: πιστεύσατε ἡμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς πιστεύει οὐδενί).' (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.4–5)

According to Epictetus, the alleged impossibility of acquiring trustworthy knowledge is like a snake biting its own tail. Thus, the 'call for belief' of these Academic philosophers is satirized for the inconsistency with their own beliefs. A similar refutation was already put forward by Aristotle, arguing that 'he that subverts our belief in the opinion of all mankind, will hardly persuade us to believe his own either (ὁ δ' ἀναϊρωῶν ταύτην τὴν πίστιν οὐ πάνυ πιστότερα ἔρεῖ).'<sup>121</sup>

In this regard, the Academics are not much better off than the Epicureans, for Epictetus continues to scorn Epicurus himself for his use of a self-defeating argument in stating that there is no natural fellowship (φυσική κοινωνία) between rational human beings, while also asking for people to trust him (πιστεύσατέ μοι).<sup>122</sup> Upon this, Epictetus remarks: 'Why do you care, then?

121 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.2.4 (1173a1–2).

122 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.7.

Allow us to be deceived.' Thus, the philosopher's call to belief is once again ridiculed, this time because persuasion implies care, and this care for one another is precisely what Epicurus (according to Epictetus) wants to deny. The effort to get people to trust you (*pisteuō*), already implies fellowship (*koinōnia*) in this context. Whereas Epicurus 'cut off everything that characterizes a man, the head of a household, a citizen, and a friend', so the Academics would have liked to 'cast away or blind their own sense perceptions' (τὰς αἰσθήσεις τὰς αὐτῶν ἀποβαλεῖν ἢ ἀποτυφλώσαι).<sup>123</sup> This treatise ends with the lament, 'By Zeus, one might much rather hope to convert (μεταπείσειν) a filthy degenerate than men who have become so deaf and blind (τοσοῦτον ἀποκεκωφωμένους καὶ ἀποτετυφλωμένους)!'<sup>124</sup> This accusation of Epicureans and Academics being deaf and blind, as they are denying plain sensations, offers interesting comparative material for Paul's polemic against *apistoi*.

To sum up, we have seen that a certain kind of religious trust was indeed at stake in interphilosophical debate and that *apistia* was perceived as a persuasive-religious attitude that was to be discarded by Stoics, Epicureans, and Academics alike. The interphilosophical polemic in the first and second century AD demonstrates that *pistis* was creatively employed and even turned on its head in epistemological, persuasive, but also philosophical-religious contexts. In particular Plutarch's expressions of faith and lack thereof as regards mystical-philosophical points-of-view offer relevant parallels to Paul's *apistia* language, as these show how the *pistis/apistia* contrast serves to distinguish between those fully initiated and those remaining in unholy, impure circumstances.

#### 8.4 *Apistia* as a Polyvalent and Deviantizing Boundary Marker in Paul's Letters

In most commentaries on Paul, the sense of 'general pagan unbeliever' is assumed rather than questioned or substantiated, and translations almost invariably opt for 'unbelief' or 'disbelief' and cognates. The main reason for this reading of *apistia* and cognates seems to lay in the subsequent usage in later biblical and early Christian sources or perhaps also in the widespread modern usage of designating those outside of a particular monotheistic religion as such. It is evident that *apistos* eventually, in the course of decades after Paul, came to include the sense of 'general outsider'. However, such a devel-

<sup>123</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.20.

<sup>124</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.37.



opment takes time. Whereas the ‘religious adherent’ was already designated as a *pistos*, a ‘faithful one’, in some of the surviving Graeco-Roman sources, and even though *apistia* indicated a religious vice, *apistoi* was not yet used as an absolute and general outsider designation, as I established in the previous section (esp. §8.3.1), although the signs of a development in this direction increase in the second and third century AD.

So, if Paul’s *apistoi* are not general outsiders, what was their exact deficit? Now that we have seen the many shades of meaning of *pistis* and cognates in the previous chapters, and the contemporary discourses in which *apistia* plays a major part (esp. §§8.3.3–4), it makes sense to see whether the negative may also carry more precise and perhaps more diverse meanings in Paul’s letters. Does Paul use *apistia* and its cognates in a persuasive (scepticism), ethical (untrustworthiness), or religious (unfaithfulness, lack of loyalty) sense, or are Paul’s *apistoi* simply unbelieving outsiders, in a neutral, socio-religious sense, as non-adherents to his movement?

Within the New Testament canon as a whole, a famous example of *apistia* language from the Johannine tradition is the resurrected Jesus saying to his disciple Thomas, ‘do not be distrusting but trusting’ (John 20.27: μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός). Here, obviously, disbelief or scepticism is at stake, not some kind of faithlessness or disloyalty. However, it is still not the type of nominal, general group designation we are looking for, but one warranted by Thomas’s sceptical attitude. More interesting is the juxtaposition in the letter 2 *Peter* of ‘those who believe’ (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν) and ‘those who do not believe’ (ἀπιστοῦσιν) in a such an unmarked fashion that the latter label seems to be a general designation for outsiders (2 *Pet* 1.7), albeit in this case a designation in the shape of a present participle. The date of this letter is disputed, yet even in the most conservative dating it certainly postdates Paul’s first (and second) letter to the Corinthians.

In the wider Pauline corpus (particularly those letters of disputed authorship), there are some possible candidates for an insider-outsider reading of *pistis* and *apistia* language. An interesting case is found in 1 *Timothy*, where (in 1 *Tim* 5.8) the one who does not provide for her (or ‘his’, yet the passage speaks about widows) relatives is said to have ‘rejected the (bond of) faith’ (τὴν πίστιν ἕρνηται) and to be ‘worse than an unbeliever’ (ἀπίστου χείρων), another possible use of *apistos* as pertaining to the outsider in general.<sup>125</sup> Yet even here,

125 This sentence also contains an interesting usage of the noun *pistis* that is, as I have noted before in §6.4.1 and §7.4.1, probably still unfamiliar to Paul, namely as denoting the sum total of Christian life, ‘the faith’. Yet a reading as ‘bond of trust/faith’ is also quite feasible and therefore preferable.

especially *apistos* in the sense of ‘being as yet uncommitted’ may well explain why it is worse for one who did embrace the ‘bond of faith’ or made a ‘pledge of faith’ (cf. 1 Tim 5.12: τὴν πρώτην πίστιν ἠθέτησαν) to not take care of his or her own household than for one who is not yet persuaded and committed (*pistos*).<sup>126</sup> An even stranger translation of the positive adjective *pistos* is found in *Titus*, in an enumeration of the qualifications for elders. One of the items listed (at 1.6) is ‘having *pista* children’, which is often rendered as ‘whose children are believers’ (NRSV) or ‘whose children believe’ (NIV) and is understood as such in scholarship.<sup>127</sup> However, in the remainder of this sentence these children are required to be ‘not accused of debauchery and not rebellious’, these markers indicating the ethical domain in which the language partakes. A translation of *apistos* as ‘untrustworthy’ or ‘disloyal’ is therefore to be semantically preferred.

Not all *pistis* designations in the disputed letters are so easily explained from a more explicit relational or ethical perspective, though. *2 Thessalonians* contains obvious insider-outsider usage, when people are said to be led by God ‘to believe what is false’ (εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ ψεύδει) and are thereafter referred to as ‘all who have not believed the truth (πάντες οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ) but took pleasure in unrighteousness’. In this letter, a general ‘us-versus-them’ scheme seems to be very much present, and *pistis* is at the heart of this social distinction:

And that we may be rescued from wicked and evil people; for not all have faith (οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις). But the Lord is faithful (πιστὸς δὲ ἔστιν ὁ κύριος); he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. (*2 Thessalonians* 3.2–3)

The bond of *pistis* creates a strong division of good and evil here, both on the divine and on the human level. Nevertheless, as the focus of this study is on the undisputed letters, can we find any clue here for the use of *pistis* and *apistia* language to create a boundary between the good insiders and the general bad outsiders?

In scholarship, Paul’s *apistoi* are generally understood as general outsiders. A quick look at major translations and commentaries of the texts in ques-

126 Cf. *2 Timothy* 3.8, where a typology of end-time people is given, who are ‘of corrupted mind and untested (or: failing) in persuasion’ (ἀδόκιμοι περὶ τὴν πίστιν): the translation ‘counterfeit faith’ (NRSV) is better avoided if we consider the cognitive-persuasive dimension here: their religious stance is not fake, yet their understanding was destroyed and their persuasion was easily swayed.

127 Cf. Leppä 2005, 378–379.

tion shows that the most common understanding is indeed ‘unbelievers’.<sup>128</sup> We already saw that even Paul Trebilco, in his monograph on self-designations in the New Testament, never questions this meaning, maintaining that ‘the use of the term “unbelievers” is thus a new and innovative use of language’, since it does not occur before 1 *Corinthians*.<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, this translation is sometimes questioned, as it reflects a typically modern idea of an ‘abstract, interior belief’ instead of being a first-century name for ‘specific character traits and resulting behaviour’.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, several studies that I will return to below have argued for a different translation and interpretation in a particular passage. To my knowledge, however, only T.J. Lang (2018) made an overarching attempt to see whether such a translation is warranted in any of the fourteen instances in the undisputed Pauline corpus (see §8.1 above and, when it pertains to a specific passage, in the subsections below).

The statistics of *apistoi* designations alone, distributed over only six sections in the letters addressed to one community (the one in Corinth), should raise some eyebrows. If the *apistos* would indeed have been such a well-known, general set-off to the more common *pisteuōn* and *pisteuontes*, ‘believing one(s)’, why did Paul only avail himself of this useful outsider designation in these letters to the Corinthians? The positive variant of the adjective, *pistos*, is used only once in a substantivized, personal manner, and that is in the rhetorical question ‘for what does a *pistos* share with an *apistos*?’ (2 Cor 6.15) The choice for *apistos* may have influenced the preference for *pistos* over *pisteuōn* here (yet cf. 14.22–24 with the pair of *piseuontes-apistoi*). But why did Paul use *apistos* and not the more logical choices of either the present active participle with a negation, *ho mē pisteuōn* (cf. Joh 3.18: ὁ μὴ πιστεύων; 1 Joh 5.10: ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ), the present active participle of *apisteō*, *apistōn* (cf. 2 Pet 1.7: ἀπιστοῦσιν), or its aorist active participle, *ho apistēsas* (cf. Mark 16.16: ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας)?

One solution to these questions is that there is a difference in sense between the adjective and the participles, between being (*a*)*pistos* on the one hand and being (*a*)*pistēsas*, (*a*)*pist(eu)ōn*, or (*mē*) *pisteuōn* on the other. Obviously, as the participles derive from verbs, they more easily convey actions and, in the

128 See e.g. Hay 2006, 47: ‘Paul uses *pist*- terms only in relation to the Jewish Scriptures or the Christian movement. Very often he speaks of Christians simply as *pisteuontes* (“those who have faith”). Contrariwise, non-Christians can be mentioned simply as “unbelievers” (*apistoi*).’ Cf. Renn 2005, 997, s.v. *apistia*: ‘*apistia* is a noun with the consistent meaning “unbelief” in each of the twelve contexts in which it occurs.’

129 Trebilco 2012, 83, see §8.2.2 above.

130 So Hodge 2007, 82. Cf. Hodge 2010, 2, n. 5.

case of *pisteuō/apisteō*, may be complemented with a propositional phrase (believing that). Morgan, who argues for a gradual small-step development of propositional *pistis* language postdating Paul, observes:

*Hoi pisteuontes* could mean either ‘those who trust in God/are faithful to God’ or ‘those who believe’, but *hoi pistoi* can only mean ‘those who trust/the faithful’: no Greek speaker would have coined the term *hoi pistoi* to mean ‘those who believe’. (Morgan 2015, 240)<sup>131</sup>

She reasons that as both terms were in use in Paul’s days, it is more likely that both meant ‘those who trust/are faithful’, for then there is no ambiguity in what (self-)defines these early Christ-followers. If she is correct, the same can be said for the negative adjective *apistos*, which in that case speaks of a non-trusting or unfaithful person, not a non-believer. Paul meant to identify these persons by something different from ‘not believing’.

In this section (8.4), we have a look at what this different characteristic may be in more detail by matching the meanings we encountered in the Graeco-Roman material with Paul’s designations. I begin with the substantivized participle *hoi pisteuontes*, used as a designation (in §8.4.1). This survey demonstrates that the positive designations function as inclusive markers, meant to include all common opposites of Jew and Greek, male and female, slave and free. In *Romans*, this created the opposite attitude of *apistia*, used to indicate the position of those who deny such inclusivity. This usage perfectly fits the bridging social function of *pistis* language we discussed in chapter 7.

In the remaining subsections we turn to the supposedly ‘logical opposite’ (as Trebilco has it, see §8.2.2 above) of *hoi pisteuontes*: *hoi apistoi*. My overall thesis is that for Paul, this term it is not meant to refer to all outsiders in general. In that case Paul would undermine the very purpose of his innovative use of *pistis* as an inclusive self-definition and create yet another all-encompassing dualism of believer and unbeliever. Instead, I would argue that it refers to

<sup>131</sup> Morgan is followed by Schellenberg 2019, 39, n. 26, yet one page further (at 37) Schellenberg declares that ‘[t]he self-designation *οἱ πιστεύοντες* is in the active voice and thus clearly refers to ‘faith’ exercised by Paul’s addressees’, simply ignoring the possible meaning of ‘the faithful’ (or rephrasing it as ‘faith-full’: at 36). Consequently, Schellenberg’s contribution to the *pistis Christou* debate in favour of a ‘faith in Christ’ or ‘Christ-faith’ interpretation is also less convincing: the rhetorical force of the designation ‘the faithful’ is just as capable of strengthening the importance of Christ’s faithfulness, for then it is Christ’s faithfulness that prefigures and incorporates the addressees’ faithfulness (‘you who call yourself faithful, understand that is through a similar faithfulness that righteousness has come to you’).

particular people or groups of people at the borders of the Pauline movement, people who were either not yet fully part of the faithful ingroup because they did not trust the message or the messenger (the ‘unconvinced’, ‘untrusting’, or ‘uncommitted’, see §8.4.2) or in other instances to people whom Paul perceived as a problem or even threat to his message of faithfulness by continuing their polytheistic lifestyle (the ‘untrustworthy’, ‘unfaithful’, or ‘disloyal’, see §8.4.3, §8.4.4, and §8.4.5).

In all cases, I submit, the immediate context should weigh more heavily in determining the meaning of *apistia* language. Unmarked, an *apistos* is someone in proximity of a Pauline community, someone who has not (yet fully) responded to God's offer of faithfulness with faithfulness. From a positive angle, these people may still be saved or become ‘convinced’ and ‘committed’ (*pistos*). Negatively charged, *apistoi* pose a risk to the community as their immoral untrustworthiness corrupts the community or because their disloyalty undermines the exclusive loyalty of the faithful to the one God.

#### 8.4.1 *If They do Not Persist in Apistia (Rom 11.23): Pisteuontes as an Inclusive Religious Marker and Apistia as ‘Scepticism’ of Inclusive Divine Benefaction*

In this subsection, I first review all the substantivized uses of the participle *pisteuontes* and the adjective *pistos* in the undisputed letters (leaving only the passages where there is a contrast with the negative *apistos* for the following subsections). Thereafter, I discuss the few occurrences of *apist-* vocabulary outside of the letters to the Corinthians, all in *Romans*. As we will see, the context and semantic colouring of these words is somewhat different from what we encounter when Paul differentiates *pistoi* and *pisteuontes* from *apistoi* in the Corinthian correspondence.

As Paul Trebilco and others observed, the combination of a substantivized *pistis* participle and derivatives of the adjective ‘all’ (πᾶς) is extremely common in Paul's letters, particularly in *Romans*.<sup>132</sup> This frequent co-occurrence (six out of fifteen participles go with *pas*) suggests that inclusivity or universality is on Paul's mind when he designates his audience by means of *pistis*. This preliminary estimation is confirmed when we look at the direct context of

132 Apart from 1 *Thessalonians* 1.7, they are *Romans* 1.16, 3.22, 4.11, 10.4, and 10.11. See e.g. Matlock 2007, 184: ‘For not only is πᾶς, in its own right, a thematic word in *Romans* (...); it also keeps some interesting company with πιστεύω: in addition to εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας in *Romans* 3.22, we have παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι (1.16), πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων (4.11), παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι (10.4) and πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων (10.11).’ And cf. the discussion of Trebilco's work above (§8.2.2).

these designations. Without going into much detail, I offer a quick overview to show the remarkable coherence in contexts, as we have already spent time with each of these passages in the preceding chapters.

In the opening section of *Romans*, the combination of ‘all’ and the substantivized participle *pisteuontes* is part of the programmatic statement on the ‘good news’: this is God’s power ‘for salvation to everyone who has faith (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι), to the Jew first and also to the Greek’ (Rom 1.16). The ‘everyone’ is explicitly said to include Jew and Greek here. Just as in the elaboration of this programmatic opening in *Romans* 3.22—where it is the ‘righteousness of God’ that is meant ‘for all who have faith (εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας), for there is no distinction’—here also the potential distinction is an ethnical one between Jew and Greek, as is indeed confirmed (at 3.29): ‘Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of gentiles also?’ In both cases, there is no object of this ‘faith’ specified (a complement in the dative or a prepositional phrase), which is an absolute usage of the active participle for which there is no contemporary parallel in extant Greek source material (see §8.3.1 above). Yet, that it is absolute in usage does not mean that it is a general social-religious category at this point. Instead, it demonstrates that the action of ‘having faith’ is closely linked to its universal scope.

In what is now the fourth chapter of the letter it is *pistis*-counted-as-righteousness itself that is said to belong to ‘one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly’ (Rom 4.5: τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιούντα τὸν ἄσεβῆ). The act of *pistis* thus consists of trust in the God that justifies outsiders, which amounts to trust in God’s inclusive benefaction (see §7.4.4). Next, Abraham is said to be ‘the ancestor of all who trust (πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων) without being circumcised’ (Rom 4.11): here, the universalizing notion of ‘all who trust’ is explicitly restricted to the uncircumcised, which confirms the all-encompassing meaning of the combination without this restriction. This trust of Abraham is then taken to apply to ‘us’ and expanded to include the ‘people that trust in him who raised Jesus from the dead’ (Rom 4.24: τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν). The whole argument set up in this section concerns the inclusion of gentile nations through *pistis* (cf. §4.4.1 and §7.4.4 above). The *pistis* of the *pisteuontes* not only ensures this inclusion and the ‘making just / regarding as just’, it is also focused on the inclusive saving action of God: *pistis* is trust in divine provision for all. If *pisteuontes* was already used as an insider designation within the Christ-movement, it is evidently Paul’s intention to point out that as a designation it expresses trust in God’s universal benefaction.

Further on in *Romans*, Paul’s usage of the participle of *pisteuō* as a designation is prompted by his appropriation of an *Isaiah* text, namely ‘and the one

who trusts in him is surely not put to shame' (LXX *Isaiah* 28.16: καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυθή). The first time Paul cites this text, in *Romans* 9.33, it is phrased pretty much the same as in the Septuagint.<sup>133</sup> The second time, he adds *pas* and draws again the conclusion that the non-Jews are included in this prophetic text:<sup>134</sup>

The scripture says, 'Everyone who trusts in him will not be put to shame (πάς ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυθήσεται).' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. (*Romans* 10.11–12)

The second 'all' here comes from the book of Joel and is not added by Paul like the first. Yet, it is clear that the inclusion of 'all' is on Paul's mind here.<sup>135</sup> As I argued in chapter 3, the topic at hand is God's divine benefaction to all the nations through *pistis* as an universal law, based on their reliance upon the living law, Christ, who is introduced here as being 'the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for all who trust (παντί τῷ πιστεύοντι)' (Rom 10.4).

There are six more *pisteuontes* designations in different (undisputed) letters. In 1 *Thessalonians*, these designations are a little less abstract. In the (first) thanksgiving section the Thessalonian Christ-followers are said to have become 'an example to all who trust/are faithful in Macedonia and in Achaia' (1 Thes 1.7). Their 'faithfulness' is further specified as 'your faithfulness towards God' (1 Thes 1.8: ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεόν), evident from their welcoming of Paul, their turning from idols towards the true God, serving this God, and expecting Jesus. The explicit mentioning of idols here foregrounds the meaning of loyalty to this particular god (cf. §7.4.3 and §8.3.1), while the idea of a chain of imitations in this passage highlights the moral nature of *pistis* as a virtue and attitude enabling imitation (see §6.4.3).

Twice, the combination of 'you who trust' is used to underline the Thessalonians' response to Paul and to the word of God:

You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how pure,

133 Only with a single negation and the future tense of the verb (corrected in codex Claromontanus and two ninth century manuscripts).

134 Also noted in Trebilco 2012, 76 and cf. §3.4.3 above for a discussion of this text in the context of the 'living law' discourse.

135 Cf. LXX *Joel* 3.5: καὶ ἔσται, πᾶς, ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου, σωθήσεται.

upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you who trust (ὁμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν<sup>136</sup>). (...) We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you who trust (ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). (1 *Thessalonians* 2.9–10,13)

All three participles are used in an absolute sense, without a defined object of trust, and it can be safely said that they function as group designations (usage 4, as I set out in §8.3.1 above). The question remains whether these designations were felt to be still close to the original meaning of the verb or whether they were already being emptied of their specific content as general labels. Are the addressees simply 'believers' as a general social-religious category (usage 6 as described in §8.3.1, as it is often translated) or did they trust someone or something in particular, which the context specifies or at least hints at (usage 2 or 4)? Evidently, in this context, they trust in and are faithful to Paul as a messenger and in/to Paul's or rather God's message itself. Based on our earlier discussions of this text in the contexts of transformative persuasion (§5.4.3) and imitation in the virtue of faithfulness (§6.4.3), it is the process of trusting this message and becoming faithful receivers and enactors of it that is foregrounded here, and this is what resonates in the designation of being *pisteuontes*.

Of the three *pisteuontes* designations in 1 *Corinthians*, two are discussed below, as we have a contrast there with *apistoi* (both in 1 Cor 14.22). The first occurrence (1 Cor 1.21) concerns *pisteuontes* as the object of God's salvation (σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας) 'through the foolishness of proclamation' (διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος). This absolute usage is again a response to Paul's proclamation, and the theme of rhetoric is evident in this part of the letter (see §5.4.2 above): the 'believers' are not a category of religious adherents so much as 'faithful receivers' of Paul's saving message.

Finally, in *Galatians*, the participle is used next to a *pistis Christou* phrase (at Gal 3.22): 'But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who trust (ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῆναι τοῖς πιστεύουσιν).' Earlier, we read this passage as partaking in the topos of imitation (see §6.4.5): the trusting and faithful attitude of Christ towards God (or even humanity) ought to be mirrored in his footsteps by *hoi pisteuontes*, who trust Christ and are faithful

136 A third-century fragment (P65) appears to have the aorist participle πιστεύσασιν here, as also the old Latin tradition and Vulgate seem to have translated.



like Christ. Still, the political themes of benefaction (δοθῆναι) and inclusion of the nations (Gal 3.26–28), as described in my chapter 7, are not absent here either. The *pisteuontes* are those who partake in a bond of faith, whereby they share in Abraham's inheritance (see Gal 3.29) that was given based on a similar bond. In both cases, reciprocity or relationality is key for understanding the use of the *pisteuontes* designation.

This overview of the substantivized participle of *pisteuō* in Paul's letters has shown that on the one hand, these are the earliest sources we have in which *pistis* designations are unequivocally used to indicate a group identity. The frequency of the term and its absolute usage confirm this. On the other hand, it is evident that the different contexts still provide an explanatory semantic domain, that explains the use of these designations at these precise spots.<sup>137</sup> They are far from *epitheta ornantia*: designations detached from any particular contextual markers (usage 6). In each case, there are markers that help to fill in the precise meaning of these *pistis* designations: either they foreground trust in the inclusion of all ethnicities in God's salvation, or they mark the sense of exclusive loyalty to the one God, or they express the process of becoming persuaded, transformed, and imitable by trusting this God and message. And sometimes the context is so heavy-loaded that multiple frames seem to press on the meaning of *pisteuontes*.

In *Romans*, the inclusive-universal frame is dominant, which is good to keep in mind as we now turn to the *apistia* language in this letter. The four instances in Paul's letters of the noun *apistia* and the one and only instance of the verb *apisteō* are all found in *Romans*. One of these is the remark that Abraham did not 'dispute the promise of God out of distrust' but 'grew strong in trust' (Rom 4.19), where, as I argued (in §4.4.1), the cognitive dimension of trust (or having a firm conviction) grounds the relational dimension (or the capacity to stay loyal to the bond of trust). In the other instances, the relational sphere seems to be even more in view, particularly the relationship between three parties: God, the Jewish *ethnos*, and the other *ethnē*.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. for a different view, Schellenberg 2019, who states (at 36), after evaluating the usage of *pisteuontes* in 1 *Thessalonians* and 1 *Corinthians*, that 'there is no particular emphasis here on the faith (or faithlessness) of those so designated. Paul is simply naming insiders and outsiders.' Ryan Schellenberg (2019, 35) does not distinguish between subtle categories of usage and deems the denominative meaning of 'believers' in 1 *Corinthians* and 1 *Thessalonians* 'uncontested' in scholarship. However, he notes that, without specific scholarly contemplation, in *Romans* and *Galatians*, the participles are often translated differently and less nominally, as 'those/all who believe', whereas in these letters, they carry much more rhetorical force precisely if they are recognised as a well-known self-designation.

In *Romans 3*, we encounter interesting *pistis* and *apistia* language in the midst of a large section on what I would read as a justification of divine justice. The position Paul is responding to seems to be one that questions God's fairness (or justice, goodness, faithfulness) in dealing with the world and with Jews in particular: is Paul arguing that God is nullifying his covenant relationship with Abraham and Israel?<sup>138</sup> Is there an advantage to having a Jewish identity? In response, Paul argues that one of the primary benefits of being a Jew is that it is them that 'were entrusted with (ἐπιστεύθησαν) the oracles of God' (Rom 3.2). He continues, playing with the *pistis* word group, and asks:

What if some were unfaithful (εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες)? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God (μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ)? (*Romans 3.3*)

Clearly, *apisteō* is a verb that is here used in line with the noun *apistia* and in contrast to the faithfulness (*pistis*) of God: apparently, this verb can very well carry this relational sense.<sup>139</sup> As for the meaning of the question as a whole, we might rephrase this as follows: is the bond of trust between God and the Jews broken and done now that the human party appeared untrustworthy?<sup>140</sup> Paul's answer is obviously 'no', as not only are humans generally untrustworthy because they are under the power of sin (Rom 3.9–20), but God has now revealed his justice in a new way in Christ for 'all who are faithful' (Rom 3.22), building on the earlier bond with Abraham (from 4.1). The faithfulness of God towards humanity is therefore not diminished; rather, it has gained in scope to include not only the Jews, but also the other nations. *Apistia* seems to consist of not properly upholding the relationship of good faith with God.

In the later parts of the letter, the question of God's enduring faithfulness towards Israel is again taken up and affirmed. Here, *apistia* seems to gain a specific point of reference. The quotations from *Deuteronomy/Isaiah* and the *Psalms* (11.8–10) serve to confirm the unfaithfulness of a part of Israel that was also thematized in the prelude to *Romans 3.3* (2.17–24). Paul, however, now asks for the purpose (Rom 11.11: ἵνα) of this 'stumbling' and boldly states that 'through their transgression salvation has come to the nations' (Rom 11.11). Thus, the unfaithfulness is seen in light of the inclusion of the nations:

138 Cf. Hays 1980, 109, with reference to Keck 1979: 'This issue is, at bottom, the question of God's integrity.'

139 So also Matlock 2000, 15, who is generally more sceptical about a relational meaning for *pisteuō*.

140 See also §4.4.1 *supra*.

You will say, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' That is true. They were broken off because of their unfaithfulness (τῆ ἀπιστίᾳ ἐξεκλάσθησαν), but you stand only through faith (σὺ δὲ τῆ πίστει ἔστηκας). So do not become proud, but stand in awe. (...) And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unfaithfulness (ἐὰν μὴ ἐπιμένωσιν τῆ ἀπιστίᾳ), will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. (*Romans* 11.19–20,23)

The first occurrence of *apistia* stands in direct opposition to 'standing in *pistis*'. While the NRSV renders *apistia* as 'faithlessness' in *Romans* 3, it has 'unbelief' in *Romans* 11, which seems misplaced. The text states that being grafted onto the olive tree is a state that can be altered, depending on whether the gentiles in question 'continue in his kindness' (Rom 11.22: ἐὰν ἐπιμένῃς τῆ χρηστότητι) or the Jews in question 'persist in *apistia*' (Rom 11.23: ἐπιμένωσι τῆ ἀπιστίᾳ). To refuse to believe something seems an unlikely antithesis to remaining in the sphere of divine benefaction. Instead, to remain in *apistia* is to not or no longer participate in a relationship or sphere of good faith and faithfulness to God's purposes (cf. §7.4.4 on 'standing in grace' in Rom 5.1). Again, the relationality, not the lack of cognitive persuasion, is in focus here.

The context here, moreover, highlights that this relational-political *apistia* refers to a scepticism of divine kindness to the whole of the cosmos. For Paul, this implies an unfaithfulness as regards their vocation as a nation that, with Paul, should proclaim Christ, not only as a fulfilment of their law (Rom 10.4) or as their own salvation, but as salvation for all nations.<sup>141</sup> In Paul's logic, they are unfaithful to their bond of faith with God by refusing to be ambassadors of God's grace to the nations. *Apistia* is thus the opposite from the inclusivity expressed in the *pisteuontes* designations, so prominent in *Romans*. Trebilco and others have argued that Paul used *pisteuontes* to overcome social boundaries but also devised a new general social dichotomy, one between 'belief' and 'disbelief'. Instead, the advantage of the reading I propose is that it assumes a

141 I here draw on Windsor's reading that the failure of Israel was a 'vocational failure' (203) and that in *Romans* chapter 11, Israel's vocation towards the nations and Paul's apostleship to the nations converge. See Windsor 2014, 201: 'Thus they have not only failed to attain salvation themselves, they have also failed to come to terms with Paul's gospel-centred redefinition of Jewish vocation. Since Paul's own mission is fundamentally Jewish, he needs the backing of the Jewish community. Israel's vocational failure, therefore, threatens Paul's apostolic mission at its deepest level.'

continuity in usage in this letter, with both *pistis* and *apistia* pointing towards the inclusion of the nations in a divine-human bond of trust.<sup>142</sup>

This interpretation is also feasible from the perspective of a wider, pagan usage of *apistia* language. It is a small step from using *apistia* to express scepticism of any divine involvement—as was common in anti-Epicurean polemic (see §8.3.3)—to using it to express scepticism of divine involvement beyond the Jewish *ethnos*. Thus, in Paul's take on Israel's *apistia*, a cognitive scepticism regarding the good news for all coincides with a relational breach of faith with God by renouncing Israel's divine vocation. In the words in which the BDAG describes *apistia*, for Paul, this attitude of some of his people consists of an 'unwillingness to commit oneself to another or respond positively to the other's words or actions', namely, in this particular usage, to God's offer of salvation to the nations.<sup>143</sup>

*Apistia*, understood in this way, comes close to the meaning of *apeitheia* ('unpersuadedness' or 'disobedience'), as was already made in the discussion of Paul's use of *peithō* (in §5.4.1).<sup>144</sup> Paul is wrestling with the fact that many of his fellow-Jews did not respond positively, in mind and action, to his good news and hence to God's saving of the nations. It is this theme of 'disobedience' and the strange relationship to divine 'mercy' that is taken up in the remainder of his argument here (Rom 11.28–32), and that also leads to Paul's prayer request 'to be rescued from the disobedient people (ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπειθούντων) in Judaea' (Rom 15.31). These people are not 'disobedient to' or 'unpersuaded by' any specific command, yet they do not respond positively to God's vocation to, with Paul, spread the good news of divine grace for all. Instead, they actively work against Paul and his proclamatory efforts. *Apistia* and *apeitheia* both adequately express their scepticism in (or their 'remaining unconvinced of') divine benefaction to the nations and trustworthiness in effectuating this offer by participating in Paul's ministry to the nations.<sup>145</sup>

142 See Trebilco 2012, 85 and cf. Minear 2003 [1971], 48: 'The only distinction which survived the resurrection of Jesus was the distinction of faith and unbelief. Even the dichotomy between Jews and the nations, often emphasized by Paul, serves as a rhetorical tool to eventually overcome this dualism: cf. the position advocated in Rosen-Zvi & Ophir 2015 that the uniforming category of the *goyim* or *ta ethnē* as opposed to Jews was in fact invented by Paul.

143 BDAG, s.v. ἀπιστία, #1.

144 Cf. BDAG, s.v. ἀπειθέω: 'In a number of passages NRSV and REB, among others, with less probability render ἀ[πειθέω] "disbelieve" or an equivalent.' Cf., for a convincing argument against the gloss 'disobedience' for *apeitheia*, Matthew D. Jensen 2019.

145 Both *apistia* and *apeitheia* language can include a range of cognitive-behavioural-relational responses, even in one occurrence, and there is no need to meticulously dis-

### 8.4.2 *A Sign for the Apistoi (1 Cor 14.22) and Blinded Minds of the Apistoi (2 Cor 4.4): Apistia as Religious Unpersuadedness*

Now that we have seen how *pisteuontes* and *apistia* are used in *Romans* to express the transethnic nature of faith (or mistrust thereof), we turn to the usage of similar terms in the Corinthian letters. The designation of *apistoi* is used only in these letters, next to the positive variants of *pisteuontes* and *pistoi*. Just as in the previous subsection, I argue for a more specialized meaning than the social categories of ‘believers’ (religious insiders) versus ‘unbelievers’ (religious outsiders), as such a usage would be a major linguistic innovation (see §8.3.1) that is unlikely to have taken place in the mid-first century.

Roughly, I argue, we can distinguish between a more persuasive-religious sense (‘the sceptical/unconvinced’), a more ethical-religious sense (‘the untrustworthy’), and an idolatrous-religious sense (‘the disloyal/unfaithful’). The unpersuaded person is one that has not responded positively to Paul’s good news as of yet. The untrustworthy person partakes in the Christ-community while continuing in immoral behaviour. The unfaithful person is a polytheist closely connected socially to community members who serves more gods than the one God. Each category is discussed in a separate subsection (§8.4.2, §8.4.3, and §8.4.4), and I conclude with what is potentially the most exclusivist passage in the corpus Paulinum (§8.4.5 on 2 Cor 6.14), which might also lead us to some clues on the specific teachings of certain *apistoi*.

A first passage to consider is one in which *pisteuontes* and *apistoi* are being distinguished twice, in a context in which the relative merits of the charismatic gifts of tongues and prophecy are being discussed:

<sup>21</sup> In the law it is written, ‘By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people; yet even then they will not listen to me (οὐδ’ οὕτως εἰσακούσονται μου),’ says the Lord. <sup>22</sup> Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers (αἱ γλώσσαι εἰς σημεῖόν εἰσιν οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις), while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers (οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). <sup>23</sup> If, therefore/then (οὖν), the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter (ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι), will they not say that you are out of your mind? <sup>24</sup> But if (ἐάν δέ) all prophesy, an unbeliever or outsider who enters is reproved by all (ἐλέγχεται)

---

tinguish between cognitive, volitional, and behavioural senses, as Jensen (2004, 400, 406) deems necessary (see also §5.4.1 above). In cases like this, a discourse analytical approach supplements a purely semantic approach.

and examined (ἀνακρίνεται) by all.<sup>25</sup> After the secrets of the unbeliever's heart are disclosed (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ), that person will bow down before God and worship him, declaring, 'God is really among you' (ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἔστιν). (1 *Corinthians* 14.21–25)

This is a notoriously difficult passage, because of the (at least apparent) incongruence between what is stated in verse 22 and the examples given in verse 23–25. If tongues are a sign meant for 'unbelievers' (22a), why would an 'unbeliever' who enters the church meeting not be impressed by this sign (23)? And if prophecy is for 'believers' (22b), why would an 'unbeliever' worship God upon hearing the Corinthians prophecy (24–25)?

There have been diverse solutions to solve this discrepancy, with diverse interpretations of (1) the importance of the citation's original context for the situation in Corinth, (2) the positive or negative nature of the 'sign', (3) the positive or negative evaluation of tongues by those entering the meeting, (4) whether Paul or an opponent is speaking, and (5) the meaning of the four occurrences of *apistoi*.<sup>146</sup> It is mainly to this fifth issue that I contribute some thoughts here, though there are some implications for the other issues involved.

In *Isaiah* 28.11–12, which is cited with considerable deviations from both MT and LXX, the 'speech' concerns foreign speech by nations surrounding Ephraim and Judah, either as a message of comfort in times of oppression (in the LXX) or as a divine message of judgement through enemy peoples (in the MT).<sup>147</sup> Here, it seems to be applied to a considerably different case of unintelligible utterances in the Corinthian community gatherings, and for Paul to expect the addressees to take the original context into account may be an overestimation.<sup>148</sup> In line with this scriptural context, though, John Sweet sees Paul's quotation as a means to correct the Corinthian view that tongues are meant for those who disbelieve God's message:

146 For a thorough overview of different interpretative options up to 1979, see Johanson 1979, 181–186. Whether the response is indeed negative ('you are out of your mind') is questioned in Chester 2005, who argues that tongues are positively evaluated as a sign of divine hysteria (comparative to positive evaluations of inspired madness in pagan religion), yet inadequate in communicating the gospel.

147 See Chester 2005, 440–441; Johanson 1979, 182; Fitzmyer 2008, 519. Paul deviates from both by adding 'says the Lord', setting it in first person, adding 'even then', and leaving parts out.

148 So also Sweet 1967, 242; Johanson 1979, 182–183; Chester 2005, 431: 'How are unbelievers to know that the incomprehensible tongues they hear indicate divine displeasure?'

Paul warns the Corinthians that according to scripture tongues are meant as a sign for (=against!) those who reject God's simple message, not, as the Corinthians assume, as a sign for the benefit of believers; whereas prophecy is a sign for believers in the effect it has on unbelievers. On this view he is deliberately exploiting the ambiguity of *apistos* ('disbeliever', verse 22; 'unbeliever', verses 23–4) and of the dative, but such shifts of meaning are common enough in Paul. (Sweet 1967, 242)<sup>149</sup>

Such a shift in meaning of *apistos*, between one who stubbornly disbelieves to a general unbelieving non-Christian is critiqued by Bruce Johanson, and I would argue, justly so.<sup>150</sup> Polysemy in a corpus or even in a letter is to be distinguished from sudden shifts in meaning within a single argument. Only, Johanson's solution involves putting verse 21–22 in the mouth of a Corinthian opponent, whereby Paul is using 'diatribal' style to rebut the claim that tongues are useful for convincing outsiders, as part of his larger argument to relativize the value of tongues and to rebut the Corinthian childish thinking.<sup>151</sup> Paul is then quoting the Corinthians who misinterpret Scripture to suit their argument about the usefulness of tongues. In that case, however, the particle οὖν in verse 23 would have to be read as introducing a rebuttal instead of a logical consequence, which may overstretch the usage of this particle.<sup>152</sup> Thus, while I would not rule out the possibility of quotation here, it is useful to look for other more cohesive readings.

A fresh approach by Stephen Chester proposes, based on a large number of Graeco-Roman sources on divine speech, that we take the example of the outsider entering the tongues-speaking community as one that confirms the thesis that tongues are a positive sign to outsiders.<sup>153</sup> Paul is then confirming that outsiders are impressed by the divinely inspired madness. This

149 Fitzmyer (2008, 521–522) follows Sweet, citing his conclusion: 'what is meant is that "unbelievers will be confirmed in their unbelief"' (Sweet 1967, 244).

150 Johanson 1979, 183–184: 'For Paul to use a key term in assertions with a different sense from the same term in supporting illustrations does not make sense, especially when they are so closely juxtaposed to each other. It would only be confusing and serve to weaken his argument.'

151 Johanson is followed here by Peppiatt 2015, 126–128, who is even more strongly convinced of Paul citing a Corinthian letter in this and several other passages (see at 126: 'I depart from his [i.e. Johanson's] reading slightly in seeing more than just a vague possibility that Paul is citing his opponents more directly').

152 See Smit 1994, 177; Garland 2003, 649. Though cf. Watson & Culy 2018, chapter 9, where the authors subject this passage to their 'twelve steps for identifying quotations' and conclude that verses 21–22 are a Corinthian slogan.

153 See Chester 2005, 441: 'Tongues do serve as a sign for unbelievers, but not a sufficient one.'

way, tongues are indeed a positive sign for outsiders and of relative use. That said, *apistoi* need something more, the more intelligible prophetic speech, to become *pisteuontes*. The particle δὲ in the beginning of verse 24 then signals a next step ('furthermore'), not a contradictory situation ('but').

This approach, which takes the 'sign' of tongues in Paul's argument as a positive yet insufficient encouragement to *apistoi*, is reinforced by my own semantic domain approach to *pistis* designations. As we have seen throughout this study, the *pistis* terms in question gain their meaning from contextual markers. In particular the notions of speech (be it in strange tongues or in prophetic language) and listening (14.21: εἰσακούσονται) suggest that the *pistis* terms refer to a response to such speech (cf. chapter 5 above): a response that is either distrustful/unconvinced (*apistos*) or one of being persuaded (*pisteuōn*). For the *apistoi*, tongues are a sign, and a positive one at that (following Chester), but, as in the words cited from Scripture and adapted by Paul, they will still not hear and head (οὐδ' οὕτως εἰσακούσονται) what is being said. The passage illustrates *pistis* language in the sense of transformative persuasion (see chapter 5 above): such persuasion is as yet lacking in these *apistoi*, these 'unpersuaded listeners'.<sup>154</sup>

This sense of 'unpersuadedness' is in line with the wider cultural, moral discourse on the value of speech. In *On Talkativeness*, Plutarch describes the fate of babblers to whom people listen only superficially, but who cannot 'secure listeners who either pay attention or believe what they say (οὔτε προσεχόντων οὔτε πιστευόντων ἀκρατῶν)' and hence their speech is fruitless (ἄκαρπός).<sup>155</sup> He emphasizes the importance of *pistis* as the aim, the fruit, and therefore touchstone for proper speech:

They [i.e. babblers] do not, therefore, meet with belief (ὄθεν οὐδὲ πίστιν ἔχουσιν ἧς πᾶς λόγος ἐφίεται), which is the object (τέλος) of all speech. For this is the proper end and aim of speech, to engender belief in the hearer (πίστιν ἐνεργάσασθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσιν); but chatterers are disbelieved (ἀπιστοῦνται δ' οἱ λάλοι) even if they are telling the truth. For as

<sup>154</sup> Cf. for another rhetorical contextualisation Smit 1994, who points to the usage of 'sign' (σημεῖον) and 'to refute' (ἐλέγχω) here and compares it to the rhetorical means of persuasion (πίστεις) of 'signs' (σημεῖα) 'refutation' (ἔλεγχος) in Aristotle (at 180–182). Smit's main thesis, however, that tongues are seen as pagan *mania* and therefore 'a sign proper to unbelievers' (187) is less convincing, as Paul does not reject tongues altogether (see 1 Cor 14.5,18).

<sup>155</sup> Plutarch, *Concerning Talkativeness* 503B–C. This superficial listening is described astutely: 'the soul surrenders to them the ears to be flooded from outside, but herself within unrolls thoughts of another sort and follows them out by herself' (503B).



wheat shut up in a jar is found to have increased in quantity, but to have deteriorated in quality, so when a story finds its way to a chatterer, it generates a large addition of falsehood and thereby destroys its credibility (ὧ διαφθείρει τὴν πίστιν). (Plutarch, *Concerning Talkativeness* 503D)

Thus, within this context of improper and proper speech and listening with or without attention, *pistis* language emphasizes the desired response of not merely hearing what is said, but actively responding to it (see also chapter 5, esp. §5.4.2 and §5.4.3).

This can be any speech, but as we saw in our discussion of Plato's use of *apistia*, more commonly, the contrast between *pistis* and *apistia* is used in contexts where the reliability of mythical, philosophical, or religious language is at stake. In several Platonic dialogues, disbelief is a provisional sceptical attitude towards truth-claims, and it even serves a beneficial purpose in ultimately approaching truth dialectically. In Lucian, *apistia* is less welcome, as only the *pisteuontes*, those already 'convinced' and 'faithful' to the mysteries performed, were allowed to stay (see §8.3.1). Paul partakes in this same persuasive-religious domain. His evaluation of *apistia* in this passage lies somewhere between these two examples: he is adamant about also having the sceptical *apistoi* be present in the meeting to allow prophecy to do its work and turn them into *pisteuontes*.<sup>156</sup> Yet all three authors use *apistia* in a semantic domain of philosophical-religious persuadedness.

The exclamation of the *apistoi*-turned-*pisteuontes*, 'God is really among you' (1 Cor 14.25), confirms that the *apistia* in question involves a lack of recognition of the presence of the one God. 'God is really among you' may well refer to *Isaiah* again, where the nations acknowledge that there is no other god but the God of Israel (45.14).<sup>157</sup> The transition from *apistia* to *pistis* is thus one that involves a recognition of God's involvement with a particular

156 Lang (2018, 985–986) makes much of the distinction here between the disparity in use of the participle and the adjective, and views the latter category as specific 'disloyal others', a particular group of people that the Corinthians would have recognized (at 985): 'the imparity in the juxtaposition [i.e. between participle and adjective] may instead correspond to the fact that the ἄπιστοι here are something more like what the word usually means.' While I share his critique of the interpretation of *apistos* as representing a general disbelieving outsider, I do see the relevance here in the juxtaposition between *pisteuōn* and *apistos* and would therefore interpret the latter in the active (and still quite common) sense of a 'distrustful' or 'unpersuaded' almost-insider, in line with persuasive usage in contemporary Hellenistic sources (see §8.3.2 above and for the whole persuasive semantic domain chapter 5 above).

157 See Sweet 1967, 245; Fitzmyer 2008, 522; Barrett 1993, 326–327.

people, just as we saw in *Romans*, where the term specifically referred to Jews sceptical of the good news of pagan admission (see §8.4.1).<sup>158</sup> In this declaration, another more specifically religious and relational semantic domain of *pistis* comes to the fore: these *apistoi* have been double-hearted, with divided religious loyalties, but are now starting to become solely committed to this one God.<sup>159</sup> Paul's *pisteuontes* are very much religiously committed, and hence the reverse of *apistia* is not simply 'unpersuadedness' but a form of 'religious unpersuadedness': a lack of commitment to one divinity.

All in all, in line with the general argument of this chapter, I would question both Johanson's and Chester's interpretation of *apistoi* as referring to any unpersuaded outsider: a general, neutral 'unbeliever', or 'non-Christian'. This interpretation is quite common, including among those specifically interested in *pistis* designations. Teresa Morgan argues: 'It seems likely here that *hoi pisteuontes* is Paul's term for community members, and *hoi apistoi* for outsiders.'<sup>160</sup> According to Paul Trebilco, the contrast between *hoi pisteuontes* and *hoi apistoi* in this text makes it clear that 'the use of this self-designation for insiders has led to the development of 'its own logical opposite'—οἱ ἄπιστοι—for outsiders.'<sup>161</sup> Similarly, Ryan Schellenberg states that *apistoi* is 'evidently a familiar designation for those outside the assembly.'<sup>162</sup> In the situation described here by Paul, however, these *apistoi* are entering a church meeting, which already implies that they are not just any outsider. By using *apistoi* here, Paul may also wish to indicate specific people in the physical and probably also in the relational vicinity of the Christ-community.

This near-insider status is confirmed by the pairing of *apistoi* and *idiōtai*, 'uninitiated'. This latter word refers to those who do not have the specialized

158 Cf. the social-scientific approach taken by Esler who compares present-day anthropological research into communities practising glossolalia to the effects of the sign in *Acts* 10.46 and to the sign of tongues in *1 Corinthians* 14: 'the fact that such an event was interpreted as possession by the Holy Spirit, together perhaps with some ritual unease that a non-baptised person had been touched by God, would have constituted the strongest imaginable inducement for the existing Jewish members of the congregation to abandon their deep-seated aversion to mingling with gentiles' (Esler 1994, 50–51).

159 This condition is similar to what we encountered in the social-political domain, for instance in the expression of 'Punic good faith' (*Punica fides*), which implied anything but loyalty (see §7.3.2 above), only here the double-heartedness concerns God.

160 Morgan 2015, 236.

161 Trebilco 2014, 189.

162 Schellenberg 2019, 36.

knowledge, such as philosophical training.<sup>163</sup> It can even be used pejoratively, for instance when Plato's Socrates refers to sophists as 'unskilled amateurs'.<sup>164</sup> Or, in the context of a religious gathering, it identifies a particular group of people who participate in sacrifices yet have not been fully initiated in the cult.<sup>165</sup> Far from being general outsiders, these people are in the best position for becoming *pisteuontes*: they are 'uninitiated', yet may be on their way to 'being initiated' at the same time. Thus, the *idiōtai* need not stand in contrast to the *apistoi*, as has been suggested, but should be seen in line with them.<sup>166</sup> Both the 'religiously uneducated' (*idiōtai*) and the 'religiously unpersuaded/uncommitted' (*apistoi*) neighbours are present at these meetings as potential future *pisteuontes*. And, according to Paul, the Corinthians should even arrange their meetings to suit these people's needs.

There is one other instance of Paul's use of *hoi apistoi* that we already encountered in a previous chapter (see §4.4.3), one that partakes in a more cognitive semantic domain. In *2 Corinthians* 4, Paul speaks of those who are blinded by the god of this world and therefore unable to see Christ as God's image:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing (ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις). In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unpersuaded (ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων), to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image (εἰκῶν) of God. (*2 Corinthians* 4.4)

163 For its philosophical usage, cf. Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 33.6, cited below (§8.4.5). And see Eshleman 2012, who analyses the (similar) use of this term among philosophical, sophistic and Christian circles (see esp. at 69, 260). Cf. at 91: 'Like Second Sophistic intellectuals, early Christian controversialists deploy the figure of the *idiotēs* to measure the distance between true Christianity and its rivals.'

164 Plato, *Republic* 493a: 'Each of those private individuals (ἰδιωτῶν) who work for a living, whom these people call sophists and consider as their rivals in trade, teaches nothing but the ordinary beliefs of the majority of people which they promulgate whenever they meet together, and which he calls "wisdom" (καὶ σοφίαν ταύτην καλεῖν):'

165 See BDAG, s.v. ἰδιώτης.

166 Cf. BDAG, s.v. ἰδιώτης, where the two groups are sharply distinguished: 'The ἰδιῶται are neither similar to the ἄπιστοι, nor are they full-fledged Christians, but stand between the two groups, probably as prospects for membership and are therefore relatively outsiders. (...) The closer relation which they, in contrast to the ἄπιστοι, held with the Christian group (...) is clearly shown by the fact that they had a special place in the room where the Christians assembled (1 Cor 14.16).' Whether this 'special place' is a geographical notion or a figurative position, however, is debated: cf. Fee 1987, 684–685; Chester 2005, 418, n. 2.

I have already discussed how this passage abounds in epistemological language, to a great extent converging with Platonic (and to some extent Stoic) thought on seeing the intelligible and eternal through what is sensible. What is described is the mental inability of the *apistoi* to understand that Christ is a reflection of God. Their *apistia* is evidently meant to denote a cognitive-persuasive condition, an impediment vis-à-vis Paul's good news and vis-à-vis Christ.

In this passage, *apistoi* is reminiscent of a label for a general social-religious category to many. Yet, if we compare it to 'the perishing' of the preceding verse, a similar case could be made (but as far as I know never is, as the translation with an adjective clause here nicely illustrates), as this substantivized adjective also occurs multiple times in the Corinthian letters (1 Cor 1.18, 1 Cor 2.15, both in contrast to 'the saved'). In fact, 'the perishing' also fits the dual Platonic frame of the sensible versus the intelligible (or earthly versus heavenly) realm, confirming the importance of an epistemological semantic domain in this passage.<sup>167</sup>

There is some discussion about the precise identity of these *apistoi*. Some infer that they are gentiles, since the 'god of this world' mentioned here implies a different cause for their lack of faith than the God of Israel who caused the *apistia* among Jews in *Romans* 11.<sup>168</sup> Others argue that they are Jews, as the preceding argument on Moses might suggest.<sup>169</sup> Yet, even though Paul refers to the veiled minds of the followers of Moses, the actual veiling he inveighs against is not that of disbelieving Jews in general, but that of the people he addresses who do not believe his message, who cannot bear looking at the glory of the 'ministry of the Spirit' (2 Cor 3.8). Therefore, a third option to consider is that Paul might have sceptical Corinthians in mind, be they Jews or pagans.<sup>170</sup> These people are present at the Pauline community meetings, or

167 Which is also an apocalyptic dualism, as these are not mutually exclusive, see Tronier 2001, discussed in the introduction of section 4.3.

168 E.g. Wolter 2017, 354: 'In Röm 11.8 geht es um den Unglauben *Israels*—für ihn macht Paulus unter Rückgriff auf Dtn 29.3 und Jes 29.10 das Verstockungshandeln *Gottes* verantwortlich. Demgegenüber thematisiert Paulus in 2Kor 4.3–4 den Unglauben der *Völker* und der wird nicht auf *Gottes* Verstockungshandeln sondern auf das Wirken des "Gottes dieser Welt", also des *Teufels* zurückgeführt.'

169 E.g. Furnish 1984, 221: "There [i.e. in *1 Corinthians*] it [i.e. *apistoi*] always has reference to unconverted gentiles; but here, given the reference to the Israelites who have been hindered from seeing the glory of the new covenant (= the gospel; 3.14–15), unbelieving Jews may also be in mind (Cf. Rom 11.20, 23).' See also Starling 2013, 51; Tomson 2014, 128.

170 Cf. the suggestion of errant Christians in Oostendorp 1967, 47 and Lang's suggestion of idolaters based on LXX *Isaiah* 44.18 (Lang 2018, 999).

are at least close relations of the members, but remain as yet unconvinced. Just like the unbelieving spectators (the *irreligiosi*) at the Isis procession in Apuleius's story of Lucius's miraculous transformation, Paul hopes that these *apistoi* 'see (*videant*) and recognise their errant ways'.<sup>171</sup>

A definitive judgement on the identity of these sceptics, however, as speculative as it necessarily is, would have to take the other instances of *apistoi* and the views he opposes in the Corinthian correspondence into account. In §8.4.5, I will elaborate on a suggestion of my own. Yet already here, it is good to note how Paul's description of the blinded condition of these 'unconvinced' others matches the anti-Epicurean and anti-Academic polemic as set out in §8.3.3 and §8.3.4 above. Epicureans' 'blind the faith (*τυφλοῦν τὴν πίστιν*)' that most men have in the gods.<sup>172</sup> Academic philosophers were dismissed for being 'completely deaf and totally blind', that is, for denying truth as it is set out in sensible reality which leads towards deeper knowledge.<sup>173</sup> In a similar fashion, Paul's *apistoi* do not see divine knowledge either in the earthly Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4.6: 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ') or in the message of Paul, his earthly ambassador (cf. Paul's notion of himself as an earthen vessel in 2 Cor 4.7–12). Thus, I submit that Paul's *apistia* language partakes in this polemical philosophical discourse used in anti-Epicurean and anti-Academic contexts.

#### 8.4.3 *Before Apistoi Judges (1 Cor 6.6): Apistia as Moral-Religious Untrustworthiness*

In three different scenarios in *1 Corinthians*, the *apistos* person is mentioned in contexts of the daily life of the community members: in lawsuits, marriages, and meals. Their *apistia* is in each of these cases more of a problem to Paul than in the situations discussed so far, where *apistoi* are mentioned as having a cognitive impediment (2 Cor 4.4) and as entering a community meeting, whereby they may become worshippers themselves (1 Cor 14.23). These already discussed cases fit the semantic domains of chapter 2 (their *nous* is debased but may be renewed by the internal 'law of *pistis*') and chapter 5 (*pistis* functioning as persuasion transforming one's mentality). In the passage I discuss now (1 Cor 6.6), the theme of chapter 6 resurfaces, as there are many references to (unbecoming) moral behaviour at play. We already saw (in §8.3.1) that Epictetus offers great comparative material for understanding (*a*)*apistos* ethically, as

171 Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.15.

172 Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1101C.

173 Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.20.37: ἀποκεκωφωμένους καὶ ἀποτετυφλωμένους. See §8.3.4.

a crucial character trait fully present in sages, but in need of further development in ordinary people. In such contexts, *apistia* is not a general, sociological outsider-designation, and also more than a mental condition of unpersuadability; it is a moral and even philosophical-religious designation. I argue that the *apistoi* in 1 *Corinthians* 6 are ‘the (morally/religiously) untrustworthy’: people within the community’s social networks who are exerting negative influence.

The *apistia* language in question is found in a section where Paul utters his indignation over lawsuits between community members:

When any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous (ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδίκων), instead of taking it before the saints (ἐπὶ τῶν ἁγίων)? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? (...) If you have ordinary cases, then, do you appoint as judges (καθίζετε) those who have no standing in the church (τοὺς ἐξουθενημένους ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ)? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough (οὐκ ἔστι ἐν ὑμῖν οὐδεὶς σοφός)<sup>174</sup> to decide between one brother and another, but a brother goes to court against a brother (ἀλλὰ ἀδελφὸς μετὰ ἀδελφοῦ κρίνεται)—and before unbelievers at that (καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ ἀπίστων)? (1 *Corinthians* 6.1–2a, 4–6)

Unlike what is suggested by the occurrence of ‘believers’ in the NRSV translation (which I adapted here), the only *pistis* language used is the final word: *apistōn*, a substantivized use of the adjective *apistos*.<sup>175</sup> Paul evidently prefers to use the fictive kinship language of ‘brothers’ (including sisters) and the cultic-ethical language of ‘saints’ for the proper kind of insiders here, not *pisteuontes*, as we encountered in 1 *Corinthians* 14. If my hypothesis that *pistis* designations are not yet simple insider designations is correct, this choice can easily be accounted for. For here, the more specific meaning of ‘persuaded ones’ or ‘trusting ones’ is not central to Paul’s argument. The emphasis is on the argument that being holy excludes immoral behaviour (therefore, *hagioi*) and that family matters ought to be solved inside the spiritual family (hence, *adelphoi*). Yet whereas Paul opts for ‘brothers’ and ‘holy ones’ to denote the good community members here, rather than ‘persuaded/faithful/trusting ones’, the judges are deemed *apistos* (verse 6). Even though these words are

174 The textual variants here do not provide any major differences in meaning.

175 This may be due to the preference for a gender-inclusive term.

often interpreted as being outsider designations, we may have to consider the possibility that these judges may not be general pagan outsiders at all.<sup>176</sup>

In order to understand Paul's usage of *apistoi* here, we need to take the wider context of the passage into account. It is quite clear that the whole question of lawsuits emerges from a discussion of certain vices inside the community, even though it is unclear whether Paul still has the incestuous offense mentioned in *1 Corinthians* 5.1 in mind here.<sup>177</sup> Paul has just given a whole list of immoral behaviour (*1 Cor* 5.10–11) and gives another right after this section on lawsuits (*1 Cor* 6.9–10), both including forms of sexual immorality, greed, and idolatry, which also shows the intricate interconnectedness of what we may deem 'worldly' and 'spiritual' offenses.<sup>178</sup> It thus makes more sense to understand *apistos* as describing an ethical-religious deficit: untrustworthiness as regards their behaviour or a lack of moral steadfastness.

In the preceding section of the letter, we find important clues confirming the insider-status of these judges. Paul explained that his earlier teachings had been misunderstood: associating with 'unbelieving' outsiders is not the problem and cannot be avoided without leaving the world behind; but anyone wicked, 'who bears the name of brother' (*1 Cor* 5.11: ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος) is to be judged and driven out (*1 Cor* 5.13).<sup>179</sup> There are obvious connections here to *Deuteronomy* 17, from which Paul quotes, but also to *Psalms* 101, in which we saw (in §8.3.1) that *pistoi* is used very much ethically, as a group designation, and pertaining to faithful insiders. Here, the psalmist declares, 'with him

176 In most literature, their pagan identity is simply assumed. The only suggestion of a possible non-pagan identity of both *adikoi* and *apistoi* I found in Derrett 1991, 27 (on which, see below in this subsection).

177 As Paul considers the cases 'minor' (*1 Cor* 6.2: ἐλαχίστων) and 'trivial' (*1 Cor* 6.3: βιωτικά) this would suggest they do not concern incest. Nevertheless, any case may be considered a mere matter of this life in light of judging angels, so in principle these trials could pertain to any of the human vices mentioned. In view of the verb 'withhold' or 'steal' (*1 Cor* 6.8: ἀποστερείτε), it may have been a property issue. And in light of the metaphor of 'inheriting the kingdom of God' in *1 Cor* 6.9, it may have had to do with cases of inheritance specifically: so Peppard 2014. For a defence of *1 Corinthians* 6.1–11 as pertaining to sexual immorality, see Richardson 1983.

178 On the connection between idolatry and fornication, see Derrett 1991, 34; Barton 2007 (also on food rules); Fitzmyer 2008, 255. Gaca (2003, 138) even holds that Paul 'considers sexual intercourse in honour of other gods to be worse than nonsexual aspects of other-theistic worship or idolatry.'

179 McDonough (2005) explains the transition from driving out the immoral to difficult cases of judgement by pointing out a similar transition in *Deuteronomy* 17, from which Paul quotes explicitly (in *1 Cor* 5.13). Cf. on this transition and *Deuteronomy* 17 also Richardson 1983, 47, who also links it to the themes Paul discusses in *1 Corinthians* 7.

I would not eat' (LXX *Psalms* 100.5: τοῦτω οὐ συνήσθιον), a sentiment shared by Paul who may well have this psalm in mind when he says: 'do not even eat with such a one' (1 Cor 5.11: τῷ τοιούτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν). David, to whom this psalm is attributed, boasts about all varieties of 'getting rid of' people that exhibit any kind of immoral or lawless behaviour: they cannot be in the 'city of the Lord' (100.8).<sup>180</sup>

Moreover, Paul's advice resembles the advice of contemporary pagan moral philosophers. In order to avoid negative influence and not transforming one's behaviour due to old habits, those on their way to becoming philosophers were not supposed to mingle too much with ordinary people (ιδιώται). In an oration devoted to this theme, Epictetus warns his followers to 'flee the untrained' (φεύγετε τοὺς ιδιώτας), for they risk that until their grasp (ὑπολήψεις) is firm enough, their weak babbling about 'miserable virtue' (τὴν ἀρετὴν τὴν ταλαίπωρον) will not stand against the 'strong conviction' (ἰσχυρὸν τὸ δόγμα) of their friends.<sup>181</sup> According to Paul, the Corinthians are not that advanced and strong in their convictions and corresponding behaviour either, despite their boasting.<sup>182</sup> Such seclusive language thus fits an ethical-philosophical semantic domain.

The problem Paul perceives in Corinth is, apparently, that these very immoral 'untrustworthy' persons inside or at the borders of the community, who are brothers in name only, are judging instead of being judged. This same issue of 'judging' is now taken a step further when Paul explains that the morally depraved 'brothers in name only' are even asked to determine what is morally good amongst quarrelling brothers and sisters, who should not be going to court at all.

A word used here to describe the judges in parallel to *apistoi* is *adikoi*, 'the unjust' (1 Cor 6.1 and 9). Whereas this word is often understood to refer to pagans in general too, it is not a common Pauline designation for pagans: the only two times Paul uses the adjective as relating to people are in this passage (1 Cor 6.1 and 6.9; and in Rom 3.5 pertaining to God).<sup>183</sup> Indeed, in light of all

180 Cf. 'I have hated (3: ἐμίσησα), 'I have not known' (4: ἐγίνωσκον, 'I persecuted' (5: ἐξεδίωκον), 'I killed' (8: ἀπέκτεινον), 'in order to destroy' (8: ἐξολοθρεῦσαι). Considering these alternatives, Paul's 'do not eat' (1 Cor 5.11: τοιούτῳ μηδὲ συνεσθίειν) and 'drive out' (1 Cor 5.13: ἐξάρατε) are not quite the harshest options available.

181 Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.16.16 and 3.16.7–9. See on this theme also Konstan 1997, 113 and Eshleman 2008, 133.

182 Cf. Barton 2017, 39: 'their sociali[z]ation into the Christian way is incomplete.'

183 See e.g., on *adikoi* indicating pagans, Fitzmyer 2008, 251: 'The adjective simply describes non-Christians who are, from a Christian perspective, those who do not pursue justice or righteousness in the OT sense.'



the vices mentioned, it seems likely that by calling the judges ‘unrighteous’ and ‘faithless’ he has moral-religious offenses in mind, not the offense of being an outsider. Unlike the majority of commentators, Bruce Winter and Duncan Derrett argue for the possibility that the *adikoi* and the *apistoi* do not represent pagans in general. Winter understands both terms as referring to ‘the character of judges or the juries who pronounced verdicts in civil cases and not to non-Christians involved in secular judicial processes’ and supports this using ancient sources that confirm the immoral character of judges and juries in the period.<sup>184</sup> Derrett argues that the combination of *adikos* and *apistos* makes it clear that *adikoi* ‘include pagans, Jews, or nominal Christians whose status is uncertain under 1 Cor 5.3–5.’<sup>185</sup>

I would agree with Winter that these are deeply moral terms, not sociological designations. Yet, with Derrett I would hesitate to have both terms relate specifically to formal court-officials outside of the community. Paul in fact confirms that brothers are *adikos* too when he states (in a construction parallel to verse 6) that they ‘act unjustly and that towards brothers’ (1 Cor 6.8: ἀδικεῖτε (...) καὶ τοῦτο ἀδελφούς). By acting immorally vis-à-vis brothers, the Corinthian community members are being ‘unjust’, just as the judges who are supposed to decide between them. Thus, Alan Mitchell is right to infer from the parallelism between verses 6 and 8 that ‘the erring *adelphoi* are equated with *apistoi*’, only not in sense that he understands them to be. The brothers do not act similar to general ‘pagans’ in ‘using the legal system to their advantage’, as Mitchell reasons, but they act as untrustworthily (*apistos*) as the immoral judges they themselves appointed, by arranging unfair lawsuits to solve a case among brothers, who are now their equals in Christ.<sup>186</sup>

If the appointed judges are indeed immoral people in or on the border of the community, rather than general unbelievers, then the phrase ‘(do you) appoint as judges those held in disdain in the church(?)’ (1 Cor 6.4) also makes sense. The verb here is sometimes taken as an imperative (also in the NIV) to circumvent the problem of Paul being unlikely to have derided unknown pagan judges.<sup>187</sup> In the imperative reading, Paul admonished them to ‘appoint the people you look down upon’ among the brothers as judges. Yet, the placement of an imperative at the end of the sentence is linguistically unusual, the softer translation questionable, and for Paul to use ‘held in disdain’ for socially weaker community members is harsh, even when used in an ironical

184 Winter 1991, 563.

185 Derrett 1991, 27, n. 12.

186 See Mitchell 1993, 565.

187 Noted as problematic by e.g. Garland 2003, 206.

fashion.<sup>188</sup> The same problem is solved differently by the more benign translation of ‘those who have no standing’ (e.g. in the NRSV), while opting for a (rhetorical) question with an indicative: ‘and you even appoint those despised in/by the community as judges?’ Gordon Fee opts for this indicative reading, according to which Paul derides their choice of pagan judges, and he attempts to soften the derision by arguing that it is not the judges themselves but their pagan values and judgements that are held in disdain as a consequence of the church’s ‘totally different standards’.<sup>189</sup> Still, such a creative softening of the language is exactly what he blames the ‘imperative-side’ for, and judging pagans or ‘those outside’ is exactly what Paul just said is none of his business (1 Cor 5.12) and is at odds with his general attitude towards the authorities (Rom 13.1–5).<sup>190</sup>

I would propose a solution that avoids both the Scylla of deriding pagan judges and the Charybdis of ironically deriding low status brothers. This is accomplished by reading the phrase as an interrogatory indicative (‘do you actually appoint as judges?’) but taking ‘the derided’ to be people of questionable behaviour who are part of the Christ-community or at least socially related to core community members. Apart from explaining the harsh designation of being ‘held in disdain’, this would also allow for the verb ‘to appoint’ (καθίζω) to mean just that, and not ‘to sit in council’ as Fee suggests and which fails to explain its transitive use here.<sup>191</sup> In this reading, the judges appointed are both ‘held in disdain’ and even located ‘in the church’ (ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ),

188 I follow Fee (2014, 258–259) here, arguing in his revised commentary against Kinman (1997) and Derrett (1991, 28). BDAG indeed offers no use of ἐξουθενέω as something more benign than ‘disdain’, ‘reject disdainfully’, and ‘treat with contempt’. Fitzmyer also rejects the imperative reading (Fitzmyer 2008, 253): ‘that hardly suits this context’. Though cf. for its defence Kinman 1997, 349–350 (who does not ‘totally disregard’ this issue, as Fee claims at 258, n. 204, but offers several examples of sentences ending with an imperative).

189 Fee 2014, 260.

190 As also Winter, Kinman, and Garland point out: Winter 1991, 559; Kinman 1997, 352; Garland 2003, 206.

191 Both Fee (at 259, n. 206) and BDAG (s.v. καθίζω) refer for a parallel usage to Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.75: ‘And they requested the king to sit in council with his Friends (παρεκάλεσάν τε σὺν τοῖς φίλοις καθίσαντα τὸν βασιλέα); yet here, the active intransitive participle pertains to the king, whereas the transitive verb here is ‘they requested’ (παρεκάλεσάν). Fee responds to Kinman’s argument (at 350; and see n. 12 for a similar observance of how ‘to sit for a judgment’ does not fit this context) that it can only mean ‘to appoint’, which would lead to the weird suggestion that Paul’s addressees could appoint pagan judges.

as the problem apparently is that they should be rejected 'by the church' (1 Cor 5.13) but are instead asked to judge other church members.<sup>192</sup>

That the *adikoi* and *apistoi* judges are more or less insiders is not an improbable situation if we take the social circumstances into account. Several studies on the Corinthian correspondence have looked into the social dynamics behind the problems addressed by Paul, with quarrelling parties (1 Cor 1.10–11) separated along the lines of social status and power.<sup>193</sup> Throughout the letter, Paul admonishes the 'wise', 'powerful', 'well-born', and 'strong' among the Corinthians to stop boasting (1 Cor 1.26–29) and follow his and Christ's example in taking the role of a slave (1 Cor 9.19 and 10.33–11.1). The social divisions within this community may be at play in issues as varied as incest (1 Cor 5), eating idol meat (1 Cor 8, 10), eucharistic community meals (1 Cor 11), and community worship (1 Cor 12), and has also been applied to the situation at hand in 1 *Corinthians* 6.

Regarding this passage, Alan Mitchell argues that Paul addresses the problem that upper status people were taking lower status people to provincial Roman courts, which was not only unethical move in itself, but also threatened the community borders as it demonstrated their inability to regulate itself (by making use of the Roman right of private arbitration).<sup>194</sup> The premise of this thesis, that there were pagan Roman courts at play, is assumed rather than substantiated. But Mitchell's position concerning the high status identity of the offenders is credibly argued for.<sup>195</sup> Among other considerations, Mitchell shows that the use of *sophos* in verse 5 is an ironical play on the philosophical topos that it would be shameful (cf. 6.5: πρὸς ἐντροπήν) for a wise person to go to court in order to rectify a personal injury: in accordance with philosophical teachings, Paul holds that a wise person should instead prefer being

192 Kinman also argues for a locative meaning instead of one expressing agency, based on Paul's use of ἐν at other places, the available alternative of ὑπὸ, and the other use of ἐξουθενημένος for insiders in 1 *Corinthians* 1.28 (and we may add 1 Cor 16.11 on not despising Timothy): see Kinman 1997, 352. Lang (2018, 995–996) offers the additional argument that the verb 'to hold in disdain' (ἐξουθενέω) is also used in *Romans* 14.3,10 to indicate the process of marginalizing people in the church (which is a bad thing in Rome, but should have been done with the judges in Corinth).

193 Pioneering work was done by Meeks 1979; Theissen 1982.

194 Mitchell 1993, esp. 585–586.

195 Mitchell follows Winter in his findings on Roman litigation. Cf. Winter 1991, 561: 'Generally, lawsuits were conducted between social equals who were from the powerful (οἱ δυνάτοί) of the city, or by a plaintiff of superior social status and power against an inferior. The reason for these proscriptions was to avoid insult being given to the good name of the person concerned or concern for the lack of respect being accorded to one's patron or one's betters.'

wronged (cf. 6.7).<sup>196</sup> Apparently, Paul sneers in irony, the powerful offenders did not deem themselves (or any proper 'brother') wise enough and took their case before some of their unrighteous and untrustworthy friends, thus showing themselves to be not only unwise, but unrighteous and untrustworthy as well.<sup>197</sup>

Based on the verse that follow (vv. 9–11), there is also a religious deficit to this behaviour, as immoral behaviour prevents their inheritance of the kingdom of God. They are 'unfaithful' towards the gospel of Christ by refusing to be wronged in the first place (cf. 1 Cor 9.22–23). They do not live up to the ideal of holiness (1 Cor 6.11). All this neatly fits the interpretation of the *apistoi* in 1 *Corinthians* 6 being morally and religiously untrustworthy (near-)insiders. As I discuss in the next section, *apistia* indeed takes on even more 'religious' semantic tones in the two other passages on holiness within marriage and food sacrifices to other gods.

#### 8.4.4 *If an Apistos Is Wed to You (1 Cor 7.15) or Invites You to Dinner (1 Cor 10.27): Apistia as Polytheistic Unfaithfulness*

In 1 *Corinthians*, there are two more instances of people that are called *apistos*, people which are again almost unanimously interpreted as general 'unbelievers'. In both cases, I argue by contrast to this notion of 'general outsider', but also in (a relatively small) contrast to the meanings of 'religiously unconvinced' and 'morally untrustworthy', that Paul here negotiates a lack of exclusive commitment to the one God, in other words, polytheistic *apistia* or 'religious unfaithfulness'. According to Paul, a commitment to Christ and the one God cannot go together with being otherwise engaged in religious commitments, and therefore he addresses the questions related to the existence

196 See Mitchell 1993, 573–574. Michell refers to Musonius Rufus' oration 'Will the Philosopher Persecute Anyone for Personal Injury?' (see Lutz 2020, 49–52) and to several passages in Epictetus and Seneca: see Mitchell 1993, 573, n. 40. See esp. at p. 50: 'But the wise and sensible man, such as the philosopher ought to be, is not disturbed by any of these things. He does not think that disgrace lies in enduring them, but rather in doing them. For what does the man who submits to insult do that is wrong? It is the doer of wrong who forthwith puts himself to shame, while the sufferer, who does nothing but submit, has no reason whatever to feel shame or disgrace. Therefore, the sensible man would not go to law nor bring indictments, since he would not even consider that he had been insulted.' Garland (2003) is more sceptical than Mitchell about the convergence and prefers to uphold a strong dichotomy of 'a Christian's versus a pagan's ethic', with different 'sources': 'these parallels only reveal that some unbelievers would have understood and resonated with this ethic. They need not be the source of Paul's reflections' (at 210).

197 The 'wise' were probably those in the community with a higher social status: see Theissen 1982, 97.

of such idolatrous ties within families and close social relationships of his community members. This meaning of *pistis/apistia* belongs to the domain of power and allegiance I discussed in chapter 7 above, only now it pertains to exclusive allegiance to the highest divine power, whereby it may be considered religious vocabulary as well (cf. chapter 2).

From a ‘pagan perspective’, such an interpretation as ‘religiously unfaithful’ is feasible. The usage of *pistis* vocabulary in social-religious contexts is evidenced across Graeco-Roman authors, with an increase in the early second century (see §8.3.1 above). Plutarch used *pistis* language in combination with purity language in the context of initiation into the mysteries and faith in the afterlife. Those initiated into the mysteries ‘converse with pure and holy men (ὁσίοις καὶ καθαροῖς ἀνδράσι)’ and look down upon ‘the uninitiated (ἀμύητων), impure (ἀκάθαρτον) mob here on earth’ with people who ‘cling to their miseries out of scepticism in the blessings of the other world (ἀπιστίᾳ τῶν ἐκεῖ ἀγαθῶν)’.<sup>198</sup> Though this context is ‘religious’, and the terms all function to mark the boundaries between the initiated and the rest, the *apistia* in question is closer to the persuasive-transformative domain (their conviction about the ‘over-there’ determines their status). For *apistia* in the meaning of ‘unfaithful to a god or a specific cult’, the closest pagan parallels are found in Lucian: ‘let all such as have faith in the God (οἱ δὲ πιστεύοντες τῷ θεῷ) be initiated!’, whereby all who do not identify as such are supposed to leave at this point.<sup>199</sup> Still, for a specific connection to worshipping not merely competing divinities, but reproachable idols, excellent comparative material is found in *Wisdom*. As we saw (in §8.3.1), in this Jewish-Hellenistic work the *pistoi* are those remaining faithful to God and to the law, whereas *apistia* is a vice of questioning the one God’s intervening power, ascribed to both Jews and pagans, but originating in pagan worship of different gods. This connection between *apistia* and idolatry is important for understanding why Paul speaks of *apistoi* in the context of ‘questionable’ marriages and eating food offered to idols.

The first occurrence of *apistia* language in Paul that makes sense to understand as ‘religious unfaithfulness’ concerns the matter of marriage and divorce when wed to an *apistos* husband or wife:

To the rest I say—I and not the Lord—that if any brother has an *apistos* wife (εἴ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον), and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. And if any woman has an *apistos*

198 Plutarch, *Fragment 178* (apud Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.52.49).

199 Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet* 38.

husband (ἄνδρα ἄπιστον), and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the *apistos* husband (ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἄπιστος) is made holy (ἡγίασται) through his wife, and the *apistos* wife (ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος) is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean (ἀκάθαρτά), but as it is, they are holy. But if the *apistos* partner separates (εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται), let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife. (1 Corinthians 7.12–16)

Again, some instances of ‘brother’ are translated as ‘believer’ in the NRSV. I have adapted these, as this is unhelpful for gaining clarity about the meaning of *apistos* (which the NRSV consistently translates as ‘unbelieving/unbeliever’). Just as in the previous passage a little earlier in the same letter (1 Cor 6.1–11), there are no *pisteuontes* or *pistoi* mentioned, and that is noteworthy as this suggests that Paul is consciously choosing designations whose meaning fits the context (and not general insider-designations).<sup>200</sup> Here, Paul prefers the language of brothers and sisters (again), and this preference may be due to his desire to negotiate different family ties and different relationships that indicate unity: that between husband and wife and that between brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the literature on this specific passage, the meaning of *apistos* is commonly assumed to be that of a general outsider who has no faith in Christ, an ‘unbeliever’.<sup>201</sup> An exception is Ed Christian’s reading of *apistos* here as ‘unfaithful’ in the sense of ‘disloyal to one’s husband/wife’, which he understands as encompassing adultery but including any form of ‘spiritual unfaithfulness to the marriage covenant’.<sup>202</sup> This sense does seem to fit the context of marriage and divorce, and it is perhaps more harmonious with Jesus’s teachings on divorce (which is important to Christian), on which Paul is then seen to elaborate (cf. 1 Cor 7.10: ‘not I but the Lord’ and 1 Cor 7.12: ‘I and not the Lord’).<sup>203</sup> We also come across *pistis* in this sense in pagan sources,

200 Cf., for a different understanding of the designations used here, Morgan 2015, 236: ‘It is more likely that *adelphos/apistos* and *apistos/hagios* are to be read as complementary categories and that *apistos* means ‘outsider’ (and by implication, community members are presumably *pistoi*).’

201 Just some examples: Gillihan 2002; Garland 2003, 280; Morgan 2015, 236; Barton 2017.

202 Christian 1999, at 57.

203 See Christian 1999, 55: “‘I, not the Lord’ does not indicate a lower level of inspiration, but merely a change in attribution.’

such as when Plutarch speaks of the relationship between men and women (as opposed to men's relationships with other men or boys) as one 'distinguished from beginning to end by every sort of fidelity and zealous loyalty (πάσης πίστεως κοινωνίαν πιστῶς ἄμα).<sup>204</sup> Nevertheless, a more problematic consequence is that in this reading, Paul assumes that children might be considered impure because of one of their parents' marital unfaithfulness. Moreover, this would amount to a larger rift in the sense of instances of *apistos* than plausible in one letter: from Paul's perspective, the socially disruptive issue is *apistia* (be it unpersuadedness, ethical untrustworthiness, or religious disloyalty) vis-à-vis God and Christ.

In defence of reading *apistia* as marital infidelity, we could note that the book of *Wisdom* speaks in harsh terms about 'the children of adulterers' in a passage immediately following the occurrence of *hoi pistoi* (*Wisdom* 3.9, see §8.3.1 above) and a reappraisal of the eunuch's faithfulness, which consists of good behaviour and thought (*Wisdom* 3.14, see §8.3.1 as well):<sup>205</sup>

But the children of adulterers will not reach maturity (τέκνα δὲ μοιχῶν ἀτέλεστα ἔσται), and the offspring of unlawful intercourse (παρανόμου κοίτης) will perish. Even if they live long, they will be held of no account, and finally their old age will be without honor; if they die early, they will have no hope nor comfort on the day of decision, for the end of an unrighteous (ἀδίκου) generation is grievous. Better is childlessness with virtue (μετὰ ἀρετῆς). (*Wisdom* 3.14,16–4.1)<sup>206</sup>

In this text, the *pistoi* are the opposite of these adulterers (see §8.3.1 above), yet *pistoi* are presented as faithful in their relationship with God, not in their marriage: 'Those who trust in him (οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπ' αὐτῷ) will understand truth: and the faithful will remain with him in love (οἱ πιστοὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ προσμενοῦσιν αὐτῷ).'<sup>207</sup> Christian, however, limits the meaning of *apistos* to marital unfaithfulness, while also broadening the scope of unfaithfulness to include any lack of affection or competing 'love', which renders the idea of impure children

<sup>204</sup> Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love* 770C.

<sup>205</sup> Christian refers as proof of this reading to another Scriptural source, *Malachi* 2.14–15, where God's concern with man who forsook the wife of his youth is the 'seed' (Christian follows the NRSV in speaking of 'godly seed', yet this adjective is not in the LXX).

<sup>206</sup> The text continues on the theme of the glory of the righteous and the miserable fate of the children of the unrighteous until 4.6.

<sup>207</sup> *Wisdom* 3.9, see §8.3.1 above.

even less fitting.<sup>208</sup> Moreover, in *Wisdom*, adulterers are but one variety of the *typos* of the ungodly (3.10; 4.3,16: ἀσεβής) and the unrighteous (3.16,19; 4.16: ἄδικος). As we saw (in §8.4.3), just like the author of *Wisdom*, Paul also mentions whole lists of vices in the context of these specific admonitions. Hence, if this text from *Wisdom* is taken into account when reading Paul's advice, it makes more sense to read *apistos* along the lines of 'ungodly' and 'unrighteous' as partaking in this wider ethical-religious domain as well.

One strength of this 'unfaithful to God' interpretation that I have opted for is that it offers a more coherent reading of the *apistos* designations, for we just saw that in 1 *Corinthians* 6.6, there are also good reasons for understanding the term ethically.<sup>209</sup> The issue then is not that these husbands and wives did not believe in Christ, but that their behaviour was seen as potentially interfering with the holiness of the righteous and faithful partner and their children. Still, this does not quite explain Paul's solution: the unfaithful may be sanctified (1 Cor 7.14: ἡγιάσται) by or in the faithful partner. As Teresa Morgan reasons, even though there are 'Septuagintal' parallels for an ethical interpretation, this 'would put Paul in the unparalleled position of arguing that the virtue of one person makes up for the vice of another'.<sup>210</sup> In response, it is important to note here that the context not only offers markers belonging to the ethical semantic domain, but also those indicating religious-cultic fields of meaning: I refer in particular to the verb 'to make holy' and the adjectives 'impure' and 'holy' (1 Cor 7.14: ἀγιάζω, ἀκάθαρτά, and ἅγια). These suggest that it is not so much one person's *virtue* as it is one person's *holiness* that makes up for another's religious *apistia*.

The religious dimension (related to polytheism) of holiness language is acknowledged in several in-depth scholarly analysis of this passage.<sup>211</sup> In an

208 See Christian 1999, 57, i.a.: 'If a husband's real love is sports, his pals, or his career, he is unfaithful to his marriage oath.'

209 Christian does not exploit such a continuity in usage, much the opposite (1999, 53–54): 'Beyond doubt the verse "be not unequally yoked with unbelievers [*apistois*]" (2 Cor 6.14) is correctly translated. I would suggest, though, that the translation of this verse has affected the translation of *apistos* in 1 Cor 7.'

210 Morgan 2015, 236.

211 Kathy Gaca highlights the polytheistic danger of mixed marriages: '[B]ecause the couples were gentiles at the time they wed, ancestral gods recognized their marriage and any childbearing done so far. These domestic partnerships remain at risk, for one spouse in each couple remains polytheistic and may teach his or her children to carry on this tradition. (...) their marriages are not yet fully genuine to Paul's mind, infiltrated as their sexual and domestic life still is by other gods of sex, birth, the household, and the public sphere.' (Gaca 2003, 147) The 'infiltration' of polytheism within households is thus not



article on the role of sanctification in fostering group identity in *1 Corinthians*, Stephen Barton points out that both sexual immorality (an issue in *1 Cor* 5–7) and eating idol-meat (an issue in *1 Cor* 8–10) ‘have to do with the body—individual, corporate, and even cosmic—and both are boundary-marking issues.’<sup>212</sup> Thus, Paul also writes extensively about marital relationships in this context, as ‘oneness through the Spirit with Christ is placing other kinds of oneness in question, even the oneness of marriage partners.’<sup>213</sup> Barton deals extensively with the prohibitions against mixing certain levels of purity based on the Holiness code in *Leviticus*, yet also notes that in contrast to popular pagan conceptions of Jews, ‘there is no universal prohibition in the Torah on Jewish intermarriage with gentiles’, only prohibitions concerning the Canaanite nations to prevent the Israelites from joining these nations in idolatry.<sup>214</sup> In the later literature of *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Malachi*, *4QMMT*, and *Jubilees*, however, the prohibition is extended to all gentiles, for the ‘novel reason that marital union with a gentile profanes (that is, renders nonholy) the holy seed.’<sup>215</sup> In light of the diversity in the tradition and in these interpretations of Paul’s Jewish contemporaries, it is indeed understandable that questions concerning certain ‘mixed’ marriages arose in Corinth—not necessarily mixed in the sense of insider-outsider marriages, but also mixed in levels of purity.<sup>216</sup> Could *apistos* in this context refer to one who is religiously in an unholy state, because of involvement with the pagan divinities of the city?

Unfortunately, Barton does not question the interpretation of *apistos* in *1 Corinthians* 7 as ‘unbelieving outsider’, yet he helpfully notes that ‘in a social-scientific perspective, one of the ways of establishing and sustaining group identity is by the marking out of boundary-lines separating and distinguishing insider from outsider or even insider from insider.’<sup>217</sup> So, if we follow his lead and apply his findings to an insider-reading of *apistoi*, what does this look like? In light of contemporary discussions on purity and proper marriage matches, it would make sense that Paul is concerned with a union between one who is ‘pure’ and another who is ‘unfaithful’ in an ethical sense, but even more so if

---

easily overestimated. Nevertheless, Gaca understands a mixed marriage as one between a full-fledged ‘Christian’ and a full-fledged ‘gentile’ whom Paul hopes to ‘convert’ through the Christian’s efforts, whereas I would picture the religious landscape as a little less black-and-white (as I explain below).

212 Barton 2017, 42.

213 Barton 2017, 50.

214 Barton 2017, 45, following Hayes 2002, 24–25.

215 Hayes 2002, 10.

216 On Paul’s advice as halakhic interpretation, see Gillihan 2002.

217 Barton 2017, 43–44.

we understand this unfaithfulness in a religious sense. In this reading, one of the partners is unfaithful to the One God because of idolatrous involvement with other divinities, threatening the community's religious unity. Paul then deals with the Corinthian fear that the idolatrous behaviour of one *apistos* parent will affect the purity of the community's children.

The Corinthian fear for impurity within certain mixed marriages may have been prompted by Paul's own teachings. If the passage I will discuss below (2 Cor 6.11–7.1, see §8.4.5) belonged to a letter that was sent earlier, with the strong emphasis on purity and not mixing with *apistoi*, it may have led to questions on proper marriages (even though this text seems to pertain to the issue of religious loyalty, just as this text, as I will explain).<sup>218</sup> But in *1 Corinthians*, language of purity and holiness also abounds. According to Paul's logic in the preceding passage on *porneia*, two bodies form a unity (1 Cor 6.16), which might defile a body that is also a member of Christ and the temple of God's Spirit (1 Cor 6.15,19). For Paul, however, holiness and moral righteousness go hand in hand, and for that reason this whole argument on the children's impurity seems 'unpauline':

The relationship between impurity and holiness here is strikingly different from that found in other Pauline passages, where 'impurity' (ἀκαθαρσία) is a species of immoral activity, while 'holiness' (ἀγιασμός, ἁγιωσύνη) is manifested in activity that is moral and pleasing to God. There is no hint of a moral judgment of the children in Paul's claim that they are holy instead of impure. Rather, their holiness is a status that the children attain solely on the basis of their parents' sanctification. (Gillihan 2002, 715)<sup>219</sup>

Seen in this light, the whole logic of how the purity of the children was related to both their parents' holiness may have come from Corinthians or some of their 'purity-teachers', who may have insisted on separation and abstinence

218 See Gillihan 2002, 728. And cf. Barton 2017, 52, n. 33: 'Expressing a sectarian, almost Qumran-style ethic, we find here a classic example of holiness as avoidance and separation, with idolatry and 'every defilement of body and spirit' key symbolic foci.' In 2 *Corinthians* 6.11–7.1, however, as we argue below, this is very much related to immoral and idolatrous behaviour.

219 Gillihan (at n. 11) refers to *1 Thessalonians* 4.7; *2 Corinthians* 6.17, 7.1, 12.21; *Romans* 1.24, 6.19; *Galatians* 5.19; *1 Thessalonians* 2.3, and also to *Colossians* 3.5; *Ephesians* 4.19, 5.3, 5.5, *Revelation* 17.4.

between the faithful and the unfaithful.<sup>220</sup> This may well be the same people who wrote ‘it is good for a man not to touch a woman’ (to avoid sexual immorality), a statement which Paul countered by arguing that it is precisely because of sexual immorality that marriage exists (1 Cor 7.1–2). In reply to their concern for the purity of the children born from a union with an ethically-religiously unfaithful partner, Paul seems to draw from *Exodus* and *Leviticus* the idea that holiness may be transferred and the feared impurity of children averted.<sup>221</sup> He thus manages to uphold marital unity by making use of arguments in their own terms that would convince the Corinthian ‘purity party’.

In Paul’s logic of sanctification, the unfaithful spouses are thereby not quite ‘saved’ as of yet (1 Cor 7.16), but that does not mean that they remain complete outsiders. Being ‘saved’ would amount to being ‘in Christ’, yet these *apistoi* are somehow sanctified and—as is important to my argument in this chapter—socially belong to the community through their holy spouses.<sup>222</sup> The *apistos* of 1 *Corinthians* 7 is therefore not an unbelieving outsider, but an unfaithful polytheistic insider. Paul is able to allow this exception here (in contrast to his harshness on insiders in 1 Cor 5.9–13 and 2 Cor 6.11–7.1) because 1) these marriages are already a ‘given’ and staying together is therefore usually the most ‘peaceful’ option, also for the community as a whole (cf. 1 Cor 7.15), and 2) the problem of immorality and idolatry is solved by the transference of the holiness from the faithful spouse (1 Cor 7.14). This way, Paul negotiates the unity of the household, a fundamental building block of his communities and a sign of holiness in itself, while preserving the holiness of the Christ community.<sup>223</sup>

220 Cf. Barton 2017, 52: ‘what Paul appears to be engaging with is (what we may call) a rigorous, probably Jewish-Christian, ‘purity party’ advocating separation from any potential or actual source of impurity or defilement.’

221 The idea of a transference of holiness between an object and whatever or whoever touches it can be found in *Exodus* 29.37 (on the altar); 30.29 (on the furnishes of the tabernacle); *Leviticus* 6.11 (on meal offerings); 6.20 (on sin offerings). In early rabbinic literature, these passages were interpreted so that the holiness is only transferred to things that belong there or are worthy of (later) becoming holy. See Lockshin 2013.

222 By contrast, cf. Gillihan (2002, 716) who holds that this is only the case if s/he ‘believes in Christ’: ‘the believing spouse may save the unbeliever, that is, that under the influence of the believing spouse the unbeliever will believe in Christ and enter the community.’ Gillihan thus reads ‘is sanctified’ more legally as ‘is eligible for licit marriage’ (also 716), based on Christ’s prohibition to divorce (see 730).

223 Barton explains the importance of unity for Paul by its ability to foster holiness, and shows how this is evident from Paul’s reliance on the Shema and his account of the Eucharist. See Barton 2017, 40–42, and on 1 Cor 7 specifically, 50–55, cf. his conclusion at 55: ‘The oneness of the household is important for Paul, presumably as a natural symbol of the oneness-in-holiness of the church.’

The insider-status of the *apistoi* here is not only evident from their ascribed status as ‘sanctified’ in their partners, it also makes sense according to sociological reconstructions of these newly formed Christ communities. The all-pervading influence of polytheism and the practical difficulties particularly a woman convert married to a ‘religiously unfaithful’ husband would face are explored in a helpful manner by Caroline Hodge.<sup>224</sup> She concludes that

Christian practices may have mixed and mingled with traditional worship practices without much conflict. This analysis prompts us to consider some larger issues relating to the beginnings of Christianity and its place in the Roman world. The boundaries between traditional religious practices and this newcomer, Christianity, may have been more porous and fluid than someone like Paul or Tertullian—or scholars of Christian origins—would typically conceive. (...) The kind of historical situation implied by texts like *1 Corinthians*, where Christian practices might exist along side many others in an ancient household, suggests that conversion to Christianity could happen in a piecemeal fashion, where individuals or groups might adopt aspects of Christianity and perhaps integrate these into their traditional religious forms. (Hodge 2010, 24–25)

If we follow Hodge’s reconstruction of the early Corinthian Christ-followers, we may have to consider that in the vicinity of Paul’s most earnest new ‘converts’ there were also many who did not immediately stop worshipping their ancestral divinities. An *apistos* visitor is then potentially close to becoming a more *pistos* member of the community. In that case, Paul’s boundary language of *apistoi* versus the ‘pure’ and ‘holy’ attempts to create some order in an otherwise mixed and messy community. Indeed, in line with her social insights, Hodge is one of the few who opt for translating *apistos* here as ‘untrustworthy’ or ‘unfaithful’ (and not in a marital sense) and not as a general pagan ‘unbeliever’.<sup>225</sup>

Taking a similar social-historical approach, Lang argues that in light of the power difference, it is even highly implausible that a complete outsider would allow his wife to worship Christ and stop participating in the cults of the household and city.<sup>226</sup> Or, reversely, in case of a male convert, a husband would insist on a disbelieving wife to accompany him to the Christ-community meetings. Hence, the *apistos* partner must in either case have strong social ties to

224 Hodge 2010.

225 Hodge 2010, 2, n. 5.

226 Lang 2018, 988–989.

the Christ-community. Neither of them are disbelieving outsiders in a social sense. A schematic depiction of *apistoi* in this passage would thus come closer to ‘Model A’, with *apistoi* as deviants at the borders, than ‘Model B’, with *apistoi* as general pagan outsiders (see, for both models, figure 5 at the end of §8.2.1 above).

A second passage in which I would argue that Paul is exploiting the religious potential of *apistoi* language, 1 *Corinthians* 10.27, is found in the part of the letter in which he discusses idolatry in relation to ‘eating meat’. We can be somewhat briefer with this text, as it is quite evident that the *apistos*’ idolatry is what makes the situation described here potentially hazardous for Paul’s addressees:

<sup>27</sup> If an unbeliever invites you to a meal (εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων) and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. <sup>28</sup> But if someone says to you, ‘This has been offered in sacrifice,’ (ἐάν δέ τις ὑμῖν εἴπη· τοῦτο ἱερόθυτόν ἐστιν) then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—<sup>29</sup> I mean the other’s conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else’s conscience? <sup>30</sup> If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks? (1 *Corinthians* 10.27–30)

As Paul explains, the Corinthians ought not to worry about their own ‘conscience’ or ‘moral compass’; it is ‘the other’s conscience’ that is at stake, the conscience of the ‘someone’ who reported that it is sacrificial food that is served. Yet, who is this ‘other’, this reporter or informer? And what is the identity of this *apistos* host?

This issue is caught up in general interpretations of chapters 8 and 10. One of the problems to be solved is how Paul’s rejection of eating idol meat (in 10.1–22) and his allowance for eating it (in chapter 8 and the passage above) may be reconciled. Gordon Fee argued that some of the discrepancy is solved by supposing to different settings: enjoying a festive banquet in an idol temple versus eating meat bought at markets in someone else’s home (in the passage we just quoted).<sup>227</sup> Bruce Fisk suggests that Paul allows for social gatherings in temples but rejects attendance of festivals with a ‘distinctly religious focus’ in chapter 10.<sup>228</sup> Gregory Dawes solves the puzzle rhetorically: in chapter 8, Paul

<sup>227</sup> Fee 1987, 357–363.

<sup>228</sup> Fisk 1989, 63–64.

first answers to ‘those “having knowledge” on their own grounds’, before stating his personal convictions on the matter.<sup>229</sup> For our purposes, the discrepancy need not be solved, but the cohesion of these chapters also influences the identity of the ‘other’ in 1 *Corinthians* 10.28.

Most commentators agree that the host (1 Cor 10.27) and the ‘someone’ (1 Cor 10.28) represent different people: the host is a ‘pagan outsider’ and the ‘someone’ an impaired brother or sister, similar to the brother or sister that is Paul’s concern in 1 *Corinthians* 8.11. Fitzmyer, for example, assumes a change in subject between verses 27 and 28, which explains why the informer is not the host and could not have been another guest (who could not have known about the origin of the food), but might be a slave serving in this household.<sup>230</sup> Even Lang, who is one of the very few who explicitly regards the *apistoi* as insiders to the Christ community, argues that ‘since the hypothetical informant takes the initiative to raise the issue with the Christian and since the informant’s conscience is the one in question, a fellow believer with a “weak” conscience is more likely.’<sup>231</sup> In line with Lang’s own reasoning, *apistoi* insiders would also be well aware of the potentially troublesome eating of sacrificial meat and would furthermore, in Paul’s reasoning, be in danger of seriously harming their conscience, if we take this to mean a ‘moral compass’ that may become twisted.

In this regard, we need to take a closer look at the meaning of ‘conscience’ (συνείδησις). Lang implicitly argues from the widely shared assumption that the informer’s conscience may be weakened (cf. 1 Cor 8.10) because they eat while remaining hesitant: like the ‘weak’ in *Romans* 14, they do not act out of conviction (*pistis*).<sup>232</sup> Alternatively, Gregory Dawes has argued that Paul is not worried about acting against one’s convictions here, but that he is concerned ‘that the weak may be led to take part in such sacrificial meals as a religious act; such behaviour can be described only as idolatry, pure and simple.’<sup>233</sup> This interpretation has the benefit of a more consistent interpretation of ‘conscience’ (in both 1 Cor 8.12 and 1 Cor 10.28,29) as ‘moral arbiter’: the conscience suffers from the misguided belief that participation in eating food

229 Dawes 1996, 92.

230 Fitzmyer 2008, 401.

231 Lang 2018, 991.

232 It is important not to unconsciously import Paul’s concerns in *Romans* 14 into this passage; cf. Dawes 1996, 86–91.

233 Dawes 1996, 90. Cf. at 98: ‘In particular, the behaviour of those “having knowledge” is leading the “weak” into the mistaken judgment that they may take part in cultic meals in pagan temples. Because the “weak” lack a clear conviction regarding the nonexistence of pagan gods, this action is for them an act of idolatry.’

offered to other deities is allowed for followers of Christ.<sup>234</sup> Moreover, Dawes's interpretation does justice to the context in which Paul is concerned with his addressees actually becoming idolaters (see 10.7 and 10.14). Idolatry 'pure and simple' indeed seems to be at stake here. Yet, who is this potential informer who might commit idolatry?

Mark Nanos offers a refreshing suggestion on the identity of the host and the informer. He suggests that both are not Christ-followers, but polytheist outsiders, for whose well-being Paul is concerned as he aims to please 'everyone' in order to save 'the many' (10.33). Thus, 'the impaired are not resistant to eating idol food; rather, the impaired have always eaten idol food as an act of religious significance.'<sup>235</sup> The risk involved may then be that pagan 'idolaters may fail to understand that Christ-faith makes exclusivist claims for the One God and Christ.'<sup>236</sup> This interpretation explains the term the informer uses to designate the food, *hierotuton*, a 'holy sacrifice', which is a more neutral term than what Paul uses otherwise, *eidolotuton*, 'a sacrifice to idols', which, for Paul at least, seems to imply that the deity is in fact an idol.<sup>237</sup> Moreover, Nanos notes that the most natural reading is that the 'someone' (τις) of verse 28 is similar to the subject of the preceding verse (τις ... τῶν ἀπίστων), so the host is also the informer, given the absence of 'any grammatical or contextual grounds for a change of the referent from a polytheist to a "Christ-believer" between these verses.'<sup>238</sup>

The main problem with Nanos's reading, however, is that one impaired by the eating of idol meat is described earlier (in 1 Cor 8.11) as a 'brother or sister for whom Christ died', which suggests that it is a community member. Nanos goes to great lengths to counter this objection, pleading that kinship language was flexibly used across insider boundaries in pagan and Jewish sources alike and that Paul speak in *Romans* about Christ dying for sinners (Rom 5.8).<sup>239</sup> A solution in light of my own research, however, is that instead of having 'brothers' refer to general polytheistic outsiders, it makes more sense to have *apistoi* refer to specific, uncommitted, religiously unfaithful people who lead their lives among 'the faithful' yet who include more gods than the God of Christ in

234 See Dawes 1996, 93–97, building on Gooch 1987b.

235 Nanos 2008, 190.

236 Nanos 2008, 192.

237 See Nanos 2008, 200–201, with further references at n. 60; Cf. Fitzmyer 2008, 401, who believes that a slave may have used this word stemming from the days before he or she was a follower of Christ.

238 Nanos 2008, 201.

239 Nanos 2008, 203–209.

their pantheon. Such a person is 'unfaithful' in the one contextually meaningful way: he or she is perfectly comfortable with eating meat offered to other deities and thus participating in their cult, while also partaking in the Christ community.

Apart from the argument of consistency with the *apistoi* passages discussed so far, this reading also makes excellent sense in this particular part of the letter. The context of 'concern for idolatry' confirms the meaning of *apistia* as religious unfaithfulness, in line with many Jewish sources (see §8.3.1 above) and understandable for pagans as such usage is familiar from contexts of exclusive socio-political allegiance (cf. chapter 7). Furthermore, an uncommitted frequenter of the meetings of the Christ community, such as a wealthy family member of a more committed member, is in a position both socially and financially to invite other members to a meal (10.27).<sup>240</sup> Such an *apistos* (or another *apistos* member of the household) may check whether his or her faithful friends are okay with eating 'sacred food' (10.28). And just as in 1 *Corinthians* 14 (see §8.4.2), Paul encourages the type of behaviour among the *pisteuontes* that might convince the *apistos* with many religious commitments that there is only one God worthy of worship. It would indeed damage this other person's 'moral compass' (10.28–29) if the Christ-follower would continue eating this meal while this 'other' lacks the knowledge or acknowledgement that idols do not exist or are unworthy of worship.

Both in 1 *Corinthians* 7.15 and in 10.27, then, the context offers plenty of markers to understand *apistos* as someone more specific than any pagan outsider. The problems Paul discusses and the solutions Paul proposes make excellent sense if the *apistos* person is standing with one leg in the Christ-movement and with another in a pagan lifestyle, a lifestyle Paul deems idolatrous. In each case, the solution is one aimed at turning the *apistos* into a *pistos* Christ-follower. This option, however, seems out of the question in a final passage I now turn to, in which *apistoi* are not incorporated but appear to be rejected as the ultimate 'other'.

#### 8.4.5 *Mismatched with Apistoi (2 Cor 6.14): Apistia as Disloyalty to Paul and Christ Influenced by Epicurean Teaching*

The most enigmatic and polemical passage in which *apistoi* play a part, can be found in what is now known as the second extant letter to the Christ-

<sup>240</sup> A feasible objection is that Paul explicitly tells the Corinthians not to eat with idolatrous insiders (1 Cor 5.11). In this verse, however, Paul names not only religious infidelity, but many other vices too.



community in Corinth.<sup>241</sup> I will argue that the meaning of *apistoi* of this passage draws from the same semantic domain as the passages discussed in the previous subsection (§8.4.4): they are unfaithful to Christ and the one God, and by extension also to Paul as the ambassador he understands himself to be. Just as with these other instances of *apistos*, idolatry vis-à-vis God is at stake, yet loyalty to God is now mingled with loyalty to Paul as their spiritual father. And, just as with the earlier passages, I propose that this disloyalty is not any general pagan's: for Paul, it hits too close to home. The *apistoi* are, again, those in the community's social network who remain uncommitted to the one God.

Here is the passage in question including the most relevant direct context:

We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also. Do not be mismatched with *apistoi* (Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις). For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness (τίς μετοχή δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνομία)? Or what fellowship (τίς κοινωνία) is there between light and darkness? What agreement (τίς συμφώνησις) does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a *pistos* share with an *apistos*? (ἢ τίς μερίς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου;) What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit (ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος), making holiness perfect in the fear of God. (2 *Corinthians* 6.11–7.1)

The emphasis placed here on dualism, separatism, and exclusivism does not at first sight fit the picture of Paul as the champion of accommodation (cf. 1 Cor 9.22) and inclusion (cf. §8.4.1 and chapter 3 above). These and other observations on the divergent terms used have led to several suggestions of it being an interpolation or a misplacement, or at the very least a text borrowed from

<sup>241</sup> Whether these letters indeed represent two integral letters as Paul sent them is doubtful and debated (see e.g. Mitchell 2005), but this matter need not be solved in order to answer the question at hand. The possibility of 2 *Corinthians* consisting of more than one letter does, however, account for sudden changes in tone and changing semantic domains at play.

sectarian, perhaps Qumranic circles.<sup>242</sup> Nigel Watson, for instance, argues that it is most likely non-Pauline, as Paul nowhere refers to his opponents as *apistoi*, and other *apistoi* passages (such as 1 Cor 7.12–16 and 1 Cor 10.27) ‘evince a readiness for reasonable compromise which seems to be totally lacking from the paragraph we are considering’.<sup>243</sup>

On the other hand, the arguments in favour of the passage being well placed remain quite convincing, and it is a viable route to make as much sense of the letter as possible in the shape in which it has been transmitted over the centuries.<sup>244</sup> Moreover, the connection between *apistia* and idolatry/unholiness is one that is not unique to this passage, as we already saw this combination in several Corinthian passages in the preceding subsection.<sup>245</sup> Thus, a recurrence of this combination here in fact offers an extra piece of evidence for Paul’s authorship. Yet, unlike in the passages we discussed in the previous subsection, the *apistoi* are now forcefully rejected as unclean instead of being (more or less) accepted as part of the daily social involvements of the community. Who are these *apistoi*, and why do they pose a major problem at this point?

If scholarship agrees on one thing concerning Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, it is that the letters address certain conflicts or disagreements within the

---

242 Joseph Fitzmyer argued for a Qumranic origin in an influential article (1961). More recently, Stephen Hultgren (2003) has suggested that it is ‘a piece of parenthesis that originated in a Jewish-Christian circle in Ephesus’ (39). Outi Leppä (2005) builds a case for interpolation based on precisely the *pistos-apistos* pair: ‘When the term believer is used in a way which differs from other undisputed Pauline epistles and the teaching is contradictory to Paul’s doctrine in his other letters, this suggests that this part of 2 *Corinthians* does not come from Paul at all’ (at 375). For a more complex position, cf. Furnish 1984, 375–383, who argues (at 383) in favour ‘the hypothesis that the passage is of non-Pauline composition, but was incorporated by the apostle himself as he wrote this letter.’ Furnish puts the question into perspective by deeming the section secondary in importance to the preceding and following argument (383: ‘it remains only marginally Pauline’). Peter Tomson offers a detailed comparison of this passage, in particular the dualism and inclusion of ‘daughters’, and early Jewish literature, and concludes that these two features are, respectively, somewhere in-between Qumran and the rabbis and closer to rabbinic literature (Tomson 2014, 116) and that the passage is most likely authentic as these features are ‘not at all incompatible with Paul’s letters’ (at 126). For an overview and evaluation of scholarly positions, see Nathan 2013, who finds a scholarly majority for its authenticity and integrity.

243 Watson 1993, 76–77, quote p. 77.

244 See for some arguments in favour of its genuine or (at least) fitting place: Fee 1977; Thrall 1977; Webb 1993; Starling 2013. Cf. Barnett 1997, 355: ‘Indeed, the whole paraenesis 6.14–7.1 is the end point and climax of the appeals made earlier (5.20; 6.1, 11–14).’

245 The connection between *apistia* and a lack of purity is evident from Paul’s use here of the metaphor of the temple, which also serves an important role in Paul’s identity-forming language: see Lim 2010, 203–204.

congregation (see 1 Cor 1.10), and between Paul and certain parties or members of the congregation. At the same time, opinions could hardly diverge more on the either socio-economic or ideological nature of these conflicts, and on the identity of the diverse groups and opponents involved.<sup>246</sup> As for the *apistoi* in this particular passage, roughly two identities have been argued for. They are thought to represent either the gentile pagans of the city in general or the ‘false apostles’ of chapters 10–13.<sup>247</sup> The first option appears to be the most popular among scholars and is seen as being in line with the majority of interpretations of all *apistoi* passages: Paul consistently calls pagans *apistoi*.<sup>248</sup> Arguing against the second option of *apistoi* as the false apostles, Margaret Thrall puts forth that the rival Jewish ‘superapostles’ Paul opposes in the remainder of 2 *Corinthians* are never accused of being *apistos*.<sup>249</sup> They are accused of a sophist-like attitude, esteeming only outward appearances, and even connected to Satan (2 Cor 11.14–15), but it is deemed unlikely that Paul would associate them with lawlessness and idolatry.<sup>250</sup> In order to find a way out of this dilemma, Volker Rabens argued for a ‘double entendre’: Paul’s audience probably first understood this designation as referring to all pagans of the

246 See, for instance, the five different outlines of Paul’s possible opponents in 2 *Corinthians* in Bieringer & Lambrecht 1994, 193–215. Ben Witherington (1995, 342) even counts 14 different proposals for the opponents in 2 *Corinthians*.

247 See for these positions Starling 2013, 50–51; for an overview of literature, see nn. 25 and 26. Morgan (2015, 236, n. 94) regards the *apistoi* here as outsiders and argues that ‘[w]hile it is possible in principle that Paul uses *hoi apistoi* in two different senses, and there certainly are groups with whom he does not agree, there is no compelling reason to read *hoi apistoi* as referring to insiders in this passage (the rhetoric of the rest of the passage fits outsiders better), and it is preferable to assume that Paul’s usage is consistent unless there are clear contradictions.’ Barnett also regards the *apistoi* to be outsiders, but particularly in a cultic sense (see Barnett 1997, 348–350).

248 See Furnish 1984, 361: ‘Most interpreters take this as a reference to non-Christians, as in 4.4 (...) and in 1 *Corinthians*.’ and at 372: ‘if Paul is somehow responsible for this material (even as its redactor), the application of the term unbelievers to other Christians would be against his usage everywhere else.’ Thus, Furnish’s interpretation assumes a clear-cut division between who is a Christian and who is not and is moreover heavily reliant on the other passages, where, as we have seen, there is good reason to interpret *apistos* as referring to being unfaithful in an ethical or religious sense.

249 Cf. for their Jewish identity 2 *Corinthians* 11.22. Cf. for this argument Thrall 1977, 143, arguing against Collange 1972, 305.

250 See Thrall 1977, 144. These arguments are not conclusive, though, as there exist parallels of accusing others of ‘lawlessness’ and even *apistia* in inter-Jewish polemic (see §8.3.1 *supra*) and Paul seems to do the same in *Romans* (see §8.4.1 *supra*). Cf. Rabens 2014a, 310, n. 52: ‘as they do not bow down to actual idols, one can speak of them as people who practice metaphorical idolatry.’

city, yet after hearing Paul's polemic against the false apostles, they understand it as pertaining to these insiders as well.<sup>251</sup>

Michael Goulder, by contrast, offers a third option. He builds on the connection with the false apostles, although he regards the group of *apistoi* as encompassing a wider group. Instead of the *apistoi* being general pagans or specific Jewish missionaries, he pictures them as errant 'unfaithful' Christians, arguing that *apistoi* was used in the gospels for people in vicinity to Jesus (the disciples or the masses and their weak faith) and for docetic heretics in writings of church fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch.<sup>252</sup> Moreover, he reasons, the adjective *pistos* is used here and only here as the opposite of *apistos*, and thus the terms were probably understood as talking about (un)faithfulness rather than as denoting a Christ-believing insider versus a pagan disbelieving outsider.<sup>253</sup> This indeed seems a more reasonable argument than taking the meaning of *apistoi* as a given (namely 'unbelievers') and deducing that *pistoi* therefore must mean 'believers' here.<sup>254</sup>

251 See Rabens 2014a, 308: 'with chapters 10–12 in one's memory, the fragment rhetorically [*sic*] encourages the Corinthians (by means of a double entendre) to avoid partnership with the false apostles.' The arguments for the 'first hearing' of *apistoi* as outsiders, however, appear to depend mostly on previous scholarship and the assumption that this was how the term is used elsewhere by Paul (see 298–300). Cf. for the same argument Rabens 2013. Starling also argues for a combination of these identities: the *apistoi* are pagans, but (2013, 60): 'the ψευδαπόστολοι, whilst not themselves the ones whom Paul is describing in these verses as "unbelievers" (or "Beliar" or "idols") are guilty in Paul's eyes of exactly the kind of illicit and unclean fellowship that he is condemning in vv. 14–16, and their influence is fostering rather than combating the Corinthians' captivity to the pagan mindset of the surrounding culture.'

252 See Goulder 1994, building (cf. at 53) on Collange 1972. Ignatius wrote (in *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 5.2–3): 'For what does any one profit me, if he commends me, but blasphemes my Lord, not confessing that He was [truly] possessed of a body? But he who does not acknowledge this, has in fact altogether denied Him, being enveloped in death. I have not, however, thought good to write the names of such persons, inasmuch as they are disbelievers (ὄντα ἄπιστα).' Gupta (2020b, ch. 7) also tentatively sides with a translation as 'the unfaithful' or 'the infidels'. As far as I know, the only other scholars arguing for the interpretation of the *apistoi* as faithless insiders are Lang 2018 and Regina Plunkett-Dowling (2001, 121–173), based on a reference to her dissertation in Hodge 2010, 3, n. 6.

253 See Goulder 1994, 53. Tomson (2014, 128–130) is of a similar mind when it comes to the *apistoi*'s identity as closer to the 'superapostles', yet also distinct, reasoning that, just as earlier in the letter (2 Cor 4.4), they are most likely fellow Jews who are 'blind' to the message of Christ, as inner-Jewish, particularly Qumranic, polemic also includes accusations of factual or metaphorical 'idolatry' and lawlessness.

254 Cf. Furnish 1984, 362: 'Elsewhere in the letter of certain Pauline authorship the adjective *pistos* means "worthy of belief" or "faithful," but here, where it is contrasted with *apistos* (unbeliever), it must mean "one who believes."

It is on this third option of the *apistoi* being deviants that I elaborate in this subsection, by affirming (in line with the other *apistos* passages I discussed) that they are individuals in close proximity to the Corinthian community (or even members), not restricted to the Jewish ‘superapostles’ (though they may overlap in some characteristics), and suggesting that these Corinthian *apistoi* were influenced by Epicurean ideas. Their closeness and their resulting ability to influence the Christ-community with rival teachings is reason enough for Paul to emphasize social boundaries by ‘othering’ these unfaithful deviants.

One reason to question the interpretation that the *apistoi* are general Corinthian polytheists is that *apistoi* was not a known general outsider-designation prior to Paul (see §8.3.1), and the term only occurs in his letters to the Corinthians. As we saw, according to Trebilco, the negative designation is ‘a new and innovative use of language’ as the centrality of the notion of faith ‘created its own logical opposite’ and this opposite incorporated all outsiders ‘almost by definition.’<sup>255</sup> Trebilco argues that it was first and only used by Paul in his letters to the Corinthians, because Paul is ‘of the view that the Corinthians are involved in the surrounding culture in unhelpful ways.’<sup>256</sup> The two observations, that *apistoi* was not used as a general outsider-designation prior to Paul, and that it only occurs in *1 and 2 Corinthians*, may, however, lead one to a different conclusion. We must ask ourselves if it is likely that Paul’s audience understood this ‘innovation’ as referring to all outsiders and, moreover, if the usage of the *apistia* word group actually was such a novelty, in view of the interphilosophical discourses set out in §8.3.3 and §8.3.4.<sup>257</sup> As I argue here, the problem is not unhealthy involvement in ‘surrounding culture’, but instead the *apistoi* were unhealthily involved in the Christ-community.

A second reason to question whether *apistoi* refers to general outsiders is the fact that Paul’s attitude towards general non-members is neutral or sometimes even inclusive.<sup>258</sup> The general non-members are the potential gain, the potential *pisteuontes*, for the gospel is meant to reach ‘all’ (see §8.4.1 and §8.4.2).<sup>259</sup> At the same time, and as I already pointed out (see §8.4.3), Paul’s attitude towards those that claim insider-status is considerably more severe.

255 Trebilco 2012, 83.

256 Trebilco 2012, 85.

257 Pagan outsiders are elsewhere described by Paul in more cognitive terms, as people who ‘suppress the truth’ (Rom 1.18), who ‘became futile in their thinking’ (Rom 1.21) or who ‘did not see fit to acknowledge God’ (Rom 1.28). See Van Kooten 2010a, esp. 403–407.

258 If we take the ‘weak’ in *1 Corinthians* 8.7–11 as polytheistic non-members, Paul goes to even greater lengths to win outsiders for his gospel: see Nanos 2008.

259 Cf. *1 Corinthians* 9.22b, ‘I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some’, and *1 Corinthians* 10.33.

In *1 Corinthians* 5.9–13, those who call themselves brothers yet act immorally or worship other gods are subject to a harsh judgement, whereas Paul explicitly withholds his judgement on ‘those outside’. Thus, to read his polemic against idolatry and lawlessness in *2 Corinthians* 6 as pertaining to outsiders would leave us with a contradiction to solve. In fact, the call to ‘drive out the wicked’ (1 Cor 5.13) echoes a similar separatist tone that we find in the *apistoi*-passage I focus on in this subsection: ‘therefore come out from them, and be separate from them’ (2 Cor 6.17). The movement is reversed (‘drive out’ versus ‘come out’), but the sentiment is quite similar, which points to the conclusion of *apistoi* being at least close to insiders. Furthermore, this passage confirms that Paul believed there were idolaters ‘who call themselves brother or sister’.

Thirdly, the words used in *2 Corinthians* 6.11–7.1 to question the match of *pistoi* and *apistoi*—‘unequally yoked’ (ἑτεροζυγοῦντες),<sup>260</sup> ‘sharing’ (μετοχή), ‘fellowship’ (κοινωνία), ‘harmony’ (συμφώνησις), and ‘agreement’ (συγκατάθεσις)—seem to denote a close relationship.<sup>261</sup> They suggest that the problematic relation concerns a mismatch at the borders: either inside the congregation or at the very least with specific outsiders in its vicinity, such as family members, patrons, or neighbours. In some other occurrences of the term, the *apistoi* are also evidently neighbours of the community members (1 Cor 6.6, 1 Cor 7.15, 1 Cor 10.27; see §8.4.3 and §8.4.4), and as we saw, it was either their idolatry or their ethical transgressions (probably a complex mixture of those) that made the close relationship problematic.<sup>262</sup>

Fourthly and finally, the immediate context of the passage suggests that what is at stake is a conflict of loyalty: will they turn out to be faithful, *pistos*, or faithless, *apistos*, to Paul’s teaching and ultimately to Christ? This theme of loyalty to Paul’s ‘ministry of the Spirit’ was an issue earlier in the letter, in the context of the one other occurrence of *apistoi* in *2 Corinthians* (cf. 2 Cor 3.8 and 2 Cor 4.4, see §8.4.2). Similarly, here, in *2 Corinthians* 6–7, just before and immediately after the digression, Paul emphatically begs them to open up their hearts to him, presenting himself as their affectionate father.<sup>263</sup> The ‘digression’, then, is probably not digressing too much from this theme of

260 A practice forbidden in *Deuteronomy* 22.10.

261 Possibly, ‘unequally yoked’ (ἑτεροζυγοῦντες) is a variation upon being ‘fellow-worker’ (Phil 4.3: σύζυγος); cf. Fee 1977, 475, n. 3, followed by Goulder (1994, 54, n. 10).

262 Goulder (1994, 50–51) even argues that the similarity of *2 Corinthians* 6 with *1 Corinthians* 8 and 10 is so great that idol-meat is what Paul has in mind in *2 Corinthians* 6.

263 *2 Corinthians* 6.12–13: ‘There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.’ This theme is taken up again in *2 Corinthians* 7.2. Cf. *1 Corinthians* 4.14–15 on Paul as a father to the Corinthians.

personal allegiance to Paul and his message.<sup>264</sup> In Paul's reasoning, winning back those who seem to have forgotten their position as his children means them breaking certain other allegiances with so-called brothers and sisters who adhere to surrogate-fathers and surrogate-gods, not allegiances with all outsiders in general.<sup>265</sup>

The question remains what exactly the unfaithfulness of these 'deviants' consists of. Thomas Stegman suggests that Paul may be referring to opposition that arose from the conflict over money, or over the punishment of a recalcitrant member (2 Cor 2.6), or because of interloping missionaries: in all these cases, the translation of the pair *pistos-apistos* as 'faithful'-'unfaithful' does greater justice to these circumstances than the translation of 'believer'-'unbeliever'.<sup>266</sup> There are some clues in the Corinthian correspondence, however, that suggest that Paul thought the Corinthians needed to distance themselves from the teachings of competing philosophies. Even though the dualistic language used in this passage seems 'religious' (or even 'Qumranic') on first sight, the social relationships from philosophers with those 'outside' of their way of live, could also easily be drawn in terms of 'purity'. As Epictetus advises,

avoid entertainments given by outsiders and by persons ignorant of philosophy (τάς ἔξω καὶ ἰδιωτικὰς); but if an appropriate occasion arises for you to attend, be on the alert to avoid lapsing into the behaviour of such laymen (εἰς ἰδιωτισμόν). For you may rest assured, that, if a man's companion be dirty (μεμολυσμένος), the person who keeps close company with him must of necessity get a share of his dirt (συμμολύνεσθαι), even though he himself happens to be clean (καθαρός). (Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 33.6)

Just like Epictetus, Paul did not consider the contexts of feasts and meals risk-free either, as we already saw in the previous subsection (on 1 Cor 10.27). Even if *apistoi* were thought of primarily as religious idolaters by Paul, the capacity of

264 This passage is customarily seen as an ethical digression in the letter, with the pointed style and adversarial language as distinctive features of the epideictic genre of the diatribe. See MacCant 1999, 64; Witherington III 1995, 402. On the features of a digression cf. Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 4.3.9.

265 O'Connor (1987, 272–275) points at the striking parallel in *Deuteronomy* 10.16, where the same phrase of 'letting one's heart be open' is combined with a warning of idolatry (LXX: πρόσεχε σεαυτῷ, μὴ πλατυνθῆ ἡ καρδιά σου καὶ παραβῆτε καὶ λατρεύσητε θεοὶς ἑτέροις καὶ προσκυνήσητε αὐτοῖς).

266 Stegman 2005, 367–369: 'Excursus: Paul's Use of πιστ-Cognates in 2 *Corinthians* 6.14–15'.

outsiders to confer ‘impure’ behaviour fits a philosophical milieu just as well. Again, the religious and the philosophical are intertwined. And perhaps Paul is troubled by both religious concerns for idolatry and philosophical concerns for wayward teachings here. In particular, in the remainder of this subsection, I explore the idea that Paul’s *apistoi* are adherents to the competing school of Epicureanism.

If we take the extant Corinthian correspondence as a whole into account, it can indeed be argued that a substantial part of the views Paul opposes in these letters can be consistently understood from an Epicurean perspective. This suggestion was first made by Norman DeWitt and by Abraham Malherbe, and was developed in the latter’s footsteps by Benjamin Fiore and Graham Tomlin in the 1990s, but seems to have been overlooked ever since.<sup>267</sup> If we notice these anti-Epicurean remarks in the letters to the Corinthians, it seems not too wild a guess that the reason for Paul to sharply define the faithful-unfaithful divide is that there are traces of an elite Epicurean philosophy on the doorstep of the congregation.<sup>268</sup> As we have seen (in §8.3.3 above), anti-Epicurean polemic is a major discourse when it comes to the use of *apistia* language in Paul’s age. Moreover, *pistis* in the sense of a ‘trustworthy confidence’ was celebrated in Epicurean thought as well (see §5.3.4 above), allowing for an ironic undertone to the label of *apistoi*.

But the suggestion that Paul is opposing the lure of Epicurean teachings can be made more plausible by reviewing some areas of critique that Paul shares with contemporary anti-Epicurean polemic (on which, see §8.3.3–4). I review the following topoi: (1) the focus on sensation, pleasure, the flesh, and the belly; (2) their claim to knowledge related to freedom from cultic and mythical

267 See DeWitt 1954b, 106–166 (on 1 Cor); Malherbe 1968 (on 1 Cor 15); Malherbe 2014a (on 1 Thess, first published in 1999); Fiore 1990; Tomlin 1998. Malherbe concludes (2014a, 375): ‘Paul uses formulations that to his readers may very well have sounded anti-Epicurean.’ Fiore remarks (at 142): ‘perhaps Paul, writing to the fledgling community at Corinth and finding many of the same problems of attitude and practice against which Plutarch writes, has also found it necessary to confront Epicurean influence. This influence could well have turned his teachings on freedom into the self-centred hedonism in some segments of the Corinthian community.’

268 A first question that may be posed here is whether it would be likely that Epicureanism was a factor to be reckoned with in Corinth. The city of Corinth was refounded as a Roman colony in 44 BC. Tomlin (1998, 54) argues that, since Epicureanism was the most popular philosophy in Rome at that time, it would have been likely that the writings of Epicurus and Lucretius became part of the Italian colonists’ identity, and that their importance as elite identity markers grew when the Hellenization of the first century AD set in. The strategy Paul opts for is then to cite from their own revered tradition, to unmask its incompatibility with the Jewish scripture and Paul’s own teachings on Christ.



religion; (3) their denial of an afterlife; and (4) their aversion to social-political participation.

The main epistemological claim associated with Epicureanism was their teaching that all sense-impressions are true, even if they are contradictory. We have seen how this claim was ridiculed by Academics and Stoics alike (in §8.3.3). In 2 *Corinthians*, Paul relativizes visual sense-perception: we are said to ‘look at what cannot be seen, for what can be seen is temporary’ (2 Cor 4.18).<sup>269</sup> A similar pattern occurs with regard to the Epicurean focus on pleasures of the flesh.<sup>270</sup> One of their slogans, as recorded by Plutarch, is ‘you need but have sensation (αἴσθησιν ἔχειν δεῖ) and be made of flesh (καὶ σάρκινον εἶναι), and sense will present pleasure to you as good (φανεῖται ἡδονὴ ἀγαθόν)’.<sup>271</sup> Plutarch even accuses Epicureans of laying ‘the contemplative part of the soul flat in the body and [using] the appetites of the flesh as leaden weights to hold it down.’<sup>272</sup> This is remarkably in tune with the anthropological categorization of Corinthians as ‘*sarkikoi*’, fleshly (1 Cor 3.1.3). Throughout the letter, Paul avails himself of a tripartite anthropology, dividing humans in *pneumatikoi*, *psychikoi*, and *sarkikoi*, in accordance with the part of the soul that prevails in their lifestyle.<sup>273</sup>

Because of their emphasis on bodily pleasure as the highest end, Epicureans earned a reputation for being intemperate hedonists.<sup>274</sup> Their opponents contrasted pleasure with virtue, deeming all emotion and particularly pleasure an ‘untrustworthy juror’ (ἄπιστος ὁ δικαστής).<sup>275</sup> Epicurus taught that the absence of pain in itself was pleasurable and freedom from anxiety the ultimate aim.<sup>276</sup> From this perspective, it is noteworthy that throughout 1 and 2 *Corinthians* Paul emphasizes his own anxiety and pain as something worth

269 And cf. our discussion of 2 *Corinthians* 5,6 (‘walk by faith not by sight’) in §4.4.3 above.

270 The Epicurean position is repeatedly summarized by Plutarch by the phrase ‘the stable condition of the flesh (ἀπάσης τὴν σαρκὸς εὐστάθειαν) is the source of all delight’ (Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1089D and 1090A). This stable condition is hence ridiculed for its actual frailty, vulnerability, and morbidity (1090B: τὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐπιτηρον καὶ πολυβλαβὲς καὶ νοσῶδες).

271 Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 1122D.

272 Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1096C. The prevalence of the body and the flesh over the psyche is repeatedly criticized by Plutarch: see also *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1091C, 1096D; *Reply to Colotes* 1125A.

273 We find similar tripartite structures in Philo. For an elaborate survey of types of man and a tripartite structure of the soul in Philo and Paul, see Van Kooten 2008, esp. chapter 5.

274 Cf. e.g., Seneca, *On the Happy Life* 12–13.

275 See Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations* 33.1–2.

276 Cf. O’Keefe 2010, 117.

boasting about.<sup>277</sup> In one of Plutarch's refutations of Epicurean thinking, their position on the ultimate good is mockingly described as belly-centred (περι γαστέρα):

They believe that the good is found in the belly (περι γαστέρα τὰγαθὸν εἶναι) and all other passages of the flesh (τοὺς ἄλλους πόρους τῆς σαρκὸς ἅπαντας) through which pleasure and non-pain make their entrance, and that all the notable and brilliant inventions of civilization were devised for this belly-centred pleasure (τῆς περι γαστέρα ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα). (Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 1087D)

A similar mockery of the exultation of 'the belly' can be discerned in *1 Corinthians* 5–6, where Paul inveighs against diverse kinds of intemperate passion, including greed and drunkenness.<sup>278</sup> He quotes and dismisses several maxims (either general, cultural slogans or slogans used by the Corinthians to bolster their argument), including the conviction that 'food is meant for the stomach (τὰ βρώματα τῇ κοιλίᾳ) and the stomach for food' (1 Cor 6.13a).<sup>279</sup>

Strangely enough, to Paul, the pleasure-seeking attitude is apparently somehow related to the theme of God destructing and resurrecting. The reason for this becomes clear near the end of the letter, when Paul speaks to those in Corinth that deny the resurrection of the dead and 'hope in Christ only for this life' (1 Cor 15.19). Even though this thought has often been interpreted as a sign of an over-realized eschatology, the denial of any form of afterlife was also another main characteristic of the Epicurean school.<sup>280</sup> This connection

277 E.g., *2 Corinthians* 6.4–5, *2 Corinthians* 11.23–30.

278 *1 Corinthians* 5.10 and 6.10 both mention πλεονέκται and μέθυσοι. For an extensive discussion of *1 Corinthians* 5 and 6 in light of Plutarch's anti-Epicurean writings, see Fiore 1990. For the 'belly-topos' and anti-Epicurean rhetoric as a background for understanding Paul's belly-language, see Sandnes 2002, esp. chapter 10, 'the Corinthian belly'.

279 Denny Burk (2008, 112) argues based on the pattern of the diatribe in this passage that it is likely that not only verse 12 and 13 but also verse 18 contain quoted material and that they were ascribed to real, rather than imaginary, Corinthian interlocutors. For instead of using a rhetorical question to formulate an imagined objection, as in verse 15b, the objections are shaped as slogans. See, for a similar argument, Murphy-O'Connor 1978; Watson & Culy 2018 (chapter 6). Cf. for a more sceptical view of Corinthian slogans, Robinson 2018.

280 Cf. the Epicurean maxim 'death is nothing to us'. Closely associated to the denial of the existence of an afterlife was the Epicurean denial of a divine judgement preceding the afterlife, which would provide another reason to fear death and cause anxiety. Therefore, it may not be entirely accidental that in *1 Corinthians* 5 Christ is presented precisely as a judge, before whom all must appear 'so that each may receive recompense for what has

explains why in the midst of his plea on the resurrection, Paul again ridicules the Epicurean focus on pleasure by citing *Isaiah* (at 1 Cor 15.32): ‘If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”’,<sup>281</sup>

And there is yet another allusion to Epicureanism in 1 *Corinthians* 15. The argument ends with the words ‘for some people have no knowledge of God’ (1 Cor 15.34). At first glance this sounds like a normal lamentation. In the context of the *Corinthian* letters, however, it becomes a derision. Earlier in this letter, it was exactly the boastful and puffed-up knowledge of some Corinthians that bothered Paul, for it was the ‘puffed-up knowledge’ that ‘no idol in the world really exists’ which led to indifference towards idolatry (see 1 Cor 8.1–4a). It is easy to imagine how members of the Corinthian community could have had no difficulty dining in the Corinthian temples or eating sacrificial food, for they were well versed in the ‘true nature of things.’<sup>282</sup> If, according to Epicurean teaching, all consists of void and atoms, and if the mythical gods do not really exist, then there is no need to worry about committing idolatry.

Related to the Epicurean desire to avoid anxiety was their advice to avoid being caught up with matters of state and society.<sup>283</sup> This somewhat ‘asocial’ inclination to lead a hidden life was also heavily criticized in interphilosophical polemic. In 1 *Corinthians*, Paul explicitly distances himself from this tendency by correcting the manner in which his moral teachings were explained: ‘not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world’ (1 Cor 5.10). Apart from the rejection of a withdrawal from public life, the characterization of the so-called brothers and sister as drunkards and idolaters here is noteworthy. It fits the picture of pleasure-seeking adherents of the Epicurean school, who, because of their superior knowledge, had no issue with worshipping in the city’s temples.

---

been done in the body, whether good or evil’ (2 Cor 5.10). On the idea of divine judgment in Epicurean thought and in *Acts*, see Neyrey 1990.

281 Cf. Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes* 1125D: ‘So we are not called upon to be saviours of the Greeks or to receive from them any crown for wisdom, but to eat and drink (ἀλλ’ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν), my dear Timocrates, in a way that will do the flesh no hurt and gratify it.’ It is this passage in 1 *Corinthians* that Abraham Malherbe marks as evidence of anti-Epicureanism, explaining the preceding participle ἐθηριομάχησα as a reference to his Epicurean opponents who were often characterized as beast in the interphilosophical discourse. See Malherbe 1968 (reprinted in 2014b). Cf. a similar argument emphasizing the resurrection in 2 *Corinthians* 4.14.

282 In Lucretius’s poetic pamphlet of Epicurean doctrine, we find several references to the liberating function of study: e.g. 3.1071–1075, 5.43–54. See Tomlin 1998, 55, n. 16.

283 Cf. O’Keefe 2010, 145.

Even though each potential reference by Paul to Epicurean thought in and of itself may be explained from different angles, together these allusions form a cohesive front for Paul to inveigh against. Whereas the *apistoi* may have represented quite neutral, not-yet-persuaded neighbours in some contexts of these letters (see §8.4.2), and slightly riskier, unfaithful idolatrous relatives in others (see §8.4.3), it is in 2 *Corinthians* 6 that Paul takes a full-fledged polemical stance, as the Epicurean ‘cultic freedom’ has become an insider-issue. In his eyes, the *apistoi*’s freedom is merely a cover for idolatrous and immoral behaviour and consists of *apistia*, disloyalty, to the one God. In fact, Paul’s approach in appropriating true freedom (1 Cor 9.1, 19) and knowledge (1 Cor 8.1, 15:34) can be fairly accurately described using the words of his contemporary Seneca, who gives an account for his use of Epicurean maxims:

There is no reason why you should hold that these words belong to Epicurus alone; they are public property. (...) So I am all the more glad to repeat the distinguished words of Epicurus, in order that I may prove to those who have recourse to him through a bad motive, thinking that they will have in him a screen for their own vices, that they must live honourably, no matter what school they follow. (Seneca, *Epistles* 21.9)

Paul accuses his addressees of exactly the same disorder: they use their ‘knowledge’, their *gnōsis*, as an excuse to lead an immoral or impure life. As Plutarch accused the Epicureans of ‘recommending a practise unworthy the name of wisdom (οὐθὲν ἄξιον σοφίας)’, Paul derides the Corinthians that boast in ‘human wisdom’ (1 Cor 2.5: σοφία ἀνθρώπων, see §5.4.2 above). And what better treatment than to counter and ridicule their behaviour, slogan by slogan?

If it is indeed so that Paul vehemently opposed Epicurean influences in his congregations by deeming its adherents *apistoi*, the passage from Lucian we already encountered (see §4.2.2 and §8.3.1 above) can only evoke a sense of irony: ‘If there be any atheist or Christian or Epicurean (τις ἄθεος ἢ Χριστιανὸς ἢ Ἐπικούρειος) spying here upon our rites, let him depart in haste!’ The way in which Christians and Epicureans are lumped together with atheists here provides food for thought.<sup>284</sup> For what could have been on Paul’s mind when he sharply distinguished between his own and Epicurean teaching? From an outsider’s point of view, the critique of the Pauline movement of handmade

<sup>284</sup> Cf. also Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet* 25: ‘It was now that he resorted to a measure of intimidation; he proclaimed that Pontus was overrun with atheists and Christians, who presumed to spread the most scandalous reports concerning him; he exhorted Pontus, as it valued the God’s favour, to stone these men.’

temples and worship of handmade, speechless images (1 Cor 12.2: τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα) may have resonated with Epicurean criticism of traditional worship.<sup>285</sup> Moreover, just like the Pauline communities, the Epicurean ones were known for their inclusion of slaves and females, the deification of their founder, and their active evangelism to show others the rational route to salvation.<sup>286</sup> Perhaps, then, Paul was driven not only by a concern for doctrinal and ethical purity, but also by a social concern for being seen as an Epicurean and of being rejected like Epicureans were—a concern that, from this perspective, proves not at all unjustified.

## 8.5 Conclusion

With this final semantic domain of *pistis*, we have come full circle. We have seen that with the coming of the early Christian movement, there was a major increase in the usage of *pistis* and its derivatives to indicate a new, religious identity. At the same time, I argued that it is from parallel usage in philosophical-religious contexts that we can understand the logic behind this novel usage. In chapter 2, the somewhat more abstract background of the *theologia tripartita* helped us to imagine the early Jesus-movement (as presented by Paul) in terms of a philosophical approach to serving God. In this chapter, I argued that in this movement in which Paul participated, the notion of *pistis* functioned as a philosophical-religious designation.

The central role these Christ-followers attributed to *pistis* led to innovative language use. The freshly coined positive participle *pisteuontes* could thus refer without any further specifications to the people that had responded favourably to Paul's message and were committed to Christ. By contrast, the negative noun *apistia* and adjective *apistos* functioned to describe thought, behaviour, and people that should, in Paul's eyes, not be part of this 'faithful' ingroup. However, as Paul stood at the beginning of the 'good news movement', and as he is our first source for an absolute usage of *hoi pisteuontes* and *hoi*

285 Cf. Paul in discussion with Stoics and Epicureans in *Acts* 17, arguing that the lord of heaven and earth does not live in a handmade temple (*Acts* 17.24b). On the allusions to Epicureanism in this speech, cf. Piettre 2005, who also mentions general similarities between Pauline thought and Epicureanism, such as the centrality of *agapē* / *philia*, equality among members from different social strata, and ecstatic expression (49–50). Groundbreaking work on Paul and Epicurus was done by Norman DeWitt (1954b), whose book also contains a chapter on the historical likelihood of 'Paul's knowledge of Epicureanism' (167–184); for some critical comments on this work see §4.4.4 and §5.3.4 *supra*.

286 See O'Keefe 2010, 4–5.

*apistoi*, it is unlikely that these terms were already understood in the sense of general and neutral social-religious categories: 'believers' versus all others who are 'unbelievers'. I argued in this chapter that social-religious usage of *pistis* and *apistia* language designates specific categories of people in the periphery of Paul's communities, not all religious outsiders in general.

When we take Graeco-Roman discourses surrounding *apistia* into account, we can start to get a grip on specific philosophical-religious deficits polemically described by this word group. In Graeco-Roman sources, it was evident that *pistis* and *apistia* language was often used in religious contexts. There is even some evidence for using these terms to delineate between who is religiously faithful and unfaithful in sources as diverse as the Jewish *Book of Wisdom* and in Lucian's *Alexander the False Prophet*. I have found no undisputable evidence, however, for *pisteuontes* designations used in an absolute sense. Thus, it appears that this aspect of early Christian language use was indeed innovative. What is quite common in the sources of Paul's time, however, is to speak of *apistia* to polemically denote a specific philosophical-religious attitude according to which the gods were not involved in human affairs to either punish or comfort. It was particularly the Epicurean school that was accused of this unhealthy approach to the divine, but Academic scepticism was regarded as equally unhealthy by their Stoic opponents, as it amounted to a similar distrust of traditional religion. This social-religious usage of *apistia* as distrust of divine provision proves an important discourse to consider in Paul's letters to the Corinthians.

In order to understand the specificity of the *pistis* designations, I took into consideration the contextual semantic markers of each instance of the *pistis* designations. This exercise functioned as a foil to the delineation of semantic domains and cultural discourses in the previous chapters. The *pisteuontes* designations proved to fit the discourses mapped so far. Either they indicated the people who understood and embraced of Paul's message ('the persuaded', cf. chapters 4–5 on the cognitive and persuasive usage of *pistis*) and transformed their lives in imitation of Christ ('the ones practicing faithfulness', cf. chapter 6 on imitation in faith). Or they were used to overcome major divides within the new Christ-communities, particularly the divide between pagans and Jews ('all the faithful ones': cf. chapter 3 on Paul's universalism and 7 on the bridging function of *pistis*). All four instances of the negative noun *apistia*, 'unbelief' (all in *Romans*) appeared to participate in this latter semantic domain too, only now to designate a sceptical attitude on the inclusion of pagans in God's bond of faith: they were 'unpersuaded of' and, to put it more strongly, 'disloyal to' the good news of God's universal benefaction.

The *apistos* designations are all 'social-religious' in the sense that they express a lack of commitment to the God Paul preached. But there is more nuance in their semantic range, which clarifies the apparent discrepancies between some occurrences. Sometimes this 'lack of faith' is more cognitive in nature, as when the *apistos* ('sceptical, unpersuaded, mistrusting') attitude to Paul's gospel is in view (2 Cor 4 and 1 Cor 14). Whereas pagan *pistis* language is sometimes used to exclude people from rites and cultic life, Paul is even trying to make the community gatherings more inclusive in order to 'gain' such an 'unpersuaded one'. Sometimes *apistia* is more ethical-religious in nature, such as when the *apistos* ('disloyal', 'uncommitted', 'unfaithful') attitude consists of a loyalty that lies elsewhere, with rival teachings and rival gods. These people did not lack a certain *pistis*, but it was directed elsewhere, or at least elsewhere too. This led to questions in the Corinthian community related to the participation of such *apistoi*. Their 'untrustworthy attitude' made them unjust and not fit to judge others, especially not in any official capacity (1 Cor 6). Even then, Paul allows for meals and even marriages between 'the religiously faithful' and 'the religiously unfaithful', confiding in the freedom that everything is 'of the Lord' (1 Cor 10) or even in the transmission of holiness upon the unfaithful (1 Cor 7).

The only passage that is evidently polemical and exclusivist in tone, then, is one in which Paul expresses concerns about an *apistos* attitude influencing those inside the community (2 Cor 6). These problems may have arisen from an Epicurean mindset among community members or their immediate contacts, as especially in the Corinthian letters, Paul opposes many themes also found in contemporary anti-Epicurean polemic. Following on this observation, it is likely that Epicurean scepticism (*apistia*) of divine involvement may have resulted in a similar attitude within the social vicinity of the Christ-movement, in turn leading to a casual participation in idol cults that Paul, as a Jew, found particularly problematic. These *apistoi* were not merely unfaithful to the one God, but they posed a risk of turning community members away from Paul's more exclusivist teachings as well and were thus polemicized. Paul's deviantizing polemic, however, is no new 'Christian', or 'monotheistic', or even 'violence-inducing' phenomenon, as, for instance, Tim Whitmarsh suggests. *Apistia* was sharply rejected in sources from or about a diversity of religious groups (such as Orphism, the Isis-cult, or self-made wandering miracle makers), just as it was considered an unhealthy religious attitude by both Stoic and Platonic philosophers. Moreover, in philosophical circles, to casually associate with non-philosophical laypersons was considered a risky and potentially impure business as well (see Epictetus, *Encheiridion* 33.6, quoted in §8.4.5 above).

The diversity in semantic domains and discourses that colour each of these *pistis-apistia* designations explains the considerable difference in tone in each passage. An unpersuaded person is an opportunity for becoming fully convinced (1 Cor 14, 2 Cor 4), an unfaithful one is at best someone whose presence/involvement in idolatry must be carefully negotiated (1 Cor 6, 7, 10) and at worst a risk of misleading those inside with false teachings (2 Cor 6). This difference in tone and approach can hardly be accounted for if all occurrences represent simple insider-outsider designations. Once again, the versatility of *pistis* language is shown to accommodate a variety of nuances and contexts, proving its value for expressing the core identity of these new philosophical-religious Christ-communities.



## Concluding Reflections: Paul beyond the Philosophers' Faith

The seven preceding chapters represent an attempt to map Graeco-Roman *pistis* language, roughly divided in cosmological, mental, and social semantic domains. By distinguishing specific discourses in each domain, the breadth and versatility of the lexeme has come to the fore, which explicates at least part of *pistis*'s appeal to the Christ-movement in its earliest stages, as evidenced by the prominent place it occupies in the idiom of the apostle Paul.

Nevertheless, the polysemy of *pistis* is not an excuse to weigh each instance down with a multitude of meanings.<sup>1</sup> This is why I insisted on differentiating between genuinely different semantic domains, even if sometimes more than one may be at play for Paul or for his actual first audience. Each of the preceding seven chapters drew on particular discourses to help understand particular passages in Paul's letters in ways that are in keeping with both the author's line of thought and the wider cultural frames elicited by the language used. And while the specific frame elicited in each passage may be contested, this study has demonstrated both that Paul's *pistis* language partook in genuinely different semantic domains and that it is exegetically fruitful approach to further explore the implicit discourses at play.

In this concluding chapter, I will not repeat or summarize the specific exegetical results of reading Paul's faith language against each of these discourses, as the final sections of the preceding chapters already fulfil this purpose. Instead, I focus on the overall outcomes and linger on one question in particular: what did Paul contribute to each of these discourses? Put differently, how do Paul's discourses of faith differ from other views in his cultural and literary surroundings?

---

1 Such an outcome, whereby every instance of *pistis* is understood as carrying all the distinctive 'uses' or 'meanings' (for instance 'rhetorical proof', 'cognitive belief', and 'dispositional trustworthiness' at the same time) would not pass James Barr's famous critique of the illegitimate totality transfer, also called the 'overload fallacy'. See Barr 1961, 218. From the cognitive linguistic approach that informed this study, it is clear that the contextual markers determine the semantic domain and thereby the 'meaning' of a particular instance of *pistis* language (see also §1.2 above). The only exceptions are cases of conscious, sustained ambiguity or playful language use, which I argued for in the case of Paul's *pistis Christou* phrases (see §6.4.5).

Without lapsing into the same ‘Paul versus the pagans’ or ‘Greek faith versus Jewish faith’ schemes I criticized before (see §1.3.1 and §5.2), it is valuable to contrast Paul’s faith with that of contemporaries. For although my method of reading Paul’s letters in light of ancient discourses inevitably led to a focus on similarities, authors never merely follow and repeat the *topoi* and discourses of their time; rather, they also, to varying degrees, contribute creatively to them or side with one particular ‘school’ more than with another. These divergences, however, cannot and should not be phrased in terms of simple dichotomies. This was observed by political philosopher Eric Voegelin in his lecture on ‘The Gospel and Culture’, when after formulating some of such divergences he states:

The understanding of these complexities by which the Gospel movement differs from the movement of Classic Philosophy, though, cannot be advanced by using such topical dichotomies as philosophy and religion, metaphysics and theology, reason and revelation, natural reason and supernaturalism, rationalism and irrationalism, and so forth. (Voegelin 1971, 77)

Instead of attributing such simple contrasts to Paul and ‘the philosophers’, then, it is better to look for more precise deviations that stand out only after the general pattern of a shared discourse is established.

This balance between convergence and accommodation on the one hand and divergence and innovation on the other is sensible both historically and theologically speaking.<sup>2</sup> Whereas this book’s focus on Paul’s convergence with ancient culture in his usage of the *pistis* lexicon may have triggered some unease among theologically minded readers, picturing Paul, by contrast, as a *sui generis* author without equal is historically untenable. From a historical and literary perspective, the embeddedness of an author in her or his literary and cultural surroundings is an axiomatic truth. That said, even from a theological perspective, to find the early Christian message of faith embedded in the cultural discourses of its day is a *conditio sine qua non*. Incarnation,

---

2 Such a balance is also encouraged by Benjamin Schliesser at the end of his succinct summary of scholarly approaches to early Christian faith language (2017b, 45). He expects future research to ‘lay the primary force neither on the question of influences, dependencies, and genealogies of the early Christian concept of faith, nor in an apologetic manner on its unequivocal singularity and uniqueness’ but instead ‘acknowledges that Christian authors inhabited the same physical, cultural, and intellectual world as their contemporaries—and yet developed a distinctive conception of central identity-establishing tenets, such as faith.’

to name but one important Christian dogma, involves submission to the conditional, historical, and non-abstract nature of the cosmos. For the Word to live amongst us, it needs to take up concrete form; it needs to become flesh (to borrow a Johannine theme for a change). In Pauline terms, it needs to become empty of the divine existence and enter a particular human shape (Phil 2.7; Rom 8.3). On the other hand, for Paul to be the influential author he was historically received to be, or for his message to have been perceived as convincing and liberating (both historically and theologically speaking), he must have gone beyond what was at that point thought of as common answers to the main questions at hand.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, having responded to the question how Paul's faith language made use of existing cultural and literary discourses (in chapters 2–8), we may now contemplate which additional answers he offered to some of the main questions of his day, discourse by discourse.

### 9.1 The Distinctiveness of Paul's Contribution to Discourses of *Pistis*

The discourses I have discussed in Part I were concerned with large narratives on the ordering of the cosmos, both regarding the human knowledge of and relationship with the divine (chapter 2) and regarding creating a just society (chapter 3). From these more general discourses on the real and ideal outlook of the cosmos, we turned in Part II to *pistis* within the semantic domains pertaining to the mental life of human beings, further divided in epistemological, persuasive, and ethical domains (chapters 4, 5, and 6 respectively). In Part III, finally, I discussed discourses concerning concrete relational and societal questions: first the hierarchical, political, power-based relationships in which *pistis* was involved (chapter 7), then the group dynamics of communities described in terms of *pistis* (chapter 8). In the following subsections, which correspond to these three parts of this book, I will first pinpoint Paul's creative appropriations of and additions to specific classical discourses.

At the end of each of the following three subsections, I will furthermore indicate what the present study contributes to the scholarly landscape. In the introductory chapter (chapter 1), I discussed three methodological insights that guided my journey and that distinguish it to a certain extent from other,

3 Cf. Voegelin 1971, 63: 'It will be necessary, therefore, to recover the question to which, in Hellenistic-Roman culture, the Philosopher could understand the Gospel as the answer.' Voegelin, however, speaks of a cultural 'impasse in which the Gospel appeared to offer the answer to the philosopher's search for truth', which seems an overly dramatic diagnosis.

related academic studies. First, there was the notion of semantic domains, which allowed me to sustain the polysemy of *pistis* instead of boiling it down to one meaning. Second, I found the method of discourse analysis helpful as a comparative textual approach built on the co-occurrence of key terms in Greek (and Latin) contemporary literature. By following the trail of the discourses, I was able to incorporate useful pagan material that was often consciously left out in earlier studies that focused on Jewish, particularly Old Testament contexts. Third, this trail led us into philosophical terrain that had been largely ‘uncharted’ as far as their usefulness for understanding Paul’s *pistis* language was concerned. *Pistis* usage in a variety of philosophical traditions helped to explain the variety, interconnectedness, and depth of use in Paul. Now it is time to reflect upon these results—the ‘view’, so to speak, from each of these vantage points. I will do so by comparing my overall emphases to the main outcomes of several other major publications on Paul and *pistis* in the twenty-first century.<sup>4</sup>

### 9.1.1 *Cosmology*

*Mapping the human relationship with the divine (chapter 2)*—Seeing as faith in the sense of ‘religious affiliation’ is a highly prototypical use of faith in our modern times, I started by peeling off some of some of these modern notions by exploring ancient discourses on religion, loosely understood as ‘discourses pertaining to the divine’. As it turned out, we found a highly useful first-order model in the ancient discourse called *theologia tripartita*, a threefold approach to the divine (a mythical-poetic, a civic-cultic, and a natural-philosophical one), which was used by a variety of authors from the late-republican and early imperial period. While all refer explicitly or implicitly to this tripartite division, these authors differed at least in part as to what approach was to be favoured and for what people the approaches were best suited. For instance, whereas Scaevola, presumably the pioneer of this discourse, deemed civic religion most important (as myth is untrue and philosophy superfluous), authors in the Platonic tradition put philosophical religion forward as a necessary beneficial influence that keeps the poets and the cultic legislators in check. Within this philosophical tradition, mythical representations were interpreted as allegories, and sacrificial cult was rephrased in terms of a mental sacrifice.

---

4 In chapter 1, I traced the history of research back to earlier decades, and in chapters 2–8, I entered into dialogues on specific texts and semantic domains with more and less recent publications as well. Here, I focus on current academic conversations on the overall meaning of Paul’s *pistis* usage.

According to my reconstruction of Dio Chrysostom's contribution to the discourse, this 'purifying potential' was due to philosophy's close affinity to our innate conception of the divine (as opposed to later acquired, image-based conceptions).

Whereas Paul never explicitly uses a trifold (or fourfold) division of how humans can approach the divine, there are several references to and evaluations of different types of religion in his letters. Building on the Platonic scepticism of mythical representations of the gods, he employs civic religious terms in a highly philosophized manner, transforming the language of cult to indicate a more cognitive, indeed philosophical type of worship. The main differences with the existing versions of the discourse are that (1) his critique of mythical and civic polytheist religion reaches beyond the familiar critique of it being a misrepresentation, to a more profound critique of the non-functional human mind as the origin of this religious misrepresentation (Rom 1.28); (2) he goes further than most in reformulating (and thus reforming) cultic actions into 'reasonable worship' (Rom 12.1); (3) he makes no distinction between intellectual elite and masses when it comes to making use of this more reasonable worship; and (4) he foregrounds *pistis* as the measure to guide this restored, philosophical religion he envisions (Rom 12.3).

The once failing and now renewed *nous*, 'mind', and the divine given 'measure of *pistis*' are two key distinctive ingredients of Paul's formulation of this rather philosophical type of religion. Moreover, the availability of this renewed mind and divine measure of *pistis* to all the *pisteuontes*, all who responded and transformed their lives and worship accordingly, gave his message a democratizing effect. By using *pistis* as a philosophical-religious key term, Paul (and the early Christian movement he participated in) was thus pioneering new semantic territory, territory charted by Philo and explored within a Platonic context by Plutarch a century later. In essence, Paul's religious use of *pistis* offered a philosophical alternative to cultic practice, and this religious and somewhat intellectualized use contributed to one of the most prototypical understandings of 'faith' today as a religious and cognitive term. To understand Paul's *pistis* as a purely cognitive commitment in the modern sense, however, misses much of the original embeddedness—but we shall come back to this cognitive aspect in a moment.

*Creating a just divine-human society (chapter 3)*—*Pistis* not only takes central stage when it comes to re-imagining our approach to God; for Paul, it is the crucial enabler of a righteous divine-human society too. And again, we have seen that this is congruent with ancient discourses on utopian societies, such as the early days of Rome under Numa's kingship. If the prevalent contemporary question therefore was how to attain such an ideal society once again,

Paul's 'righteousness by faith' language ought to be understood as an answer to this wider, societal, even cosmological question, not merely as an answer to the individual, anthropological problem of salvation. Moreover, it is likely that the answer Paul had in mind must be understood in terms of righteous rulership: a just society is reached by participating in the realm of a righteous ruler, who fully embodies the one, universal law and unites the nations. These ideas of a Golden Age which is to return under a just king, and of a type of unwritten law that (1) can be embodied in such a king, (2) is common to all, and (3) should be internal in all subjects, were already part of the cultural milieu of the period, shared across Greek, Roman, and Jewish identities.

So, wherein lies Paul's distinctiveness when compared to the discourses of this semantic domain? Of course, Paul presented a particular person, Christ Jesus, as a faithful lord and as the ultimate answer to these expectations of the return of a new age of divine justice, which admittedly was a bold move given that this lord had been shamefully crucified. In doing so, however, he also combined all of these different (sub)discourses of unwritten law and explained how they worked together to actually enable a just society in the present, even while he and his addressees remained under foreign, Roman rule. For Paul, as for several philosophers of the day, the law exists not merely in written shapes, but may also take on internal, universal, and embodied (or 'living') form. Paul's thought includes notions of an internal law, as the law may be written upon hearts: he alternatively describes this law as a 'law of faith' (Rom 3.27). He also describes this law of faith in universal terms, wherefore it excludes particular boasting and calls a new realm into being, bridging old ethnic boundaries (Rom 3.29–30). A third subcategory of unwritten law is its embodied state in Christ, who is the ultimate end of the law (Rom 10.4) and who is able to transform his subjects into his image, into righteous citizens of his heavenly realm (Phil 3.20–21). The novelty of Paul's contribution is to be found not so much in the ingredients themselves as in the unique mixture of these discourses and, perhaps here also, in the prominent inclusion of faith language within his 'unwritten law' discourse. Faith is that fundamental disposition which enables followers of this 'law' to live a just life, to participate in the divine righteousness of Christ. Paul taught that it was the relationship of trust with Christ, the living law, that presented itself as a new internal 'law of trust', which at this point in time was in reach for all, Jews and Greeks alike, by becoming part of the family of trust.

When I compare the outcomes in these chapters to the findings of other recent scholarly contributions on faith in Paul, what stands out is that in the present work the divine-human dimension (set out in chapters 2–3) is seen as con-

stitutive and primary for Paul's overall *pistis* usage. The philosophical-religious positioning of the Pauline movement, based on Paul's own description in *Romans* 12.1–3, is used as the starting point for exploring relevant cultural discourses, in line with the increasing scholarly awareness of the intertwining of religion and philosophy in the Hellenistic-Roman period (see §1.4.2 above).

The centrality of great narratives on the ordering of the cosmos is perhaps most consistent with Benjamin Schliesser's emphasis on the 'trans-subjectivity' of *pistis* and his 'cosmological interpretation' of several Pauline passages (2007, 2016).<sup>5</sup> In the present work, however, this cosmological dimension is firmly grounded in Graeco-Roman literary topics on how to know the gods and create a just society. These contemporary discourses also offer an interpretative frame for the combined usage of *pistis* as describing both a divine 'event' and an anthropological response, contrasts that puzzled Schliesser and many others before him. Perhaps more importantly, with lexical polyvalence as the present study's starting point, such apparent contradictions prove not so problematic at all, as they are the consequence of the normal linguistic workings of a human brain.

The cosmic level is also taken into account in Teresa Morgan's take on *pistis* (2015), where the final chapter is devoted specifically to this theme. This chapter is informed by a higher number of philosophical discourses than the rest of the book, such as the Stoic ideal city. Its central argument is that virtues such as *pistis* structure divine-human societies in both pagan and early Christian sources.<sup>6</sup> The present study emphasizes the importance of philosophical discourses throughout the different semantic domains, yet revolves solely around Paul's rather than a wider range of early Christian thought. This allowed me to focus on key Pauline *topoi* such as the triad of faith, righteousness, and the law, which I situated within this wider cosmic domain, focussing on the discourses of the Golden Age and natural law. Specifically, the 'unwritten law' discourse was found to offer a unifying concept to explain several aspects caught up in Paul's 'justification by faith' *topos*: the importance of moral transformation (through an internal law), the transethnic scope (of universal law), and the role of Christ (as living law).

5 See Schliesser 2016, 282–283, 289; cf. his earlier monograph, esp. Schliesser 2007, 45–54.

6 See Morgan 2015, 473–500, chapter 12: 'Pistis, Fides, and the Structure of Divine–Human Communities'; on the Stoic ideals, see 489–491. On Morgan's overall scepticism as regards the influence of (at least non-Stoic) philosophical discourses, see §1.4.1 above.

### 9.1.2 *Mentality*

*Bridging the epistemological gap (chapter 4)*—In the fourth chapter, I noted that a major philosophical discourse of Paul's time concerns the problem of dualism, understood epistemologically and metaphysically as the inability of humans to attain immutable, divine levels of truth and knowledge. *Pistis* appears throughout this mostly Platonic discourse as a knowledge category, but (unlike what is often claimed) not, at least not unambiguously, as a low-level, unsubstantiated, fideistic kind. Based on his reading of crucial passages in the Septuagint, Paul's contemporary Philo of Alexandria staged *pistis* as an important virtue in human dealings with God, whose transcendence had become more and more of an epistemological problem. As an intermediate knowledge category, *pistis* was able to bridge the gap to the ultimate. This middle-Platonist position is also taken up by Plutarch roughly a hundred years later, who uses a reasonable type of *pistis* not merely in epistemological contexts, but in religious contexts as well. Plutarch used *pistis* to overcome the challenge of complete scepticism and atheism on the one hand and the threat of gullible superstition on the other. This 'trust' thus offers a reasonable epistemological bridge to metaphysical truth as represented by the divine.

Paul fits within this phase of the Platonic, epistemological discourse in his use of *pistis* as an intermediate and intermediary cognitive attitude, reaching through sensible objects for the divine, from whose trustworthiness the human *pistis* derives its stability. Just as in the Platonic scheme, it is very much an earthly category, capable of growth, but trumped and energized by love as the more enduring and heavenly type of knowledge. The 'frailty' of Pauline but also of Platonic *pistis*, then, is not due to its fideistic nature: Paul did not preach epistemic certainty based on a leap of faith into the complete unknown. Instead, the frailty of *pistis* is of an existential character, indicating the provisionality and precariousness of all human knowledge in the present state of the world.

Paul's unique position within this discourse may be sought in a somewhat more temporal (and thereby perhaps more Stoic) interpretation of what was for most Platonists an everlasting (meta)physical problem.<sup>7</sup> Paul lives in anti-

7 The distinction, however, is not a clear-cut distinction between philosophical idealism and Jewish apocalypticism. See Tronier 2001 on the structural similarities between both and cf. on the overarching category of 'axial age religion', Klostergaard Petersen 2017a and 2017b, 19–24, both discussed in §4.3's intro, above. Cf. also Atkins' exposition of a mixture of 'forensic' and 'cosmological' eschatologies in the book *Wisdom* (2021, 612): 'Wisdom innovates within Jewish apocalyptic tradition by employing the mythological idiom of apocalypticism to defend the philosophical claim that the cosmos is just and facilitates life for those who are likewise just.'



icipation of being ‘fully known’ by God, and his eschatology includes the notion of Christ coming at some point to judge the world (1 Thes 1.10, Rom 2.16, Rom 14.10, 1 Cor 4.5). This caesura in diachronic time turns Paul’s conception of *pistis* into the divine-human relationship of the ‘now’, a particular ‘now’ lasting from the coming of *pistis* until its inevitable redundancy when ‘sight’ and everlasting ‘love’ takes over (cf. 2 Cor 5.7 and 1 Cor 13.13, discussed above).

*Delineating credible persuasiveness (chapter 5)*—In the next chapter within this ‘mental’ domain, I observed that the persuasive usage of *pistis* in the narrower, reified sense of ‘proof’ is well known and as ancient as rhetorical theory itself, with Aristotle as its main proponent (see §5.3.1). In the later Hellenistic-Roman period, a rhetorical usage of *pistis* gained the additional sense of ‘philosophical adherence’ amidst competing philosophical schools. In this philosophical milieu, *pistis* in a certain philosophical teacher or sage expresses both the mentality of being persuaded and the acknowledgement of a long-lasting relational allegiance. This cognitive-relational type of *pistis* furthermore served to distinguish sophistic, shallow processes of persuasion from philosophical, in-depth variants. This latter kind involves transformation of not merely one’s convictions, but also one’s life, such that persuasion takes shape in lived experience, in a life of virtue. When a Stoic sage develops such a state of persuasion (*pistis*), real friendships are made possible, as well as accommodation to less advanced students. An individual stable persuasion thus precedes truly other-regarding relationships.

I argued in this chapter that Paul participates to a high degree in these discourses concerning persuasion. He echoes the contemporary concern for sophistic rhetoric in his contrast between a divine and a human basis for faith (§5.4.2). He carefully negotiates the reciprocity of his relationship with his addressees and their ‘faith’ (see §5.4.4 on 2 Cor 1.24) and offers advice on how the strong may welcome the less advanced ‘in faith’ (Rom 14–15, see §5.4.5): *pistis*, for Paul and Stoics alike, needs to foster friendship and community, not ambition. Due to of the genre of the surviving material (letters to communities of followers), but also because of the social nature of Paul’s actual ‘community projects’, persuasion in Paul’s works is very much attuned to community building, even to a higher degree than the comparative sources I discussed from Stoic and Epicurean origin.

In passages such as *Romans* 14–15, Paul appears to refine the importance of *pistis* for some of his addressees and transform it from a merely personal conviction into an other-regarding virtue. Having a strong conviction (*pistis*) enables one to make room for those whose convictions do not meet one’s standards. Innovative in this regard is not Paul’s accommodation-discourse per se, but the fact that it employs *pistis*’s breadth of meanings. The Stoics

would agree that one needs to have a stable conviction (*pistis*) in order to be reliable (*pistos*) as a friend and that goodness and badness may be defined as acting congruently or not with one's own judgements. Paul, in addition, also calls such personal judgements *pisteis*. At the same time, he relativizes the right of the strong to act congruently with them, as this would exclude the weak from the faith community (Rom 14–15). Instead, they ought to welcome them 'in faith' (within this '*pistis* community'), just as Christ would. Thus, in Paul's mind, *pistis* in the sense of a strong, cognitive conviction is directly connected to *pistis* denoting accommodating relationships of mutual trust. The strength of one's *pistis* is not evidenced by a restrictive personal lifestyle, but by the generosity of accepting those with different convictions into a *pistis* community.

*Practising virtue through imitation* (chapter 6)—These relationships of trust are very much imitative relationships for Paul, by which we arrive at the topic of the subsequent chapter. In that regard, there is ample comparative material from Paul's pagan contemporaries in which *pistis* represents either a virtue to imitate or the relationship between imitator and model. These discourses were most often of an educational and philosophical character. It was Philo who appears to have been the first to describe the virtue of *pistis* as a consequence of the action or attitude: trusting the ultimately trustworthy God instead of untrustworthy sensibles turned Abraham into a trustworthy person. This idea of becoming like one's ultimate example is elaborated on across schools in the particular philosophical topos of 'becoming like the divine' (*homoioōsis theōi*) or, alternatively, 'becoming like the exceptionally wise' (*homoioōsis sophōi*). The Stoic Epictetus even included the notion of *pistis* in this more specific discourse and spoke about imitation in terms of becoming *pistos*, trustworthy, like the gods. I discussed (in §6.3.4) several perceived differences between the schools within this discourse, such as the issue of divine transcendence in Platonism versus divine immanence in Stoicism. The actual differences were slightly more subtle; according to my analysis, Platonism in the first and second century AD developed more immanent intermediaries between a transcendent God and mortal humanity. Moreover, in Platonism as opposed to Epicureanism, the philosophers were supposed to help other souls to achieve their level of 'likeness' to a deity.

Paul seems to follow this Middle-Platonic path to a large degree, even though some of the best verbal parallels of imitation in *pistis* are found in the Stoic tradition. In Paul's case, Christ is the primary object of imitation, bridging the gap to the transcendent God, who is never described as a direct object of imitation. Moreover, Paul encourages his addressees to follow his own example and that of other faithful Christ-followers, building a chain of

imitative relationships also found in the wider discourse. The *pistis Christou* passages in Paul's letters were all shown to fit this semantic domain of imitation and virtue, with Christ functioning in a double role as both the ultimate paradigm of *pistis* in the sense of a faithful disposition to imitate and as a model in which his followers place their attitude of trust.

The distinctiveness of Paul's model, however, lies in the importance of the incarnation. For Christ's mediating position involves a radical role reversal between imitator and model: in order to become humanity's model for faithfulness to God, Christ first played the part of a human being. This is particularly clear in *Philippians*, where Paul explains that he exchanged the shape of God (Phil 2.6: μορφή θεοῦ) for the shape of a slave (Phil 2.7: μορφή δούλου). Only thereafter and therein could he become a model for the Philippians to mimic in their disposition (Phil 2.5: τούτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν) and towards whose virtue of *pistis* the Philippians were called to 'strive with one mind' (Phil 1.27: μιᾷ ψυχῇ συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει, see §6.4.1 above). Unlike Platonic intermediary divinities or Stoic intermediary sages, Paul's Christ not only precedes human beings and invites people to become virtuous, he actively came down from a divine to a human level first. This 'degradation' of the primary model had a levelling effect on those who became its followers, for imitating this Christ-faithfulness amounted to becoming just as 'lowly' and regarding others more 'highly' (Phil 2.3). For Paul, 'becoming like God' is not an attractive path upward, worth pursuing for the philosophical elite. Pauline *homoiosis Christōi* involves a communal training in humility, worked out by God (Phil 2.13) and Christ who actively transforms his followers' lowly body into the shape of his exalted body (Phil 3.21). Both the move of the divine downward and the active assistance to bring others upward are Pauline emphases unparalleled in the wider Graeco-Roman discourse of 'becoming like God'.

Compared to Teresa Morgan's work (esp. 2015), whose overall argument concerns *pistis*'s relationality, the present book aims to give a more prominent place to the 'mentality' of faith, by embedding specific Pauline passages in philosophical discourses of epistemology, persuasion and imitation.<sup>8</sup> Still, not unlike Morgan, I understand this interiority or mentality of *pistis* as entwined with relational configurations. More specifically, interhuman relationships are

8 According to Morgan, the interiority of *pistis* ultimately 'does not attract much interest in the first century', especially when compared to Augustine's thought and beyond (2015, 503). She does not say that the interiority is absent from first-century thought on *pistis/fides*, but rather that it is not a separate subject of study: it is always implied in its relational usages (cf. at 472).

required for processes of persuasion (see esp. §5.3.6), and education in virtue (see esp. §6.3.3 and §6.4.2), while vice versa, the interior cultivation of the virtue of *pistis* in individuals is essential for building healthy societal *pistis*-relationships (see esp. §7.3.6). These ‘mental’ colourings of *pistis* language thus help to establish Morgan’s general thesis that, in my own words, cognitive-propositional usage is always embedded in relationships of trust.

Nijay Gupta (2020) emphasized, in response to Morgan, that more cognitive and affectionate semantic options should not be overlooked. However, unlike in the present study, these cognitive understandings of faith become quite fideistic in Gupta’s exegesis of parts of *1 and 2 Corinthians* (see my discussion in §5.4.2 and §4.4.3): for him, in more cognitive semantic frames, faith becomes ‘believing the unbelievable’ (2020, ch. 7). The *pistis* language in Graeco-Roman epistemological and rhetorical discourses offered plenty of evidence against such a fideistic reading, despite its popularity in both present-day popular semantics of faith (see §2.1 above) and in many scholarly evaluations of ancient faith as well (see §4.1). Trust is generally placed in what is believed to be trustworthy, and even in highly technical discourses on Platonic epistemology, *pistis* is a high-end category of knowledge for human beings, precisely because it is able to reach beyond the limitations of sense-perception towards what is certain.

### 9.1.3 Society

*Giving and receiving in relationships of patronage (chapter 7)*—In this chapter, I discussed *pistis* language in discourses of power and benefaction or, in one word, patronage. Indeed, many relationships characterized by *pistis* (or *fides*) were asymmetrical in nature, with a high-placed person or a conquering nation offering a relationship of support and mutual good faith to a less powerful other. The discourses on domestic patronage demonstrated the transjuridical potential of faith: faith regulates those areas that are not regulated by law. This juxtaposition may have prompted Paul’s suggestion that faith may take the place of ‘works of the law’. In philosophical discourses, moreover, it was lamented that enduring benefactory relationships of reciprocal good faith are turned into temporary business transactions: an internal gratitude and lasting trust is lacking. I read Paul’s famous juxtaposition of due wages in exchange for work versus a free gift in exchange for faith in this light (§7.4.4): Paul’s concern was not with offering a return to the divine gift in itself (faithfulness is a substantial return, not a ‘standing empty handed’), but with the nature of the relationship, which in his eyes should be a long-term commitment of benefaction and gratitude, instead of an ostentatious exchange of goods.

Particularly in Roman political discourses, the importance of *fides Romana* stood out. As a collective virtue and identity marker, this ‘good faith’ made up an important part of the Roman self-image, distinguishing them from faithless enemies yet at the same time offering to peacefully ‘incorporate’ those non-Romans who turned out equally faithful. When it comes to Paul’s participation in this discourse, the question is if Paul’s notion of ‘faith in Christ’ is best understood as a covertly anti-imperial statement and his ‘obedience of faith’ as a benign reversal of the enforced surrender into Roman *fides*. The answer I gave in this chapter is that Paul’s distinctiveness in this semantic domain does not lie so much in a reversal of what *pistis* entails. Both the Roman and the Pauline variant include a reasonable expectation of the benefactor’s good faith towards a less powerful other. The more obvious anti-imperial content of Paul’s gospel must be sought in the precise ‘lord’ proclaimed: at first sight a revolting, powerless, and now dead Galilean.

Yet, more importantly in the context of this study, Paul’s idea of the universal divine offer of reconciliation and of becoming righteous through faith (cf. Rom 5.1–2,11) is a more radical approach to divine benefaction than the Roman ideal. Roman *fides* is a transethnic virtue, an offer that extends to strangers and enemies of the state who turn out to be trustworthy. But Pauline *pistis* extends even further to the unworthy, to those who are initially without good faith, to the ‘godless’ (Rom 4.5: πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιούντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ; Rom 5.6: ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν), who are the opposite of ‘just’ (Rom 5.7: ὑπὲρ δικαίου). From Paul’s Jewish perspective, then, Rome is evidently among the godless enemies in need of the divine gift (*charis*) of peace and *pistis*, turning the tables on the Roman empire’s claim to faith.

*Defining the self and negotiating the other (chapter 8)*—In this final chapter, intra- and extra-group relationships determined by *pistis* were taken into consideration, in particular for those groups that were ‘religious’ in some sense. In the Graeco-Roman material containing *pistis* designations, I found a slight increase in its use for philosophical, mystical, and religious groups in the first and second century AD, including, for example, in descriptions of initiates into a cult. This increase seems to coincide with a growing henotheism in the period and perhaps also with a growing competition and critical dialogue between philosophical traditions. In polemical discourse between different philosophical traditions, *apistia*, ‘unfaithfulness’ or ‘lack of trust’, was often connected to mistrusting divine providence (against Epicureans). This latter use of *apistia* was found to be consistent with Paul’s usage of the same noun in *Romans* (Rom 11.20,23): it described the attitude of not trusting in the good news, namely in God’s benefaction to the nations.

Overall, however, the early Christian self-designation of *pisteuontes/pistoi* and the corresponding other-designation of *apistoi* turned out to be quite an innovation, and its abundant use is unprecedented in extant Greek sources. The scarcity of contemporary sources containing socially descriptive *pistis* designations (free from particular marked content) caused me to rethink the often-presumed meaning of Paul's *apistoi* as 'general unbelievers'. As such a linguistic innovation takes time, it seemed reasonable to see if the contexts affect and mark Paul's *pistis* designations in a more precise fashion. The versatility of the *pistis* lexeme that was already evident from the preceding chapters was confirmed even in the case of *pistis* designations, whereby the different semantic colourings of the terms helped to explain the difference in tone between Paul's insistence on accommodation to the 'unpersuaded' (1 Cor 14.22) and his warnings against allowing for morally or religiously 'unfaithful' people to gain influential positions in the community (1 Cor 6.6 and 2 Cor 6.14). Particularly in these latter passages in which religious unfaithfulness, i.e. idolatry, was at stake, Paul seemed to become more exclusivist in tone. This is in line with the increase in cultic and philosophical exclusivism of the period, as well as with Paul's Jewish monotheism.

Yet, this wider development of religious exclusivist commitment may not fully account for the popularity of *pistis* as a common denominator for the early Christ-movement. Another explanation could be found in precisely the inclusive potential of the term: 'all the *pisteuontes*' is a recurring Pauline phrase to indicate that faith bridges divides between ethnicities (Jew, Greek), classes (slave, free), and genders (male, female) (cf. Gal 3.25–28). A third and final suggestion is that it was precisely the multifariousness of the *pistis* word group that ensured its appeal among early Christ-followers. Whether they intended to speak of a rhetorical persuadedness, ethical faithfulness, or philosophical-religious commitment to a deity or teaching, *pistis* served their collective need for a name that was, in all of these different meanings, well-received in their cultural milieu.

In these 'societal' chapters, the present study is in accordance with several major recent studies dealing with the semantics of *pistis* language in the ancient world. The focus on the relationality of *pistis* as foundational for understanding the whole semantic breadth was first put on the scholarly agenda by Teresa Morgan (2015). In the present study, Morgan's thesis on the importance of interhuman relations for understanding early Christian *pistis* usage is confirmed by a discourse-analytical approach. Yet, compared to Morgan's emphases and partly due to a different range of sources, the

philosophical and literary ideals concerning such relationships are given more prominence here for understanding Paul's argument.

Matthew Bates (2017) argued that when Paul uses *pistis* terminology, we ought to understand this as 'allegiance'. In response, we need to emphasize that while 'allegiance' is 'relational' to a certain extent, it is too limiting to account for all the semantic variety set out in the preceding seven chapters. Even in dominantly hierarchical social frames, the term *pistis* (or *fides*) designates both the attitude and actions of the superior and those of the inferior party. It presupposes a reciprocity, whereby each partner is bound by the expectations of a *pistis* relationship. Hence, the relationship as a whole has salvific potential according to Paul, not the one-sided loyalty of a human being.

Thomas Schumacher (2012) offered a historical semantic analysis of *pistis* and *fides* language and uses this to understand its specific usage in Paul's letters. As far as method is concerned, the present study uses a more synchronic starting point (see §1.2.2 above) and discusses pagan source material in closer detail and as constituting specific philosophical-religious discourses. One of the main contexts Schumacher emphasizes (2012, 2017), following Christian Strecker (2005) among others, is the Roman political use of *fides* in hierarchical relationships between leaders and subjects, armies, and nations. The relevance of this particular discourse is also highlighted and confirmed in the present work. Yet within this discourse, Schumacher identifies a contrast between Greek reciprocal *pistis* and Roman asymmetrical *fides*. As I have argued, this contrast appears to be unjustified, since Greek and Latin contributions to this discourse show no such contrast (see §7.2.2 and §7.3 above). Paul's use of *pistis* is not different from Rome's use of *fides* in an essential or semantic way. But it serves to emphasize a new logic of benefaction according to which Rome becomes the unworthy recipient instead of the powerful protector. Paul's political usage of faith deprives Rome of its faith monopoly.

Nijay Gupta (2020) also added to the arguments for a more relational reading of *pistis*. According to him, faith language offered the perfect vehicle for understanding the Jewish notion of 'covenant' to pagans (see especially his eighth chapter on 'Covenantal Pistism'), a suggestion also made by Morgan (2015, 291). The staggering amount of *pistis* and *fides* language in Roman political discourses would indeed confirm the appeal of the term in such contexts. But I would add that the potential of *pistis* to bridge cultural and ethnic divides in Roman discourses renders the choice of this term by Paul even more appropriate. Whereas a divine-human covenant is usually understood as connecting a specific deity to a specific people or nation, *pistis* language foregrounds God's offer of grace to all peoples and nations. Moreover, if we take philosophical reflection on gift-giving into account (see §7.3.6), *pistis* language serves to

emphasize the transjuridical nature of the offer: the gift is given regardless of worthiness of the receiver, anticipating a long-lasting interior attitude of trust.

This, in turn, confirms John Barclay's overall thesis (2015) on the Pauline 'perfection' of the gift (as incongruent, not non-circular), yet without its somewhat meagre understanding of the role of *pistis* (see §7.2.4 above). Divine grace expects a return that consists precisely of upholding long-lasting commitment (*pistis*) on the side of the receiver, evidenced by faithful (*pistos*) actions.

## 9.2 A Pauline Response to Present-Day Discourses of Faith

Having evaluated both Paul's contributions to historical discourses and this work's contributions to scholarly discourses, it seems only appropriate to end this book by reflecting theologically and philosophically on the significance of Paul's faith language to present-day discourses of faith. The semantic versatility of the *pistis* lexeme was exploited to an unprecedented extent by Paul, allowing it to, over the decades and centuries, make its mark upon each of the semantic domains in which it figured. In the early Christ-movement, faith came to be understood as an essential philosophical-religious quality, drawing its meaning and significance from cosmological, mental, and social domains, and in turn shaping our understanding of all these domains. What lessons can we learn today from Paul's innovative *pistis* usage?

When we look at *pistis* as it is used in cosmological narratives (see Part I of this work), it becomes clear that it is so foundational for understanding the world that it cannot be reduced to a 'religious' notion in the modern sense (or a cultic notion in the ancient sense for that matter). *Pistis* does not indicate something 'religious', understood as some separate sphere to be distinguished from secular, non-religious domains, and restricted to particular times, rites, laws, and places. Paul regards the present time as an age wherein a divine-human *pistis* has 'come' (Gal 3.23,25), which implies that the possibility has opened up of the whole world being made righteous again by entering a relationship of trust through Christ with God. Each sphere of life is thus open to being 'righteoused' or 'renewed' in light of this new 'faithful' and 'trusting' mode of living, including our relationship with the divine, with power, with family, with money, with work, with friendships, and so on. All of these spheres can be subjected to the 'law of faith' (Rom 3.27), evaluated according to the 'measure of faith' (Rom 12.3), and understood from within the 'spirit of faith' (2 Cor 4.13). Especially in the context of these broader narratives, we



can detect the beginning of a usage of faith to indicate an all-encompassing, philosophical, and, for Paul in particular, a Christ-shaped ‘worldview’.<sup>9</sup>

Paul thereby invites us to recognize the importance of this *pistis*, this trusting commitment to what is ultimate, for our understanding the world we live in and the life we are supposed to lead. Consequently, within the highly pluriform societies many of us now live, it is important to recognize the profound implications of everyone’s ‘faith’, one’s fundamental attitude and commitment. Because of its fundamental nature, faith in this ‘cosmological’ or ‘worldview’ sense cannot simply be excluded from certain supposedly neutral public spheres. Instead, in political, educational, or healthcare settings, everyone’s *pistis* should be subject to an open conversation, as it is from one’s fundamental commitment that values, decisions, and actions are informed.

In the part on *pistis* language describing a person’s mentality (Part II), we saw that throughout classical discourses, it is a reasonable yet provisional type of cognition, specific to human beings. In current terminology, this accords with the idea that to have faith or trust is fundamental to being human. Even if the object and degree of trust is contested and negotiated differently from person to person, from birth to death, and from tradition to tradition; all human beings have such a fundamental disposition. It is from trust in our parents and caretakers that life is shaped at its premature stages. Similarly, for Paul, it is with a renewed *pistis* in Christ that a new life begins.

The provisionality of *pistis* as a ‘mentality’ implies that it is subject to human error, to risk and doubt: it is only as certain as the object of trust is trustworthy. The possibility of investing trust in the wrong person, deity, or teaching does not necessarily imply that the action of trust (be it ordinary or fundamental) is inherently unreasonable or blind. These conceptualizations of faith, popular in a wide variety of present-day discourses, seem to be the offspring of a modern (but not ancient) faith-reason opposition that is in dire need of revision.<sup>10</sup> For Paul, an attitude of faith towards Christ is highly reasonable, as it consists of trusting the trustworthy, of pledging faith to the epitome of faithfulness: Christ is the one whose faithful life proves divine trustworthiness. Faith is thereby not totally at the mercy of untrustworthy sensible

---

9 I use the word ‘worldview’ (also ‘world view’) here not as an either Christian or non-Christian framework of assumptions (as it is sometimes used in present-day neo-Calvinist circles), but, more generally, as a fundamental attitude towards the world that may be configured in multiple ways and influenced by various philosophical traditions.

10 As the title of the overarching NWO-funded research project in which the current study finds its origin also suggests: ‘Overcoming the Faith-Reason Opposition: Pauline *Pistis* in Contemporary Philosophy’.

impressions, but is able to push the human boundaries of knowledge towards finding a secure anchor in the divine.

Faith is furthermore a profound type of persuasion for Paul, capable of transforming people into the image of the one in whom they invest this trust. A faith-relationship is thus never a one-way-street. Someone's trustworthiness entices an attitude of trust, which in turn fosters the virtue of trustworthiness in the one who trusts. From its usage in educational and philosophical contexts, it is evident that the object of one's faith is determinative for the type of person one becomes. The classical 'economy of trust' teaches us moderns that the level of trust in a political system is dependent on the trustworthiness embodied by its leaders and representatives, who are not only capable of evoking an attitude of trust amongst citizens, but also of sponsoring trust-relationships in all levels of society through chains of imitation.

This also implies that, from a Pauline perspective, 'faith' should not be intellectualized or propositionalized as though it is an intellectual acceptance of a statement. Instead, its predominant usage as a virtue in ancient sources demonstrates its capacity of transforming lives by practice, cultivation, and imitation in a communal setting. Within a Pauline *pistis* community, chains of interhuman imitation foster a community of people being transformed after the image of Christ. Seen in this light, present-day religious education (or missionary work) should not be limited to conveying, debating, and accepting cognitive truths, but it should be set-up in a 'communal' and reciprocal setting designed to foster and practise virtue.

From the usage of *pistis* in public contexts (see Part III of this work), it is evident that we should not think of faith as a purely private and personal conviction or, even worse, as an inherently intolerant and exclusionary cultural phenomenon. In the ancient discourses we encountered within this domain, *pistis* transcends societal divisions and shapes new, bridging communities of those trusting a particular teacher and teaching. Particularly in present-day pluriform societal contexts, with people coming from different backgrounds and systems with their own 'laws', the importance of *pistis* as a relational virtue stands out. As societies and political landscapes are becoming more and more 'transactional' in orientation, the sphere of 'good faith' offers a meaningful relational alternative. In *pistis* relationships, the basic attitude is one of an internally motivated, long-term commitment, and of 'giving good gifts' to one another, beyond what is juridically due or relationally risk-free.

Also, particularly within protestant faith communities, we may need to reconsider placing too great an emphasis on adhesion to specific religious 'beliefs' (see §5.4.5 on *Romans* 14–15) and instead, with Paul, foreground an attitude of welcoming others into a Christ-oriented trust. As *pistis* in Paul's

days had a 'transethnic' and 'transjuridical' orientation, the all-encompassing worldview that *pistis* became within Christian thought should never be used as an excuse to avoid meaningful dialogue with other traditions. Indeed, as a term so heavily invested in a variety of ancient cultural discourses, *pistis* invites us, now as much as in Paul's days, to profoundly engage and connect with a variety of people and their philosophies.

All in all, by placing 'faith' at the heart of human existence, as a 'measure' for all areas of life, Paul invites us to rethink our relationship with reality on a fundamental level. Our mentality, community, and cosmology are formed by the objects of our trust. For Paul, the good life is a connected life lived out of *pistis Christou*.

# Bibliography

- Aalders, Gerhard J. D. 1969. 'Νόμος ἔμψυχος.' In *Politeia und res publica: Beiträge zum Verständnis von Politik, Recht und Staat in der Antike*, edited by Peter Steinmetz. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 315–329.
- Adams, Marilyn McCord. 1992. 'Philosophy and the Bible.' *Faith and Philosophy* 9: 135–150.
- Agamben, Giorgio. 2005. *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Agosto, Efrain. 2004. 'Patronage and Commendation, Imperial and Anti-imperial.' In *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity, 103–123.
- Ahrens, Heinrich Ludolf. 1843. *De graecae linguae dialectis*, vol. 2: De dialecto doricā. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Aitken, James K. 2019. 'Homeric Rewriting in Greek Sirach.' *Vetus Testamentum* 69: 1–32.
- Albrecht, Michael von. 1964. *Silius Italicus: Freiheit und Gebundenheit römischer Epik*. Amsterdam: Schippers.
- Albrecht, Michael von. 2009. 'Philosophie und Religion in der lateinischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit.' In *Religiöse Philosophie und philosophische Religion der frühen Kaiserzeit: Literaturgeschichtliche Perspektiven*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Herwig Görgemanns and Michael von Albrecht. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 23–45.
- Alexander, Loveday. 2001. 'IPSE DIXIT: Citation of Authority in Paul and in the Jewish Hellenistic Schools.' In *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 103–127.
- Alexander, Loveday. 2018. 'A Map of Understanding: The Riskiness of Trust in the World of the Early Christians.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40: 276–288.
- Algra, Keimpe A. 2003. 'Stoic Theology.' In *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, edited by Brad Inwood. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 153–178.
- Algra, Keimpe A. 2007. *Conceptions and Images: Hellenistic Philosophical Theology and Traditional Religion*. Mededelingen van de Afdeling Letterkunde 1. Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen.
- Algra, Keimpe A., Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Mansfeld & Malcolm Schofield (eds.). 1999. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allen, Danielle S. 2011. *Why Plato Wrote*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Anderson, Leslie E. 2010. *Social Capital in Developing Democracies: Nicaragua and Argentina Compared*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Anderson, R. Dean. 1996. *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*. Kampen: Kok Pharos.
- Anderson, R. Dean. 2013. 'Progymnastic Love.' In *Early Christianity in Its Hellenistic Context*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Leiden: Brill, 552–560.
- Ando, Clifford. 1999. 'Was Rome a Polis?' *Was Rome a Polis?* 18: 5–34.
- Ando, Clifford. 2008. *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage 44. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ando, Clifford. 2010. 'The Ontology of Religious Institutions.' *History of Religions* 50: 54–79.
- Annas, Julia. 1995. *The Morality of Happiness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Annas, Julia. 1999. 'Becoming like God: Ethics, Human Nature, and the Divine.' In *Platonic Ethics, Old and New*. Cornell University Press, 52–71.
- Annas, Julia. 2007. 'Ethics in Stoic Philosophy.' *Phronesis* 52: 58–87.
- Armstrong, Arthur Hilary & Robert Austin Markus. 1960. *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Armstrong, John M. 2004. 'After the Ascent: Plato on Becoming Like God.' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26: 171–183.
- Arnold, Bradley. 2014. *Christ as the Telos of Life: Moral Philosophy, Athletic Imagery, and the Aim of Philippians*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Arzt-Grabner, Peter. 2017. 'Zum alltagssprachlichen Hintergrund von πιστις: Das Zeugnis der dokumentarischen Papyri.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 241–249.
- Assefa, Daniel. 2017. 'The Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 85–90) in the Light of Traditional Ethiopian Commentary: The Case of "Open and Closed" Eyes.' In *The Blessing of Enoch: 1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology*, edited by Philip F. Esler. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 61–69.
- Assmann, Jan. 2004. 'Monotheism and Polytheism.' In *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, edited by Sarah Iles Johnston. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 17–31.
- Athanassiadi, Polymnia & Michael Frede (eds.). 1999. *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Athanassiadi, Polymnia & Constantinos Macris. 2013. 'La philosophisation du religieux.' In *Panthée: Religious Transformations in the Graeco-Roman Empire*, edited by Corinne Bonnet and Laurent Bricault. Leiden: Brill, 41–83.
- Atherton, Catherine. 1988. 'Hand over Fist: The Failure of Stoic Rhetoric.' *The Classical Quarterly* 38: 392–427.

- Atherton, Catherine. 2007. *The Stoics on Ambiguity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Atkins, Christopher. 2021. 'The Justice of the Cosmos: Philosophical Cosmology and Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Wisdom of Solomon.' *New Testament Studies* 67: 598–612.
- Atkins, Jed W. 2018. *Roman Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Attridge, Harold W. 2003. 'Making Scents of Paul: The Background and Sense of 2 Corinthians 2.14–17.' In *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, edited by John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht and L. Michael White. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 110. Leiden: Brill, 71–88.
- Augoustakis, Antony. 2010. *Motherhood and the Other: Fashioning Female Power in Flavian Epic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Augoustakis, Antony, Emma Buckley & Claire Stocks (eds.). 2019. *Fides in Flavian literature*. Phoenix Supplementary Volumes 56. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Aune, David E. 1991. 'Romans as a Logos Protreptikos in the Context of Ancient Religious and Philosophical Propaganda.' In *Paulus und das antike Judentum: Tübingen-Durham-Symposium im Gedenken an den 50. Todestag Adolf Schlatters (19. Mai 1938)*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 91–124.
- Babut, Daniel. 1969. *Plutarque et le stoïcisme*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Babut, Daniel. 1974. *La Religion des Philosophes Grecs, de Thalès aux Stoïciens*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Babut, Daniel. 1994. 'Du septicisme au dépassement de la raison: Philosophie et foi religieuse chez Plutarque.' In *Parerga: Choix d'articles de Daniel Babut (1974–1994)*. Collection de la Maison de l'Orient méditerranéen ancien 24. Série littéraire et philosophique 6. Lyon: Maison de l'Orient, 549–581.
- Badiou, Alain. 2003. *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*. Translated by Ray Brassier. Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (trans. of *Saint Paul: La Fondation de l'universalisme*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997).
- Baker, Paul. 2006. *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*. Continuum Discourse Series. London: Continuum.
- Barclay, John M. G. 1996. "Do We Undermine the Law?" A Study of Romans 14.1–15.6.' In *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, edited by James D. G. Dunn. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 287–308.
- Barclay, John M. G. 1999. 'Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-Century Judaism and Christianity.' In *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, edited by David G. Horrell. London: A&C Black, 289–308.
- Barclay, John M. G. 2013. 'Faith and Self-Detachment from Cultural Norms: A Study in Romans 14–15.' *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 104: 192–208.

- Barclay, John M. G. 2015. *Paul and the Gift*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Barnes, Jonathan. 2014. 'Reason and Faith.' In *Proof, Knowledge, and Scepticism: Essays in Ancient Philosophy III*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 35–59.
- Barnett, Paul. 1997. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Barr, James. 1961. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barr, James. 1994. *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology: The Gifford Lectures for 1991, Delivered in the University of Edinburgh*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Barrett, C. K. 1973. *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. London: A&C Black.
- Barrett, C. K. 1991. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Barrett, C. K. 1993. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Black's New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Barry, John Mannix. 2005. *Fides in Julius Caesar's Bellum Civile: A Study in Roman Political Ideology at the Close of the Republican Era*. College Park: University of Maryland (PhD Thesis).
- Bartera, Salvador. 2019. 'Flavian Fides in Tacitus' Histories.' In *Fides in Flavian literature*, edited by Antony Augoustakis, Emma Buckley and Claire Stocks. Phoenix Supplementary Volumes 56. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 257–278.
- Barth, Gerhard. 1982. 'Pistis in hellenistischer Religiosität.' *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 73: 110–126.
- Barth, Karl. 1933. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns. London: Oxford University Press.
- Barth, Karl. 2004. *Church Dogmatics 1.2: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 2 volumes, vol. 2. Translated by G. T. Thomson, Harold Knight. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Thomas F. Torrance. London: T&T Clark (trans. of *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik 1.2: Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes*, Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1938).
- Barton, Carlin A. & Daniel Boyarin. 2016. *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Barton, Stephen C. 2007. 'Sex Rules and the Prohibition of Idolatry: What's the Connection?' In *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism, and Christianity*, edited by Stephen C. Barton. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 141–162.
- Barton, Stephen C. 2017. 'Sanctification and Oneness in 1 Corinthians with Implications for the Case of "Mixed Marriages" (1 Corinthians 7.12–16).' *New Testament Studies* 63: 38–55.
- Bartsch, Hans Werner. 1968. 'The Concept of Faith in Paul's letter to the Romans.' *Biblical Research* 13: 41–53.
- Bartz, Wayne R. 2010. *Critical Thinking: The Antidote For Faith*. Stillwater: River's Bend Press.

- Bates, Matthew W. 2017. *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Batnitzky, Leora. 2011. *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Baur, Ferdinand Christian. 1878. *The church history of the first three centuries*. Translated by Allan Menzies. London: Williams and Norgate (trans. of *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche. Kirchengeschichte der drei ersten Jahrhunderte*, Tübingen: Fues, 1863).
- Beard, Mary, John North & Simon Price. 1998. *Religions of Rome*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: A History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Becker, Andrew Sprague. 1993. 'The "Theologia Tripertita" in Dio Chrysostom's Olympian Oration.' *The Classical World* 87: 67–71.
- Behm, Johannes. 1942. 'νοέω, νοῦς, νόημα, κτλ.' In *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (ThWNT)*, 8 volumes, vol. 4, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 947–1016.
- Bell, Richard H. 1998. *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18–3.20*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Bellantuono, Antonella. 2018. 'Does the Word Group ἀπιστ- Have a Religious Connotation in Non-Jewish Greek Literature?' In *Die Septuaginta: Geschichte, Wirkung, Relevanz*, edited by Martin Meiser, Michaela Geiger, Siegfried Kreuzer and Marcus Sigismunt. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1405. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, xii, 947.
- Ben-Yehuda, Nachman. 1992. 'Criminalization and Deviantization as Properties of the Social Order.' *The Sociological Review* 40: 73–108.
- Benitez, Rick & Harold Tarrant. 2015. 'Philosophy.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, edited by Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 211–224.
- Benvéniste, Emile. 1993. *Indoeuropäische Institutionen: Wortschatz, Geschichte, Funktionen*. Frankfurt: Campus.
- Berchman, Robert M. 2005. *Porphyry Against the Christians*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bergmann, Claudia. 2006. 'Idol Worship in Bel and the Dragon and Other Jewish Literature from the Second Temple Period.' In *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures*, edited by Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden. Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies 53. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 207–223.
- Berkel, Tazuko A. van. 2013. 'Made to Measure: Protagoras' μέτρον.' In *Protagoras of Abdera: The Man, His Measure*, edited by Johannes M. van Ophuijsen, Marlein van Raalte and Peter Stork. Leiden: Brill.



- Berkley, Timothy W. 2000. *From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2.17–29*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 175. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Berlage, Hendrik Petrus. 1856. *Disquisitio exegetico-theologica de formulae Paulinae ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ significatione*. Leiden: Engels (PhD thesis).
- Bertschmann, Dorothea H. 2014. 'The Good, the Bad, and the State: Romans 13.1–7 and the Dynamics of Love.' *New Testament Studies* 60: 232–249.
- Beseler, Gerhard von. 1934. 'Fides.' In *Atti del congresso internazionale di Diritto Romano, Bologna e Roma 17–27 Aprile 1933*. Pavia: Fusi, 135–167.
- Betegh, Gábor (ed.). 2004. *The Derveni Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 1979. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 1986. 'The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology according to the Apostle Paul.' In *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère*, edited by Albert Vanhoye. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 73. Leuven: Peeters, 16–48.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 1988. 'Das Problem der Grundlagen der paulinischen Ethik (Römer 12.1–2).' *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 199–218.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 1991. 'Christianity as Religion: Paul's Attempt at Definition in Romans.' *The Journal of Religion* 71: 315–344.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 1994. 'The Birth of Christianity as a Hellenistic Religion: Three Theories of Origin.' *The Journal of Religion* 1–25.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 2004. 'God Concept and Cultic Image: The Argument in Dio Chrysostom's "Oratio 12 (Olympikos)".' *Illinois Classical Studies* 29: 131–142.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 2007. 'Credibility and Credulity in Plutarch's Life of Numa Pompilius.' In *Reading Religions in the Ancient World*, edited by David Edward Aune and Robin Darling Young. Leiden: Brill, 39–56.
- Bieringer, Reimund & Jan Lambrecht. 1994. *Studies on 2 Corinthians*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 112. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Binder, Hermann. 1968. *Der Glaube bei Paulus*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.
- Bird, Michael. 2008. 'Judgment and Justification in Paul: A Review Article.' *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18: 299–313.
- Bird, Michael F. 2009. *Colossians and Philemon: A New Covenant Commentary*. New Covenant Commentary Series 1. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Bird, Michael F. & Preston M. Sprinkle (eds.). 2009. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Blackwell, Ben C. 2011. *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 11 314. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

- Blank, David. 2012. 'Varro and Antiochus.' In *The Philosophy of Antiochus*, edited by David N. Sedley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 250–289.
- Blanton, Thomas R. 2017. *A Spiritual Economy: Gift Exchange in the Letters of Paul of Tarsus*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Blocher, Henri. 2004. 'Justification of the Ungodly (Sola Fide): Theological Reflections.' In *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 2 volumes, vol. 2: The Paradoxes of Paul, edited by D. A. Carson, Peter Thomas O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 489–500.
- Bloomquist, L. Gregory. 2003. 'Paul's Inclusive Language: The Ideological Texture of Romans 1.' In *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins*, edited by David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist and Duane F. Watson. London: A&C Black, 165–193.
- Blumenfeld, Bruno. 2001. *The Political Paul: Democracy and Kingship in Paul's Thought*. The Library of New Testament Studies 210. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.
- Bobonich, Christopher. 2004. *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Boer, Martinus C. de. 2011. *Galatians: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Boer, Willis Peter de. 1962. *The Imitation of Paul: An Exegetical Study*. Kampen: Kok.
- Boghossian, Peter. 2013. *A Manual for Creating Atheists*. Durham, NC: Pitchstone.
- Böhm, Martina. 2017. 'Zum Glaubensverständnis des Philo von Alexandrien: Weisheitliche Theologie in der 1. Hälfte des 1. Jahrhunderts n.Chr.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 159–181.
- Bonazzi, Mauro. 2008a. 'The Commentary as Polemical Tool: The Anonymous Commentator on the Theaetetus against the Stoics.' *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 64: 597–605.
- Bonazzi, Mauro. 2008b. 'Towards Transcendence: Philo and the Renewal of Platonism in the Early Imperial Age.' In *Philo of Alexandria and Post-Aristotelian Philosophy*, edited by F. Alesse. Leiden: Brill, 233–252.
- Bonazzi, Mauro. 2012. 'Theoria and Praxis: On Plutarch's Platonism.' *Theoria, Praxis, and the Contemplative Life after Plato and Aristotle* 139–161.
- Bonazzi, Mauro. 2017. 'The Platonist Appropriation of Stoic Epistemology.' In *From Stoicism to Platonism: The Development of Philosophy, 100 BCE–100 CE*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 120–141.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 1959. *Prisoner for God: Letters and Papers from Prison*. Translated by Reginald H. Fuller. Edited by Eberhard Bethge. New York: Macmillan.
- Bonhöffer, Adolf. 1911. *Epiktet und das Neue Testament*. Gießen: Töpelmann.

- Bonniec, H. le. 1965. 'Fides.' In *Lexikon der Alten Welt*, 3 volumes, vol. 1. Zürich: Artemis.
- Bontempi, Milena. 2013. *La fiducia secondo gli antichi: 'pistis' in Gorgia tra Parmenide e Platone*. Saggi, nuova serie 30. Napoli: Editoriale scientifica.
- Boring, M. Eugene., Klaus Berger & Carsten Colpe. 1995. *Hellenistic commentary to the New Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Botha, J.E. 1987. 'The Meanings of "pisteuō" in the Greek New Testament: A Semantic-Lexicographical Study.' *Neotestamentica* 21: 225–240.
- Bousset, Wilhelm. 1915. *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom: Literarische Untersuchungen zu Philo und Clemens von Alexandria, Justin und Irenäus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Bowden, Hugh. 2015. 'Impiety.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, edited by Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 325–339.
- Boyancé, Pierre. 1955. 'Sur la théologie de Varron.' *Revue des études anciennes*: 57–84.
- Boyancé, Pierre. 1964. 'Les Romains, peuple de la "fides".' *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé: Lettres d'humanité* 23: 419–435.
- Boyancé, Pierre. 1972a. "'Fides" et le serment.' *Publications de l'École française de Rome* 11: 91–103.
- Boyancé, Pierre. 1972b. "'Fides Romana" et la vie internationale.' *Publications de l'École française de Rome* 11: 105–119.
- Boyancé, Pierre. 1972c. 'La main de "fides".' *Publications de l'École française de Rome* 11: 121–133.
- Boys-Stones, George. 2009. 'Ancient Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction.' In *Ancient Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Graham Robert Oppy and Nick Trakakis. History of Western Philosophy of Religion 1. London: Routledge, 1–22.
- Boys-Stones, George. 2016. 'Providence and Religion in Middle Platonism.' In *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*, edited by Esther Eidinow, Julia Kindt and Robin Osborne. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 317–338.
- Boys-Stones, George. 2017. *Platonist Philosophy 80 BC to AD 250: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boys-Stones, George R. 1996. 'Plutarch, De Stoicorum Repugnantiis 1048DE.' *The Classical Quarterly* 46: 591–595.
- Boys-Stones, George R. 1997a. 'Thyrsus-Bearer of the Academy or Enthusiast for Plato? Plutarch's "De Stoicorum Repugnantiis".' In *Plutarch and His Intellectual World*, edited by Judith Mossman. Havertown: Classical Press of Wales, 41–58.
- Boys-Stones, George R. 1997b. 'Plutarch on the Probable Principle of Cold: Epistemology and the "De Primo Frigido".' *The Classical Quarterly* 47: 227–238.
- Boys-Stones, George R. 2001. *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy: A Study of its Development from the Stoics to Origen*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Boys-Stones, George R. 2014. 'Unity and the Good: Platonists against οὐκείωσις.' In *Unité et origine des vertus dans la philosophie anciennes*. Cahiers de philosophie ancienne 23. Brussels: Éditions Ousia, 297–320.
- Boys-Stones, George R. 2019. 'Difference, Opposition, and the Roots of Intolerance in Ancient Philosophical Polemic.' In *Intolerance, Polemics, and Debate in Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill, 259–281.
- Bradley, David G. 1953. 'The Topos as a Form in the Pauline Paraenesis.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 72: 238–246.
- Brandenburger, Egon. 1988. 'Pistis und Soteria: Zum Verstehenshorizont von "Glaube" im Urchristentum.' *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 165.
- Brant, Jo-Ann A. 1993. 'The Place of Mimēsis in Paul's Thought.' *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 22: 285–300.
- Brehier, Emile. 1908. *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon D'Alexandrie*. Paris: Picard.
- Bremmer, Jan N. 1999. *Greek Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bremmer, Jan N. 2007. 'Atheism in Antiquity.' In *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, edited by Michael Martin. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 11–26.
- Bremmer, Jan N. 2017. *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays I*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 379. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Brenk, Frederick E. 2005. 'Plutarch's Middle-Platonic God: About to Enter (or Remake) the Academy.' In *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch: Götterbilder—Gottesbilder—Weltbilder*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold. Berlin: de Gruyter, 27–50.
- Brenk, Frederick E. 2007. 'Setting a Good Exemplum: Case Studies in the Moralia, the Lives as Case Studies.' In *With Unperfumed Voice: Studies in Plutarch, in Greek Literature, Religion and Philosophy, and in the New Testament Background*. Potsdamer altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 21. Steiner, 195–215.
- Brenk, Frederick E. 2014. 'Philo and Plutarch on the Nature of God.' *Studia Philonica Annual* 26: 79–92.
- Breytenbach, Cilliers. 1989. *Versöhnung: eine Studie zur paulinischen Soteriologie*. Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag.
- Breytenbach, Cilliers. 2010. *Grace, Reconciliation, Concord: The Death of Christ in Graeco-Roman Metaphors*. Leiden: Brill.
- Brookins, Timothy. 2010. 'Rhetoric and Philosophy in the First Century: Their Relation with Respect to 1 Corinthians 1–4.' *Neotestamentica* 44: 233–252.
- Brooten, Bernadette J. 1994. 'Is Belief the Center of Religion?' In *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays in Honor of Dieter Georgi*, edited by Lukas Bormann, Kelly del Del Tredici and Angela Standhartinger. Leiden: Brill, 471–479.

- Brouwer, René. 2014. *The Stoic Sage: The Early Stoics on Wisdom, Sagehood and Socrates*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bruce, F. F. 1982. *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. Edited by David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, Ralph P. Martin. Word Biblical Commentary 45. Waco, TX: Word.
- Brunner, Emil. 1946. *Revelation and Reason: The Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge*. Translated by Olive Wyon. Philadelphia: Westminster (trans. of *Offenbarung und Vernunft*, Zürich: Zwingli, 1941).
- Brunt, P. A. 1989. 'Philosophy and Religion in the Late Republic.' In *Philosophia Togata: Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society*, edited by Miriam T. Griffin and Jonathan Barnes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 174–198.
- Bryan, Christopher. 2000. *A Preface to Romans: Notes on the Epistle in Its Literary and Cultural Setting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buber, Martin. 1951. *Two Types of Faith*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (trans. of *Zwei Glaubensweisen*, Zürich: Manesse, 1950).
- Buchak, Lara. 2012. 'Can It Be Rational to Have Faith?' In *Probability in the Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Jacob Chandler and Victoria Harrison. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 225–247.
- Buckley, Emma. 2019. 'Fides under Fire: Virtue and Vice in the Octavia.' In *Fides in Flavian Literature*, edited by Emma Buckley, Antony Augustakis and Claire Stocks. Phoenix Supplementary Volumes 56. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 232–254.
- Bull, Christian H. 2018. *The Tradition of Hermes Trismegistus: The Egyptian Priestly Figure as a Teacher of Hellenized Wisdom*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. 1910. *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. 1951. *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 volumes, vol. 1. Translated by Kendrick Grobel. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. 1968. 'Πίστις κτλ.' In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, 10 volumes, vol. 6, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 174–182, 197–228.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. 1984. 'Geschichte und Eschatologie im Neuen Testament.' In *Glauben und Verstehen: gesammelte Aufsätze III*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 91–106.
- Burges, M.A. 1894. *The Works of Plato*, vol. 6: The Doubtful Works. London: Henry G. Bohn.
- Burk, Denny. 2008. 'Discerning Corinthian Slogans through Paul's Use of the Diatribe in 1 Corinthians 6.12–20.' *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18: 99–121.
- Burkert, Walter. 1972. 'Zur geistesgeschichtlichen Einordnung einiger Pseudopythagorica.' In *Pseudepigrapha*, edited by Kurt von Fritz. Vandœuvres: Fondation Hardt, 25–57.
- Burkert, Walter. 2014. 'How to Learn about Souls: The Derveni Papyrus and Democritus.' In *Poetry as Initiation: The Center for Hellenic Studies Symposium on the*

- Derveni Papyrus*, edited by Iōanna Papadopoulou and Leonard Charles Muellner. Hellenic Studies 63. Washington, D.C: Center for Hellenic Studies, 107–114.
- Burnet, John. 1892. *Early Greek Philosophy*. London: A&C Black.
- Bury, R. G. 1929. *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*. Loeb Classical Library 234. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bussels, Stijn. 2012. 'Enargeia as Epistemological Requirement and Rhetorical Virtue.' In *The Animated Image, Roman Theory on Naturalism, Vividness and Divine Power*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 57–81.
- Buxton, R. G. A. 1982. *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy: A Study of Peitho*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Calabi, Francesca. 2008. *God's Acting, Man's Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria*. Leiden: Brill.
- Calderone, Salvatore. 1964. *Pistis—fides: Ricerche di storia e diritto internazionale nell'antichità*. Messina: Università degli studi.
- Calhoun, Robert Matthew. 2011. *Paul's Definitions of the Gospel in Romans 1*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Callahan, Allen Dwight. 1997. *Embassy of Onesimus: The Letter of Paul to Philemon*. London: A&C Black.
- Calvo, Tomás. 1977. 'Truth and Doxa in Parmenides.' *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 59: 245–260.
- Campbell, Constantine R. 2012. *Paul and Union With Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Campbell, Douglas A. 1992a. *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21–26*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 65. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Campbell, Douglas A. 1992b. 'The Meaning of Pistis and Nomos in Paul: A Linguistic and Structural Perspective.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91–103.
- Campbell, Douglas A. 1997. 'False Presuppositions in the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: A Response to Brian Dodd.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116: 713–719.
- Campbell, Douglas A. 1999. 'Natural Theology in Paul? Reading Romans 1.19–20.' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 1: 231–252.
- Campbell, Douglas A. 2005. *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 274. London: T&T Clark.
- Campbell, Douglas A. 2013. *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Cancik, Hubert & Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier. 2001. 'The Truth of Images. Cicero and Varro on Image Worship.' In *Representation in Religion: Studies in Honour of Moshe Barasch*, edited by Moshé Barash, Jan Assmann and Albert I. Baumgarten. Leiden: Brill, 43–61.

- Carter, Timothy L. 2009. 'Looking at the Metaphor of Christ's Body in 1 Corinthians 12.' In *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, edited by Stanley E. Porter. Brill, 93–115.
- Casadio, Giovanni. 2010. 'Religio versus Religion.' In *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer*, edited by Jitse Dijkstra, Justin Kroesen and Yme Kuiper. Numen Book Series 127. Leiden: Brill, 301–326.
- Castelli, Elizabeth Anne. 1991. *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Chadwick, Henry (ed.). 1953. *Origen—Contra Celsum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chadwick, Henry. 1959. 'The Pythagorean Sentences.' In *The Sentences of Sextus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chanotis, Angelos. 2010. 'Megatheism: The Search for the Almighty God and the Competition of Cults.' In *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire*, edited by Stephen Mitchell and Peter Van Nuffelen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 112–140.
- Chesnut, Glenn F. 1978. 'The Ruler and the Logos in Neopythagorean, Middle Platonic, and Late Stoic Political Philosophy.' In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 2.16.2, edited by Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1310–1332.
- Chester, Stephen J. 2005. 'Divine Madness? Speaking in Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14.23.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27: 417–446.
- Chester, Stephen J. 2017. *Reading Paul with the Reformers: Reconciling Old and New Perspectives*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- ChristenUnie. 2013. 'Campagnegids Gemeenteraadsverkiezingen 2014.' <https://www.christenunie.nl/1/nl/library/download/559326> (accessed January 3, 2017).
- Christian, Ed. 1999. '1 Corinthians 7.10–16: Divorce of the Unbeliever or Reconciliation with the Unfaithful?' *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 10: 41–62.
- Church, Kenneth Ward & Patrick Hanks. 1990. 'Word Association Norms, Mutual Information, and Lexicography.' *Computational Linguistics* 16: 22–29.
- Clair, Joseph. 2016. *Discerning the Good in the Letters and Sermons of Augustine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clarke, Andrew D. 1998. "'Be Imitators of Me": Paul's Model of Leadership.' *Tyndale Bulletin* 49: 329–360.
- Coffee, Neil. 2009. *The Commerce of War: Exchange and Social Order in Latin Epic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cole, Thomas. 1967. *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*. American Philological Association Monographs 25. Cleveland: Western Reserve Press.
- Collange, Jean-François. 1972. *Enigmes de la Deuxième Epître de Paul aux Corinthiens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Collins, C. John. 2010. 'Echoes of Aristotle in Romans 2.14–15: Or, Maybe Abimelech Was Not So Bad After All.' *Journal of Markets and Morality* 13: 123–173.
- Compton, R. Bruce. 2004. '1 Corinthians 13.8–13 and the Cessation of Miraculous Gifts.' *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 9: 97–144.
- Cooper, John M. 2007. 'Socrates and Philosophy as a Way of Life.' In *Maieusis: Essays in Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat*, edited by Dominic Scott. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 20–43.
- Copan, Victor A. 2007. *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director: An Analysis of the Imitation of Paul with Implications and Applications to the Practice of Spiritual Direction*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster.
- Copenhaver, Brian P. 1995. *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a New English Translation, with Notes and Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Corbeil, Anthony. 2005. 'The Topography of Fides in Propertius 1.16.' In *Defining Genre and Gender in Latin Literature: Essays Presented to William S. Anderson on His Seventy-fifth Birthday*, edited by William W. Batstone and Garth Tissol. New York: Lang, 79–95.
- Cornford, F. M. 1912. 'Psychology and Social Structure in the Republic of Plato.' *The Classical Quarterly* 6: 246–265.
- Cousar, Charles B. 2009. *Philippians and Philemon: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Coutsoumpos, Panayotis. 2008. 'Paul's Attitude Towards the Law.' In *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, edited by Stanley E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 39–50.
- Coutsoumpos, Panayotis. 2015. *Paul, Corinth, and the Roman Empire*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Cox, Ronald. 2009. *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Cranfield, C. E. B. 2004a [1975]. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Romans 1–8. International Critical Commentary Series. London: T&T Clark.
- Cranfield, C. E. B. 2004b [1975]. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 volumes, vol. 2: Romans 9–16. International Critical Commentary Series. London: T&T Clark.
- Cranfield, Charles E. B. 1962. 'Μέτρου πίστεως in Romans 12.3.' *New Testament Studies* 8: 34–51.
- Cranfield, Charles E. B. 1975. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 volumes, vol. 1. Edinburgh; London; New York: T&T Clark.
- Cremer, Hermann. 1899. *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre im Zusammenhange ihrer geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.



- Cremer, Hermann & William Urwick. 1886. *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Cribiore, Raffaella. 2001. *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Crombie, Frederick. 1885. 'Origen - Contra Celsum.' In *The ante-Nicene fathers. Translations of the writings of the fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 4, edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson and A. Cleveland Coxe. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Company.
- Cruse, D. A. 2000. *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cryer, Frederick H. & Thomas L. Thompson. 1998. *Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments*. London: A&C Black.
- Cueto, Bernard A. 2012. *The Concept of Pistis in Its Greco-Roman Context and Its Impact on Paul's Writings*. Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary (PhD Thesis).
- Dahlheim, Werner. 1968. *Struktur und Entwicklung des römischen Völkerrechts im dritten und zweiten Jahrhundert v. Chr.* Vestigia 8. Munich: Beck.
- Daniélou, Jean. 2014. *Philo of Alexandria*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Danker, Frederick W. 1982. *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*. St. Louis: Clayton.
- Davies, Glenn N. 1990. *Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study in Romans 1-4*. Sheffield: JSOT.
- Davis, Stephan K. 2002. *The antithesis of the ages: Paul's reconfiguration of Torah*. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 33. Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America.
- Dawes, Gregory W. 1996. 'The Danger of Idolatry: First Corinthians 8.7-13.' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 58: 82-98.
- Dawkins, Richard. 1992. 'A scientist's case against God.' *The Independent* April 20, 1992, at page 17. (Originally a lecture at the Edinburgh International Science Festival on 15 April 1992).
- Deissmann, G. Adolf. 1897. *Neue Bibelstudien: Sprachgeschichtliche Beiträge, zumeist aus den Papyri und Inschriften, zur Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*. Marburg: Elbert.
- Delgado Jara, Inmaculada. 2014. *Diccionario griego-español del Nuevo Testamento*. Estella: Verbo Divino.
- Delling, Gerhard. 1962. *Worship in the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Westminster.
- Deming, Will. 1995. *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deming, Will. 2003. 'Paul and Indifferent Things.' In *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, 2 volumes, vol. 1, edited by J. Paul Sampley. Harrisburg: Trinity, 384-403.

- Deming, Will. 2016. 'Paul and Indifferent Things.' In *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, 2 volumes, vol. 2, edited by J. Paul Sampley. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 48–67.
- Derow, Peter. 2012. *Imperialism, Cultural Politics, and Polybius*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Derrett, J. Duncan M. 1991. 'Judgement and 1 Corinthians 6.' *New Testament Studies* 37: 22–36.
- Des Places, Édouard. 1971. *Oracles chaldaïques: Avec un choix de commentaires anciens*. Collection des universités de France. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- deSilva, David A. 1999. 'Patronage and Reciprocity: The Context of Grace in the New Testament.' *Ashland Theological Journal* 31: 32–84.
- deSilva, David A. 2000. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity.
- DeWitt, Norman Wentworth. 1954a. *Epicurus and His Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- DeWitt, Norman Wentworth. 1954b. *St. Paul and Epicurus*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- De Lacy, Phillip Howard (ed.). 1980. *Galen—De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis: Edition, Translation, and Commentary*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- Diels, Hermann (ed.). 1879. *Doxographi graeci: Collegit recensuit prolegomenis indicibusque instruxit*. Berlin: Reimer.
- Diels, Hermann & Walther Kranz. 1951. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Berlin: Weidmann.
- Dihle, Albrecht. 1968. *Der Kanon der zwei Tugenden*. Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Dihle, Albrecht. 2009. 'Die griechische Philosophie zur Zeit ihrer Rezeption durch Juden und Christen.' In *Religiöse Philosophie und philosophische Religion der frühen Kaiserzeit: Literaturgeschichtliche Perspektiven*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Herwig Görgemanns and Michael von Albrecht. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 3–19.
- Dillon, John. 1977. *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism, 80 BC to AD 220*. London: Duckworth.
- Dillon, John. 1993. *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Dirkzwager, A. 1992. 'Pistis—niet alleen "geloof"?' *Met Andere Woorden* 11: 13–16.
- Dmitriev, Sviatoslav. 2011. *The Greek Slogan of Freedom and Early Roman Politics in Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dobbeler, Axel von. 1987. *Glaube als Teilhabe: Historische und semantische Grundlagen der paulinischen Theologie und Ekklesiologie des Glaubens*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Dodd, Brian J. 1999. *Paul's Paradigmatic T: Personal Example as Literary Strategy*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

- Dodds, Eric Robertson. 1965. *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dods, Marcus (ed.). 1934. *Aurelius Augustine—The City of God*, 2 volumes, vol. 1. *The Works of Aurelius Augustine: A New Translation 1*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Dombrowski, Daniel A. 2005. *A Platonic Philosophy of Religion: A Process Perspective*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Dominick, Yancy Hughes. 2018. 'The Image of the Noble Sophist.' *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22: 203–220.
- Donaldson, Terence L. 2006. Jewish Christianity, Israel's Stumbling and the Sonderweg Reading of Paul.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29: 27–54.
- Donaldson, Terence L. 2015. 'Paul within Judaism: A Critical Evaluation from a "New Perspective" Perspective.' In *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, edited by Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm. Augsburg: Fortress, 277–301.
- Donfried, Karl P. 2011. 'Paul's Jewish Matrix: The Scope and Nature of the Contributions.' In *Paul's Jewish Matrix*, edited by Thomas G. Casey and Justin Taylor. Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 11–49.
- Donini, Pierluigi. 1986. 'Lo scetticismo accademico, Aristotele e l'unità della tradizione platonica secondo Plutarco.' In *Storiografia E Dossografia Nella Filosofia Antica*, edited by Giuseppe Cambiano. Turin: Tirrenia-Stampatori, 203–226.
- Dorman, Anke. 2017. 'Abraham's Happiness and Faith in the Book of Jubilees.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 143–158.
- Dörrie, Heinrich. 1986. 'Zu Varros Konzeption der Theologia Tripertita in den Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum.' In *Beiträge zur altitalischen Geistesgeschichte: Festschrift Gerhard Radke*, edited by Ruth Altheim-Stiehl and Manfred Rosenbach. Fontes et Commentationes 2. Muenster: Aschendorff, 76–81.
- Dörrie, Heinrich. 1996. *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus*, 4 volumes, vol. 1: Einige grundlegende Axiome/Platonische Physik (im antiken Verständnis) (Bausteine 101–124: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar). Edited by Matthias Baltes. *Der Platonismus in der Antike: Grundlagen—System—Entwicklung*. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog.
- Dotter, Daniel. 2015. 'The Process of Deviantization.' In *The Handbook of Deviance*, edited by Erich Goode. New York: Wiley & Sons, 101–120.
- Downing, F. Gerald. 1984. 'Reflecting the First Century: 1 Corinthians 13.12.' *The Expository Times* 95: 176–177.

- Downing, F. Gerald. 2010. 'Ambiguity, Ancient Semantics, and Faith.' *New Testament Studies* 56: 139–162.
- Downs, David J. & Benjamin J. Lappenga. 2019. *The Faithfulness of the Risen Christ: Pistis and the Exalted Lord in the Pauline Letters*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- Drachmann, A. B. 2005. *Atheism in Pagan Antiquity*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger.
- Driediger-Murphy, Lindsay Gayle & Esther Eidinow (eds.). 2019. *Ancient Divination and Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Du Toit, Andrie. 2000. "In Christ", "in the Spirit", and Related Prepositional Phrases: Their Relevance for a Discussion on Pauline Mysticism.' *Neotestamentica* 34: 287–298.
- Duff, Timothy. 2011. 'Plutarch's "Lives" and the Critical Reader.' In *Virtues for the People: Aspects of Plutarchan Ethics*, edited by Geert Roskam and Luc Van der Stockt. Plutarchea Hypomnemata. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 59–82.
- Duncan, Donnell. 2011. *Faith Science: Where Faith and the Scientific Method Collide*. London: Tate.
- Dunn, James D. G. 1983. 'The New Perspective on Paul.' *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 65: 95–122.
- Dunn, James D. G. 1988a. *Romans 9–16*. Word Biblical Commentary 38B. Dallas: Word Books.
- Dunn, James D. G. 1988b. *Romans 1–8*. Word Biblical Commentary 38A. Dallas: Word Books.
- Dunn, James D. G. 1998. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Dunn, James D. G. 2002. 'Once More, πίστις Χριστοῦ.' In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3.1–4.11*. The Biblical Resource Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 249–271.
- Dunn, James D. G. & Alan M. Suggate. 1994. *The Justice of God: A Fresh Look at the Old Doctrine of Justification by Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Dunson, Ben C. 2011. 'Faith in Romans: The Salvation of the Individual or Life in Community?' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34: 19–46.
- Dutilh Novaes, Catarina. 2020. 'The Role of Trust in Argumentation.' *Informal Logic* 40: 205–236.
- Dvornik, Francis. 1966. *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background*, 2 volumes. Dumbarton Oaks Studies 9. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, trustees for Harvard University.
- Easter, Matthew. 2010. 'The Pistis Christou Debate: Main Arguments and Responses in Summary.' *Currents in Biblical Research* 9: 33–47.
- Eastman, Susan. 2008. 'Imitating Christ Imitating Us: Paul's Educational Project in Philippians.' In *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, edited by J. Ross Wagner, Christopher Kavin Rowe and A. Katherine Grieb. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 427–450.

- Eckstein, A. M. 1995. 'Glabrio and the Aetolians: A Note on Deditio.' *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 125: 271–289.
- Edmondson, Jonathan (ed.). 2009. *Augustus*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Edwards, Mark J. 1993. 'Lucian and the Rhetoric of Philosophy: The Hermetismus.' *L'Antiquité Classique* 62: 195–202.
- Edwards, Mark J. forthcoming. 'Pistis and Platonism.' In *Thinking about Thinking Gods: Beliefs and Conceptions of the Divine in the Ancient World*, edited by Teresa Morgan and Barbara Kowalzig. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ehrensperger, Kathy. 2013. *Paul at the Crossroads of Cultures: Theologizing in the Space Between*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Eidinow, Esther & Julia Kindt. 2015. *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eidinow, Esther, Julia Kindt & Robin Osborne. 2016. *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eisenbaum, Pamela. 2009. *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Eisenstadt, Shmuel Noah & Luis Roniger. 1984. *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellington, Dustin Watson. 2011. 'Imitating Paul's Relationship to the Gospel: 1 Corinthians 8.1–11.1.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33: 303–315.
- Elliott, Neil. 1997. 'Romans 13.1–7 in the Context of Imperial Propaganda.' In *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity, 184–204.
- Elliott, Neil. 2002. 'Asceticism in Romans 14–15.' In *Asceticism and the New Testament*, edited by Leif E. Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush. London: Routledge, 231–251.
- Elliott, Neil. 2008. *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire*. Paul in critical contexts. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Elliott, Neil. 2015. 'The Question of Politics: Paul as a Diaspora Jew under Roman Rule.' In *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, edited by Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm. Augsburg: Fortress, 203–244.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 1990. *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis: Moral Development and Social Interaction in Early Stoic Philosophy*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 2000. *Paul and the Stoics*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels (ed.). 2001. *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 2005. 'The Relationship with Others: Similarities and Differences between Paul and Stoicism.' *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 96: 35–60.

- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 2006a. 'Once more a Lutheran Paul? Francis Watson, Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith.' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 59: 439–460.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 2006b. 'Paul's Stoicizing Politics in Romans 12–13: The Role of 13.1–10 in the Argument.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29: 163–172.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 2009. "Everything is Clean" and "Everything that is Not of Faith is Sin": The Logic of Pauline Casuistry in Romans 14.1–15.13.' In *Paul, Grace and Freedom: Essays in Honour of John K. Riches*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 22–38.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 2010. *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 2022. 'Paul the Philosopher.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Pauline Studies*, edited by Matthew V. Novenson and R. Barry Matlock. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 198–216.
- Engels, David & Peter Van Nuffelen. 2014a. 'Religion and Competition in Antiquity: An Introduction.' In *Religion and Competition in Antiquity*, edited by David Engels and Peter Van Nuffelen. Collection Latomus 343. Brussels: Latomus: Société des Études Latines, 9–44.
- Engels, David & Peter Van Nuffelen (eds.). 2014b. *Religion and Competition in Antiquity*. Collection Latomus 343. Brussels: Latomus: Société des Études Latines.
- Erler, Michael. 2002a. 'Epicurus as Deus Mortalis: Homoiosis Theoi and Epicurean Self-Cultivation.' In *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath*, edited by Dorothea Frede and André Laks. *Philosophia Antiqua* 89. Leiden: Brill, 159–181.
- Erler, Michael. 2002b. 'Hilfe der Götter und Erkenntnis des Selbst: Sokrates als Göttergeschenk bei Platon und den Platonikern.' In *Metaphysik und Religion: Zur Signatur des spätantiken Denkens (Akten des Internationalen Kongresses vom 13.–17. März 2001 in Würzburg)*, edited by Theo Kobusch and Michael Erler. Berlin: de Gruyter, 387–413.
- Erler, Michael. 2011. 'Autodidact and Student: On the Relationship of Authority and Autonomy in Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition.' In *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition*, edited by Jeffrey Fish and Kirk R. Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 9–28.
- Eshleman, Kendra. 2008. 'Affection and Affiliation. Social Networks and Conversion to Philosophy.' *The Classical Journal* 103: 129–140.
- Eshleman, Kendra. 2012. *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians*. Greek Culture in the Roman World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Esler, Philip Francis. 1994. *The First Christians in their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*. London: Routledge.
- Esler, Philip Francis. 2003. *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter*. Augsburg: Fortress.

- Evans, Robert F. 2010. *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Harlow: Longman.
- Faraguna, M. 2012. 'Pistis and Apistia: Aspects of the development of Social and Economic Relations in Classical Greece.' *Mediterraneo Antico* 15: 355–374.
- Fee, Gordon D. 1977. '2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1 and Food offered to Idols.' *New Testament Studies* 23: 140–161.
- Fee, Gordon D. 1987. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Fee, Gordon D. 2014. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Feeney, Denis. 1998. *Literature and Religion at Rome: Cultures, Contexts, and Beliefs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Feldmeier, Reinhard. 1998. 'Philosoph und Priester: Plutarch als Theologe.' In *Mousopolos Stephanos: Festschrift für Herwig Gorgemanns*, edited by Manuel Baumbach, Helga Kohler and Adolf Martin Ritter. Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften (Neue Folge) 11 102. Heidelberg: Winter, 412–425.
- Ferguson, J. & J. P. Hershbell. 1990. 'Epicureanism under the Roman Empire.' In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 2.36.4, edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2257–2327.
- Ferguson, William Everett. 2011. 'Romans 1.23 and Greco-Roman Religion.' In *Method and Meaning: Essays on New Testament Interpretation in Honor of Harold W. Attridge*, edited by Andrew Brian MacGowan and Kent Harold Richards. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 441–456.
- Ferrari, Franco. 2005. 'Der Gott Plutarchs und der Gott Platons.' In *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch: Götterbilder–Gottesbilder–Weltbilder*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold. Berlin: de Gruyter, 13–25.
- Ferrari, Franco & Gretchen Reydams-Schils. 2014. 'Middle Platonism and its relation to Stoicism and the Peripatetic tradition.' In *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism*, edited by Svetla Slaveva-Griffin and Pauliina Remes. London: Routledge, 40–51.
- Festugière, André-Jean. 1949. *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 volumes. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Fillmore, Charles J. 1976. 'Frame Semantics and the Nature of Language.' *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 280: 20–32.
- Fillmore, Charles J. 1982. 'Frame Semantics.' In *Linguistics in the Morning Calm*, edited by The Linguistics Society of Korea. Seoul: Hansin, 111–137.
- Fillmore, Charles J. 2006. 'Frame semantics.' In *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*, edited by Dick Geeraerts. Berlin: de Gruyter, 373–400.
- Fine, Gail. 1978. 'Knowledge and Belief in Republic V.' *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 60: 121–139.

- Fine, Gail. 1990. 'Knowledge and belief in Republic v–vii.' In *Epistemology*, edited by Stephen Everson. Companions to Ancient Thought 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 85–115.
- Fink, David C. 2010. 'Was There a "Reformation Doctrine of Justification"?' *Harvard Theological Review* 103: 205–235.
- Fink, Jakob L. (ed.). 2012. *The Development of Dialectic from Plato to Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Finkelberg, Aryeh. 1988. 'Parmenides' Foundation of the Way of Truth.' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 6: 39–67.
- Finlan, Stephen. 2008. 'Can we speak of "theosis" in Paul?' *Partakers of the Divine Nature* 68.
- Finlan, Stephen. 2012. 'Spiritualization of Sacrifice in Paul and Hebrews.' In *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible*, edited by Christian A. Eberhart. Leiden: Brill, 83–97.
- Fiore, Benjamin. 1986. *The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles*. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.
- Fiore, Benjamin. 1990. 'Passion in Paul and Plutarch: 1 Corinthians 5–6 and the Polemic against Epicureans.' In *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, edited by David L. Balch, William E. Ferguson and Wayne A. Meeks. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Firth, J. R. 1957. 'A Synopsis of Linguistic Theory: 1930–1955.' In *Studies in Linguistic Analysis: Special Volume of the Philological Society*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1–32.
- Fischel, Henry Albert. 1977. 'Prolegomenon.' In *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature*, edited by Henry Albert Fischel. New York: Ktav.
- Fish, Jeffrey & Kirk R. Sanders (eds.). 2011. *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fisk, Bruce N. 1989. 'Eating Meat Offered to Idols: Corinthian Behavior and Pauline Response in 1 Corinthians 8–10 (A Response to Gordon Fee).' *Trinity Journal* 10: 49–70.
- Fitzgerald, John T. 1986. *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 99. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Fitzgerald, John T. 2001. 'Paul and Paradigm Shifts: Reconciliation and Its Linkage Group.' In *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 241–262.
- Fitzgerald, John T. 2007. *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*. London: Routledge.
- Fitzgerald, Timothy. 1999. *The Ideology of Religious Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. 1961. 'Qumrân and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor 6.14–7.1.' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 27.1.



- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. 1993. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Yale Bible Series 33. New York: Doubleday.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. 2008. *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Yale Bible Series 32. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Flowerdew, Lynne. 2011. 'Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis.' In *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, edited by James Paul Gee and Michael Handford. Routledge Handbooks. London: Routledge, 174–187.
- Flurl, Wolfgang. 1969. *Deditio in fidem: Untersuchungen zu Livius und Polybios*. Augsburg: Blasaditsch.
- Forster, E. S. & D. J. Furley. 1955. *Aristotle: On Sophistical Refutations, On Coming-to-be and Passing Away, On the Cosmos*. Loeb Classical Library 400. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Forsyth, Donelson R. 1999. *Group Dynamics*. Wadsworth: Brooks/Cole.
- Fortenbaugh, William W. 2002. *On Stoic and Peripatetic Ethics: The Work of Arius Didymus*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction.
- Fortenbaugh, William W. 2003. *Theophrastean Studies*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Fowl, Stephen. 1998. 'Christology and Ethics in Philippians 2.5–11.' In *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, edited by Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 140–153.
- Fowler, H. W. & F. G. Fowler (trans.). 1905. *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, 4 volumes. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Fowler, Paul B. 2016. *The Structure of Romans: The Argument of Paul's Letter*. Augsburg: Fortress.
- Fox, Robin Lane. 1986. *Pagans and Christians*. London: Viking.
- Fraenkel, Eduard. 1916. 'Zur Geschichte des Wortes Fides.' *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 71: 187–199.
- Frankfurter, David. 2012. 'Comparison and the Study of Religions of Late Antiquity.' In *Comparer en histoire des religions antiques: Controverses et propositions*, edited by Claude Calame and Bruce Lincoln. Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège.
- Frazier, Françoise. 1999. 'Platonisme et Patrios Pistis dans le discours central (chs 13–20) de l'Érotikos.' In *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles: Actas del v Congreso Internacional de la I.P.S. (Madrid-Cuenca, 4–7 de mayo de 1999)*, edited by Aurelio Pérez Jiménez, José García López and Rosa Ma Aguilar. Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 343–356.
- Frazier, Françoise. 2005. 'Göttlichkeit und Glaube: Persönliche Gottesbeziehung im Spätwerk Plutarchs.' In *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch: Götterbilder—Gottesbilder—Weltbilder*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold. Berlin: de Gruyter, 111–137.
- Frazier, Françoise. 2007. 'À propos d'Éros doxastos (Amatorius 13.756D): Le préambule de la réponse à Pemptidès et le préambule du livre x des Lois.' In *Philou skia. Stu-*

- dia philologiae in honorem Rosae Aguilar*, edited by A. Bernabé and I. Alfageme. Madrid; 85–95.
- Frazier, Françoise. 2008. 'Philosophie et religion dans la pensée de Plutarque: Quelques réflexions autour des emplois du mot πίστις.' *Études Platoniciennes* 5: 41–61.
- Frazier, Françoise. 2017. 'Returning to "Religious" πίστις: Platonism and Piety in Plutarch and Neoplatonism.' In *Saint Paul and Philosophy: The Consonance of Ancient and Modern Thought*, edited by Gert-Jan van der Heiden, George H. van Kooten and Antonio Cimino. Berlin: de Gruyter, 189–207.
- Frede, Dorothea. 2002. 'Theodicy and Providential Care in Stoicism.' In *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath*, edited by Dorothea Frede and André Laks. *Philosophia Antiqua* 89. Leiden: Brill, 85–117.
- Frede, Michael. 1999. 'Epilogue.' In *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, edited by Jaap Mansfeld, Jonathan Barnes, Keimpe Algra and Malcolm Schofield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 771–797.
- Fredriksen, Paula. 2014. 'Paul's Letter to the Romans, the Ten Commandments, and Pagan "Justification by Faith".' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133: 801–808.
- Fredriksen, Paula. 2015. 'The Question of Worship: Gods, Pagans, and the Redemption of Israel.' In *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, edited by Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm. Augsburg: Fortress, 175–202.
- Frey, Jörg. 2017. 'Was ist Glaube? Eine Hinführung.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, xv–xxv.
- Frey, Jörg, Benjamin Schliesser & Nadine Ueberschaer (eds.). 2017. *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Freyburger, Gérard. 1986. *Fides: Étude sémantique et religieuse depuis les origines jusqu'à l'époque augustéenne*. Collection d'études anciennes. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Freyburger, Gérard. 2002. 'La fides civique.' *Antiquité et citoyenneté. Actes du colloque international de Besançon (3–5 novembre 1999)* 850: 341–348.
- Friedrich, Gerhard. 1981. 'Muß ὑπακοή πίστεως (Römer 1.5) mit "Glaubensgehorsam" übersetzt werden?' *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 72: 118–123.
- Friedrich, Gerhard. 1982. 'Glaube und Verkündigung bei Paulus.' In *Glaube im Neuen Testament: Studien zu Ehren von Hermann Binder anlässlich seines 70. Geburtstags*, edited by Ferdinand Hahn and Hans Klein. *Biblich-theologische Studien* 7. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 93–113.

- Fritz, Kurt von. 1972. *Pseudepigrapha I: Pseudopythagorica, Lettres de Platon, Littérature pseudépigraphique juive (huit exposés suivis de discussions [tenus à] Vandoeuvres-Genève, 31 août–5 septembre 1971)*. Entretiens sur l'antiquité Classique 18. Geneva: Fondation Hardt.
- Fröhlich, Uwe. 2000. *Regulus, Archtyp römischer Fides: Das sechste Buch als Schlüssel zu den Punica des Silius Italicus: Interpretation, Kommentar und Übersetzung*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.
- Fucecchi, Marco. 2019. 'Hannibal as (Anti-)Hero of Fides in Silius' Punica.' In *Fides in Flavian literature*, edited by Antony Augoustakis, Emma Buckley and Claire Stocks. Phoenix Supplementary Volumes 56. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 187–207.
- Fuchs, Josef. 1955. *Lex naturae: Zur Theologie des Naturrechts*. Düsseldorf: Patmos.
- Fuchs, Josef. 1965. *Natural Law: A Theological Investigation*. New York: Sheed and Ward.
- Fuchs, Martin, Antje Bremmer, Martin Mulsow, et al. (eds.). 2019. *Religious Individualisation: Historical Dimensions and Comparative Perspectives*, vol. 1. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Furnish, Victor Paul. 1984. *2 Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Yale Bible Series 32A. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Furnish, Victor Paul. 1997. 'Where is "The Truth" in Paul's Gospel?' In *Pauline Theology, Volume IV: Looking Back, Pressing On*, edited by E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay. Atlanta: Scholars, 161–179.
- Furnish, Victor Paul. 2009. *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Gaca, Kathy L. 2003. *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1960. *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Gagné, Renaud. 2013. *Ancestral Fault in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gagnon, Robert A. J. 2000. 'Why the "Weak" at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews.' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62: 64–82.
- Gainé, Simon Francis. 2015. *Did the Saviour See the Father? Christ, Salvation, and the Vision of God*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Galinsky, Karl. 1998. *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gardner, Darren M. 2016. *Exercise and Insight: Gymnastics in Plato's Parmenides*. New York: New School for Social Research (PhD Thesis).
- Garland, David E. 2003. *First Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Garlington, Don B. 1990. 'The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans: Part 1—The Meaning of ὑπακοή πίστεως (Romans 1.5; 16.26).' *Westminster Theological Journal* 52: 201–224.

- Garlington, Don B. 1991a. *'The Obedience of Faith': A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 11 38. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Garlington, Don B. 1991b. 'The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans: Part 2—The Obedience of Faith and Judgment by Works.' *Westminster Theological Journal* 53: 47–72.
- Garlington, Don B. 1993. 'The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans: Part 3—The Obedience of Christ and the Obedience of the Christian.' *Westminster Theological Journal* 55: 87–112.
- Garlington, Don B. 1994. *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 11 79. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Garnsey, Peter & Richard Saller. 1997. 'Patronal Power Relations.' In *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity, 96–103.
- Gathercole, Simon J. 2017. 'Christians According to Second-Century Philosophers.' In *Religio-Philosophical Discourses in the Mediterranean World: From Plato, through Jesus, to Late Antiquity*, edited by Anders Klostergaard Petersen and George H. van Kooten. Ancient Philosophy & Religion 1. Leiden: Brill, 279–305.
- Gathercole, Simon J. 2002a. *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Gathercole, Simon J. 2002b. 'A Law unto Themselves: The Gentiles in Romans 2.14–15 Revisited.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24: 27–49.
- Gathercole, Simon J. 2004. 'Justified by Faith, Justified by his Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3.21–4.25.' In *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 2 volumes, vol. 2: The Paradoxes of Paul, edited by D. A. Carson, Peter Thomas O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 147–184.
- Gatz, Bodo. 1967. *Weltalter, goldene Zeit und sinnverwandte Vorstellungen*. Hildesheim: Olms.
- Gee, James Paul & Michael Handford. 2011. *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Routledge Handbooks. London: Routledge.
- Geerlings, Wilhelm. 1990. 'Die theologia mythica des M. Terentius Varro.' In *Mythos: erzählende Weltdeutung im Spannungsfeld von Ritual, Geschichte und Rationalität*, edited by Gerhard Binder. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 205–222.
- Gellner, Ernest & John Waterbury. 1977. *Patrons and clients: in Mediterranean societies*. London: Duckworth.
- Gelzer, Matthias. 1912. *Die Nobilität der römischen Republik*. Leipzig: Teubner.
- Georg, Panikulam. 1994. *Koinonia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life*. Analecta Biblica Dissertationes 85. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.

- Georgi, Dieter. 1991. *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology*. Augsburg: Fortress.
- Georgi, Dieter. 1997. 'God Turned Upside Down.' In *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity, 148–157.
- Georgiev, Plamen K. 2008. *Corruptive Patterns of Patronage in South East Europe*. Wiesbaden: vs Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Gerson, Lloyd P. 2002. 'The Presence and the Absence of the Divine in the Platonic Tradition.' In *Metaphysik und Religion: Zur Signatur des spätantiken Denkens (Akten des Internationalen Kongresses vom 13.–17. März 2001 in Würzburg)*, edited by Theo Kobusch and Michael Erler. Berlin: de Gruyter, 365–386.
- Gerson, Lloyd P. 2009. *Ancient Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Getty, Mary Ann. 1990. 'The Imitation of Paul in the Letters to the Thessalonians.' In *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, edited by Raymond F. Collins. Leuven: Peeters, 277–283.
- Gifford, E. H. (ed.). 1903. *Eusebius of Caesarea—Preparation for the Gospel*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Gill, Christopher. 2016. 'Antiochus' Theory of Oikeiōsis.' In *Cicero's De Finibus: Philosophical Approaches*, edited by Julia Annas and Gábor Betegh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 221–247.
- Gill, Christopher. 2017. 'Oikeiōsis in Stoicism, Antiochus and Arius Didymus.' In *From Stoicism to Platonism: The Development of Philosophy, 100 BCE–100 CE*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 100–119.
- Gillihan, Yonder Moynihan. 2002. 'Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage, the Defilement of Offspring, and the Holiness of the Temple: A New Halakic Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7.14.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121: 711–744.
- Giordano-Zecharya, Manuela. 2005. 'As Socrates Shows, the Athenians Did Not Believe in Gods.' *Numen* 52: 325–355.
- Given, Mark Douglas. 2001. *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome*. London: A&C Black.
- Glad, Clarence E. 1995. *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy*. Leiden: Brill.
- Glibert-Thirry, Anne (ed.). 1977. *Andronicus Rhodius—Peri pathōn*. Corpus Latinum commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum 2. Leiden: Brill.
- Glucker, John. 1988. 'Cicero's Philosophical Affiliations: Cicero and the Philosophical Schools of His Age.' In *The Question of Eclecticism: Studies in Later Greek Philosophy*, edited by Anthony A. Long and John M. Dillon. Hellenistic Culture and Society 3. Berkeley: University of California Press, 34–69.
- Gonzalez, Eliezer. 2011. 'Pauline Universalism: Anachronism or Reality?' *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 14: 65–77.
- Gonzalez, Francisco J. 1996. 'Propositions or Objects? A Critique of Gail Fine on Knowledge and Belief in "Republic" v.' *Phronesis* 41: 245–275.

- Gooch, Paul W. 1987a. *Partial Knowledge: Philosophical Studies in Paul*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Gooch, Paul W. 1987b. "Conscience" in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10.' *New Testament Studies* 33: 244–254.
- Goodenough, Erwin R. 1928. 'The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship.' *Yale Classical Studies* 1: 55–102.
- Goodwin, William W. (ed.). 1874. *Plutarch's Morals*. Cambridge: Wilson.
- Gordon, Pamela. 1996. *Epicurus in Lycia: The Second-century World of Diogenes of Oenoanda*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Goulder, Michael. 1994. '2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1 as an Integral Part of 2 Corinthians.' *Novum Testamentum* 36: 47–57.
- Goulet-Cazé, Marie-Odile. 2007. 'Popular Philosophy.' In *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, 22 volumes, vol. 11, edited by Cancik, Helmuth Schneider and Manfred Landfester. Leiden: Brill, 617–618.
- Grant, Robert M. 1952. *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought*. Amsterdam: North Holland.
- Graver, Margaret. 2009. *Cicero on the Emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Greenwood, David. 1971. 'Saint Paul and Natural Law.' *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 1: 262–279.
- Grenfell, Bernard P. & Arthur S. Hunt. 1915. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 11. London: The Egypt Exploration Society.
- Griffin, Miriam T. 2013. *Seneca on Society: A Guide to De Beneficiis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Grimal, Pierre. 1974. "Fides" et le secret.' *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 185: 141–155.
- Gruen, Erich S. 1982. 'Greek Pistis and Roman Fides.' *Athenaeum* 60: 50–68.
- Gruen, Erich S. 1998. *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gruen, Erich S. 2012. *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gupta, Nijay K. 2020a. 'Paul and Pistis Christou.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Pauline Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gupta, Nijay K. 2020b. *Paul and the Language of Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Gurtner, Daniel M. 2007. '2 Baruch.' In *The Online Critical Pseudepigrapha*, edited by Ian W. Scott, Ken M. Penner and David M. Miller. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Guthrie, George H. 1993. *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis*. Leiden: Brill.

- Guthrie, George H. 2001. 'Discourse Analysis.' In *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues*, edited by David Alan Black and David S. Dockery. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 253–271.
- Haacker, Klaus. 2003. *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hadas-Label, Mireille. 2012. *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*. Leiden: Brill.
- Hadot, Pierre. 1995. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hagen Pifer, Jeanette. 2019a. *Faith as Participation: An Exegetical Study of Some Key Pauline Texts*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 11 486. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Hagen Pifer, Jeanette. 2019b. 'Don't Stop Believing: Paul and Plutarch on Faith.' In *Paul and the Giants of Philosophy: Reading the Apostle in Greco-Roman Context*, edited by Joseph R. Dodson and David E. Briones. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 74–85.
- Harland, Philip A. 2006. 'The Declining Polis? Religious Rivalries in Ancient Civic Context.' In *Religious Rivalries in the Early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity*, edited by Leif E. Vaage. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 21–49.
- Harnack, Adolf von. 2013. 'Über den Ursprung der Formel "Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung".' In *Adolf von Harnack als Zeitgenosse: Reden und Schriften aus den Jahren des Kaiserreichs und der Weimarer Republik*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Der Theologe und Historiker. Berlin: de Gruyter, 697–714.
- Harris, B. F. 1962. 'The Olympian Oration of Dio Chrysostom.' *Journal of Religious History* 2: 85–97.
- Harris, Murray J. 2005. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Harrison, James R. 1999. 'Paul, Eschatology and the Augustan Age of Grace.' *Tyndale Bulletin* 50: 79–91.
- Harrison, James R. 2003. *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Harrison, James R. 2008. 'Paul and the Gymnasiarchs: Two Approaches to Pastoral Formation in Antiquity.' In *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, edited by Stanley E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 141–178.
- Harrison, James R. 2013. 'The Imitation of the "Great Man" in Antiquity: Paul's Inversion of a Cultural Icon.' In *Early Christianity in Its Hellenistic Context*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Leiden: Brill, 213–254.
- Harrison, Stephen J. 1996. 'Aeneid 1.286: Julius Caesar or Augustus?' In *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar 9: Roman poetry and prose, Greek poetry, etymo-*

- logy, historiography*, edited by F. Cairns and Malcolm Heath. ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers, and Monographs 34. Leeds: Cairns, 127–133.
- Harrison, Thomas. 2000. *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Harrison, Thomas. 2015a. 'Review Article: Beyond the polis? New approaches to Greek religion.' *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 135: 165–180.
- Harrison, Thomas. 2015b. 'Belief vs. Practice.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, edited by Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 21–28.
- Harry, Chelsea C. 2018. 'Concerning the Right Time: Καίρος in Plato's Statesman.' In *Proceedings of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy: Philosophy as Inquiry and Way of Life*, edited by Konstantinos Ioannou Voudoures. Athens: Greek Philosophical Society, 145–151.
- Hartman, Dorota. 2013. 'Jewish Greek.' *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*.
- Hartmann, Jana Maria. 2004. *Flavische Epik im Spannungsfeld von generischer Tradition und zeitgenössischer Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang.
- Hatch, William Henry Paine. 1917. *The Pauline Idea of Faith in its Relation to Jewish and Hellenistic Religion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hatzimichali, Myrto. 2013. 'The Texts of Plato and Aristotle in the First Century BC.' In *Aristotle, Plato and Pythagoreanism in the First Century BC: New Directions for Philosophy*, edited by Malcolm Schofield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–27.
- Havelock, E. A. 1969. 'Dikaioisune: An Essay in Greek Intellectual History.' *Phoenix: The Journal of the Classical Association of Canada* 23: 49–70.
- Hay, David M. 1989. 'Pistis as "Ground for Faith" in Hellenized Judaism and Paul.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108: 461–476.
- Hay, David M. 2006. 'Paul's Understanding of Faith as Participation.' In *Paul and His Theology*, edited by Stanley E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 45–76.
- Hayes, Christine E. 2002. *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Inter-marriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hays, Christopher B. 2008. 'Echoes of the Ancient Near East? Intertextuality and the Comparative Study of the Old Testament.' In *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 20–43.
- Hays, Richard B. 1980. 'Psalm 143 and the Logic of Romans 3.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99: 107–115.
- Hays, Richard B. 1983. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Sub-structure of Galatians 3.1–4.11*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 56. Chico, CA: Scholars.



- Hays, Richard B. 1989. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hays, Richard B. 1993. 'Christ Prays the Psalms: Paul's Use of an Early Christian Exegetical Convention.' In *The future of Christology: Essays in Honor of Leander E. Keck*, edited by Abraham J. Malherbe and Wayne A. Meeks. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 122–136.
- Hays, Richard B. 1997. 'Πίστις and Pauline Christology: What is at Stake?' In *Pauline Theology, Volume IV: Looking Back, Pressing On*, edited by E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay. Atlanta: Scholars, 35–60.
- Hays, Richard B. 2002. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3.1–4.11*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Hays, Richard B. 2011. *First Corinthians*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Heath, Jane M. F. 2009. 'Corinth, a Crucible for Byzantine Iconoclastic Debates? Viewing Paul as Icon of Christ in 2 Cor 4.7–12.' In *Religiöse Philosophie und philosophische Religion der frühen Kaiserzeit: Literaturgeschichtliche Perspektiven*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Herwig Görgemanns and Michael von Albrecht. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 271–284.
- Heath, Jane M. F. 2013. *Paul's Visual Piety: The Metamorphosis of the Beholder*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hebert, Gabriel. 1955. "Faithfulness" and "Faith." *Theology* 58: 373–379.
- Heilig, Christoph. 2015. *Hidden Criticism? The Methodology and Plausibility of the Search for a Counter-Imperial Subtext in Paul*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 11 392. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Heilig, Christoph. 2017. *Paul's Triumph: Reassessing 2 Corinthians 2.14 in Its Literary and Historical Context*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Heinze, Richard. 1928. 'Fides.' *Hermes* 64: 140–166.
- Heliso, Desta. 2007. *Pistis and the Righteous One: A Study of Romans 1.17 against the Background of Scripture and Second Temple Jewish Literature*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Hellegouarc'h, Joseph. 1972 [1963]. *Le Vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la République*. Collection d'études anciennes. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Helmig, Christoph. 2013. 'Hilfe der Götter für das gute Leben: Die Rolle der Religiosität in der Ethik des antiken Platonismus.' In *Ethik des antiken Platonismus: Der platonische Weg zum Glück in Systematik, Entstehung und historischem Kontext (Akten der 12. Tagung der Karl und Gertrud Abel-Stiftung vom 15.–18. Oktober 2009 in Münster)*, edited by Christian Pietsch. Philosophie der Antike 32. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 237–258.
- Hengel, Martin. 1974. *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, vol. 1 and 2. London: SCM (trans. of *Judentum und*

- Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2 Jh.s v. Chr.*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973).
- Hense, Otto (ed.). 1905. *C. Musonii Rufi reliquiae*. Leipzig: Teubner.
- Herman, Gabriel. 2006. *Morality and Behaviour in Democratic Athens: A Social History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirsch-Luipold, Rainer. 2002. *Plutarchs Denken in Bildern: Studien zur literarischen, philosophischen und religiösen Funktion des Bildhaften*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Hirsch-Luipold, Rainer. 2005. 'Der eine Gott bei Philon von Alexandrien und Plutarch.' In *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch: Götterbilder—Gottesbilder—Weltbilder*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold. Berlin: de Gruyter, 141–168.
- Hirsch-Luipold, Rainer. 2009. 'Die religiös-philosophische Literatur der frühen Kaiserzeit und das Neue Testament.' In *Religiöse Philosophie und philosophische Religion der frühen Kaiserzeit: Literaturgeschichtliche Perspektiven*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Herwig Görgemanns and Michael von Albrecht. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 117–146.
- Hirsch-Luipold, Rainer. 2017. 'Religiöse Tradition und individueller Glaube: Πίστις und πιστεύειν bei Plutarch als Hintergrund zum neutestamentlichen Glaubensverständnis.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 251–273.
- Hirsch-Luipold, Rainer, Herwig Görgemanns & Michael von Albrecht (eds.). 2009. *Religiöse Philosophie und philosophische Religion der frühen Kaiserzeit: Literaturgeschichtliche Perspektiven*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Hirshman, Marc. 2000. 'Rabbinic Universalism in the Second and Third Centuries.' *Harvard Theological Review* 93: 101–115.
- Hock, Ronald F. 1980. *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Hodge, Caroline Johnson. 2007. *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hodge, Caroline Johnson. 2010. 'Married to an Unbeliever: Households, Hierarchies, and Holiness in 1 Corinthians 7.12–16.' *Harvard Theological Review* 103: 1–25.
- Hoffmann, Philippe. 2000. 'La triade chaldaïque, "Erös, Alêtheia, Pistis" de Proclus à Simplicius.' In *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne*, edited by Alain Philippe Segonds and Carlos Steel. Ancient and Medieval Philosophy 1.26. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 459–489.
- Hoffmann, Philippe. 2010. 'Erös, Alêtheia, Pistis ... et Elpis: Tétrade chaldaïque, triade néoplatonicienne (Fr. 46 des Places, P 26 Kroll).' In *Die Chaldaeischen Orakel: Kontext—Interpretation—Rezeption*, edited by Helmut Seng and Michel Tardieu. Bibliotheca Chaldaica 2. Heidelberg: Winter, 255–324.

- Hogg, Michael A., Kelly S. Fielding & John Darley. 2005. 'Fringe Dwellers: Processes of Deviance and Marginalization in Groups.' In *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion*, edited by Michael A. Hogg, José M. Marques and Michael Adams. New York: Psychology Press, 191–210.
- Hölkeskamp, Karl-Joachim. 2004. *Senatus populusque Romanus*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Hollander, Harm W. 2010. 'Seeing God "In a Riddle" or "Face to Face": An Analysis of 1 Corinthians 13.12.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32: 395–403.
- Hong, In-Gyu. 1993. *The Law in Galatians*. London: A&C Black.
- Hooker, Morna D. 1960. 'Adam in Romans 1.' *New Testament Studies* 6: 297–306.
- Hooker, Morna D.. 2016. 'Another Look at πίστις Χριστοῦ.' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 69: 46–62.
- Hooker, Morna D. 1989. 'Πίστις Χριστοῦ.' *New Testament Studies* 35: 321–342.
- Hooker, Morna D. 1990. *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Horrell, David G. 2016. 'Ethnicisation, Marriage and Early Christian Identity: Critical Reflections on 1 Corinthians 7, 1 Peter 3, and Modern New Testament Scholarship.' *New Testament Studies* 62: 439–460.
- Horsley, Gregory H. R. 2013. "'Christian" Greek.' In *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, edited by Georgios K. Giannakis. Leiden: Brill.
- Howe, Bonnie & Joel B. Green. 2014. *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Hübner, Hans. 1978. *Das Gesetz bei Paulus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Hultgren, Arland J. 2011. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Hultgren, Stephen J. 2003. '2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1 and Revelation 21.3–8: Evidence for the Ephesian Redaction of 2 Corinthians.' *New Testament Studies* 49: 39–56.
- Hurtado, Larry W. 2016. *Destroyer of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- Hussey, Edward. 1990. 'The Beginnings of Epistemology: From Homer to Philolaus.' In *Epistemology*, edited by Stephen Everson. Companions to Ancient Thought 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 11–38.
- Huttunen, Niko. 2009. *Paul and Epictetus on Law: A Comparison*. The Library of New Testament Studies 405. London: T&T Clark.
- Huttunen, Niko. 2010. 'Stoic Law in Paul?' In *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, edited by Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Ismo Dunderberg. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 39–58.
- Inwood, Brad. 2002. 'God and Human Knowledge in Seneca's Natural Questions.' In *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath*,

- edited by Dorothea Frede and André Laks. *Philosophia Antiqua* 89. Leiden: Brill, 119–157.
- Inwood, Brad (ed.). 2003a. *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Inwood, Brad. 2003b. 'Natural Law in Seneca.' *Studia Philonica Annual* 15: 81–99.
- Inwood, Brad. 2017. 'The Legacy of Musonius Rufus.' In *From Stoicism to Platonism: The Development of Philosophy, 100 BCE–100 CE*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 254–276.
- Inwood, Brad. 2022. *Later Stoicism 155 BC to AD 200: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ipsen, Gunther. 1924. 'Der alte Orient und die Indogermanen.' In *Stand und Aufgaben der Sprachwissenschaft: Festschrift für Wilhelm Streitberg*, edited by Johannes Friedrich, Johannes B. Hofmann and Wilhelm Horn. Heidelberg: Winter, 200–237.
- Irani, Tushar. 2017. *Plato on the Value of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Irons, Charles Lee. 2014. 'Is "Righteousness" a Relational Concept in the Hebrew Bible?' In *Reflections on Lexicography: Explorations in Ancient Syriac, Hebrew, and Greek Sources*, edited by Richard A. Taylor and Craig E. Morrison. Piscataway: Gorgias, 135–145.
- Irwin, Terrence H. 1992. 'Plato: The Intellectual Background.' In *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, edited by Richard Kraut. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 51–89.
- Irwin, Terrence H. 2010. 'Morality as law and morality in the Laws.' In *Plato's 'Laws': A Critical Guide*, edited by Christopher Bobonich. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 92–107.
- Janaway, Christopher. 1995. *Images of Excellence: Plato's Critique of the Arts*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Janko, Richard. 2002. 'The Derveni Papyrus: An Interim Text.' *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 141: 1–62.
- Janko, Richard. 2016. 'Review of "Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World"' *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*.
- Jauss, Hans Robert & Elizabeth Benzinger. 1970. 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory.' *New Literary History* 2: 7–37.
- Jedan, Christoph. 2009. *Stoic Virtues: Chrysippus and the Religious Character of Stoic Ethics*. Continuum Studies in Ancient Philosophy. London: Continuum.
- Jedan, Christoph. 2013. 'Metaphors of Closeness: Reflections on Homoiôsis Theôî in Ancient Philosophy and Beyond.' *Numen* 60: 54–70.
- Jedan, Christoph. 2017. 'The Rapprochement of Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Consolation: Seneca, Paul, and Beyond.' In *Religio-Philosophical Discourses in the Mediterranean World: From Plato, through Jesus, to Late Antiquity*, edited by Anders

- Klostergaard Petersen and George H. van Kooten. *Ancient Philosophy & Religion* 1. Leiden: Brill, 159–184.
- Jensen, Alexander S. 2004. *John's Gospel as Witness: The Development of the Early Christian Language of Faith*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Jensen, Matthew. 2019. 'The (In)authenticity of 1 Thessalonians 2.13–16: A Review of Arguments.' *Currents in Biblical Research* 18: 59–79.
- Jensen, Matthew. 2019. 'Some Unpersuasive Glosses: The Meaning of ἀπειθεία, ἀπειθέω, and ἀπειθής in the New Testament.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138: 391–412.
- Jewett, Robert. 2003. 'Romans.' In *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul*, edited by James D. G. Dunn. Cambridge Companions to Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 91–104.
- Jewett, Robert. 2007. *Romans: A Commentary*. Hermeneia Commentary Series. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Jiménez, Aurelio Pérez. 2005. 'Δικαιοσύνη als Wesenszug des Göttlichen.' In *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch: Götterbilder—Gottesbilder—Weltbilder*, edited by Rainer Hirsch-Luipold. Berlin: de Gruyter, 101–110.
- Johanson, Bruce C. 1979. 'Tongues, a Sign for Unbelievers? A Structural and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 14.20–25.' *New Testament Studies* 25: 180–203.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. 1988. 'The Mirror of Remembrance (James 1.22–25):' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50: 632–645.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. 2003. 'Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment in Paul.' In *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, edited by Abraham J. Malherbe, John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht and L. Michael White. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 110. Leiden: Brill, 215–236.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. 2013. 'Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment in Paul.' In *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament*, edited by Luke Timothy Johnson. Leiden: Brill, 255–275.
- Johnston, Margaret Placentra. 2012. *Faith Beyond Belief: Stories of Good People Who Left Their Church Behind*. Wheaton, IL: Quest.
- Jolivet, Ira J. 1997. 'An Argument from the Letter and Intent of the Law as the Primary Argumentative Strategy in Romans.' In *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 309–335.
- Joosse, Lubbertus Adriaan. 2011. *Why a Philosopher Needs Others: Platonic and Stoic Models of Friendship and Self-Understanding*. Utrecht: Utrecht University (PhD Thesis).
- Joosse, Lubbertus Adriaan. 2016. 'De ontdekking van het atheïsme in de klassieke oudheid.' *Radix* 42: 223–226.

- Joosten, Jan. 2013. 'Hebrew Thought and Greek Thought in the Septuagint: Fifty Years after Barr's Semantics.' In *Reflections on Lexicography: Explorations in Ancient Syriac, Hebrew, and Greek Sources*, edited by Richard A. Taylor and Craig E. Morrison. Piscataway: Gorgias, 149–157.
- Judge, E. A. 1960. 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community.' *Journal of Religious History* 1: 4–15.
- Judge, E. A. 1961. 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community: Part II.' *Journal of Religious History* 1: 125–137.
- Judge, E. A. 2008a. 'The Reaction Against Classical Education in the New Testament.' In *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, edited by James R. Harrison. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 709–716.
- Judge, E. A. 2008b. 'First Impressions of St Paul.' In *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, edited by James R. Harrison. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 410–415.
- Judge, E. A. 2008c. 'St Paul and Socrates.' In *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, edited by James R. Harrison. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 670–683.
- Judge, E. A. 2008d. 'Was Christianity a Religion?' In *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, edited by James R. Harrison. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 404–409.
- Judge, E. A. 2008e. 'Did the Churches Compete with Cult-groups?' In *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, edited by James R. Harrison. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 597–618.
- Judge, E. A. 2008f. 'The Roman Theory of Historical Degeneration.' In *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, edited by James R. Harrison. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 52–58.
- Judge, E. A. 2008g. *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*. Edited by James R. Harrison. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Judge, E. A. 2015. 'Higher Education in the Pauline Churches.' In *Learning and Teaching Theology: Some Ways Ahead*, edited by Les Ball and James R. Harrison. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 23–31.
- Karamanolis, George E. 2014. *The Philosophy of Early Christianity*. London: Routledge.
- Karris, Robert J. 1991. 'Romans 14.1–15.13 and the Occasion of Romans.' In *The Romans Debate*, edited by Karl P. Donfried. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 65–84.
- Käsemann, Ernst. 1969. "'The Righteousness of God" in Paul.' In *New Testament Questions Today*, translated by W. J. Montague. London: SCM, 168–182.
- Käsemann, Ernst. 1980 [1973]. *An die Römer*. Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 8A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Kechagia, Eleni. 2011. *Plutarch against Colotes: A Lesson in History of Philosophy*. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Keck, Leander E. 1979. 'The Moral Integrity of God and the Human Situation.' In *Paul and his letters*. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress, 117–130.
- Keener, Craig S. 2009a. *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*. New Covenant Commentary Series 6. Cambridge: Lutterworth.
- Keener, Craig S. 2009b. "Fleshly" Versus Spirit Perspectives In Romans 8.5–8.' *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman* 211–229.
- Keener, Craig S. 2016. *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Kemmler, Dieter Werner. 1975. *Faith and Human Reason: A Study of Paul's Method of Preaching as Illustrated by 1–2 Thessalonians and Acts 17.2–4*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 40. Leiden: Brill.
- Kennedy, George. 1963. *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, vol. 1. History of Rhetoric. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kindt, Julia. 2012. *Rethinking Greek Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- King, Charles. 2003. 'The Organization of Roman Religious Beliefs.' *Classical Antiquity* 22: 275–312.
- King, J. E. 1927. *Cicero: Tusculan Disputations*. Loeb Classical Library 141. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kinman, Brent. 1997. "Appoint the Despised as Judges!" (1 Corinthians 6.4). *Tyndale Bulletin* 48: 345–354.
- Kinneavy, James L. 1987. *Greek Rhetorical Origins of Christian Faith: An Inquiry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Klauck, Hans-Josef. 2007. 'Nature, Art, and Thought: Dio Chrysostom and the Theologia Tripertita.' *The Journal of Religion* 333–354.
- Klein, Anja. 2017. "Wie hast Du's mit dem Glauben, Israel?" Der Glaubensbegriff im Alten Testament.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 53–78.
- Kloppenborg, John S. 1993. 'Philadelphia, Theodidaktos, and the Dioscuri: Rhetorical Engagement in 1 Thessalonians 4.9–12.' *New Testament Studies* 39: 265–289.
- Kloppenborg, John S. 2017. 'Disciplined Exaggeration: The Heuristics of Comparison in Biblical Studies.' *Novum Testamentum* 59: 390–414.
- Klostergaard Petersen, Anders. 2017a. 'Paul's Use of  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma/\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu$  as Epitome of Axial Age Religion.' In *Saint Paul and Philosophy: The Consonance of Ancient and Modern Thought*, edited by Gert-Jan van der Heiden, George H. van Kooten and Antonio Cimino. Berlin: de Gruyter, 231–248.
- Klostergaard Petersen, Anders. 2017b. 'Plato's Philosophy—Why Not Just Platonic Religion?' In *Religio-Philosophical Discourses in the Mediterranean World: From Plato,*

- through Jesus, to Late Antiquity*, edited by Anders Klostergaard Petersen and George H. van Kooten. *Ancient Philosophy & Religion* 1. Leiden: Brill, 9–36.
- Klostergaard Petersen, Anders & George H. van Kooten. 2017a. 'Introduction: The Religion and Philosophy Debate in a New Key.' In *Religio-Philosophical Discourses in the Mediterranean World: From Plato, through Jesus, to Late Antiquity*, edited by Anders Klostergaard Petersen and George H. van Kooten. *Ancient Philosophy & Religion* 1. Leiden: Brill, 1–6.
- Klostergaard Petersen, Anders & George H. van Kooten (eds.). 2017b. *Religio-Philosophical Discourses in the Mediterranean World: From Plato, through Jesus, to Late Antiquity*. *Ancient Philosophy & Religion* 1. Leiden: Brill.
- Knust, Jennifer W. 2004. 'Paul and the Politics of Virtue and Vice.' In *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, edited by Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg: Trinity, 155–174.
- Komatsu, Eisuke & Roy Harris (eds.). 2014. *Saussure's Third Course of Lectures on General Linguistics (1910–1911): From the Notebooks of Emile Constantin*. Amsterdam: Elsevier (trans. of *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris: Payot, 1916).
- Konstan, David. 1997. *Friendship in the Classical World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Konstan, David. 2001. *Pity Transformed*. *Classical inter/faces*. London: Duckworth.
- Konstan, David. 2010. 'Are Fellow Citizens Friends? Aristotle Versus Cicero on Philia, Amicitia, and Social Solidarity.' In *Valuing Others in Classical Antiquity*, edited by Ralph Rosen and Ineke Sluiter, 233–248.
- Konstan, David. 2018. 'Trusting in Jesus.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40: 247–254.
- Kooten, George H. van. 2007. 'Pagan and Jewish Monotheism According to Varro, Plutarch, and St Paul: The Aniconic, Monotheistic Beginnings of Rome's Pagan Cult—Romans 1.9–25 in a Roman Context.' In *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, edited by Anthony Hilhorst, Emile Puech and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, 633–652.
- Kooten, George H. van. 2008. *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity*. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 1 232. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Kooten, George H. van. 2010a. 'Is Early Christianity a Religion or a Philosophy? Reflections on the Importance of "Knowledge" and "Truth" in the Letters of Paul and Peter.' In *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer*, edited by Jitse Dijkstra, Justin Kroesen and Yme Kuiper. Leiden: Brill, 393–408.
- Kooten, George H. van. 2010b. 'Broadening the New Perspective on Paul.' In *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites*, edited by Martin Goodman, George H. van Kooten



- and Jacques T. A. G. M. van Ruiten. *Themes in Biblical Narrative* 13. Leiden: Brill, 319–344.
- Kooten, George H. van. 2012. 'A Non-Fideistic Interpretation of Pistis in Plutarch's Writings: The Harmony between Pistis and Knowledge.' In *Plutarch in the Religious and Philosophical Discourse of Late Antiquity*, edited by Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta and Israel Muñoz Gallarte. Leiden: Brill, 215–233.
- Kooten, George H. van. 2014. 'Paulus als anti-filosoof en messiaans nihilist? Kanttekeningen vanuit antiekwijsgerig perspectief bij Badiou, Taubes' en Agambens interpretatie van Paulus.' *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 54: 277–294.
- Kooten, George H. van. 2017. 'Paul's Stoic Onto-Theology and Ethics of Good, Evil and "Indifferents": A Response to Anti-Metaphysical and Nihilistic Readings of Paul in Modern Philosophy.' In *Saint Paul and Philosophy: The Consonance of Ancient and Modern Thought*, edited by Gert-Jan van der Heiden, George H. van Kooten and Antonio Cimino. Berlin: de Gruyter, 133–164.
- Kooten, George H. van. 2023. 'The Alliance between Faith, the Mysteries and Philosophy in Plutarch's *Moralia*.' In *Belief in Greek and Roman Religion*, edited by Ralph Anderson and Pramit Chaudhuri. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kouremenos, Theokritos, George M. Parássoglou & Kuriakos Tsantsanoglou. 2006. *The Derveni Papyrus*. Studi e testi per il Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini 13. Firenze: Olschki.
- Kreitzer, Larry Joseph. 1987. *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Krentz, Edgar. 2003. 'Logos or Sophia: The Pauline Use of the Ancient Dispute Between Rhetoric and Philosophy.' In *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, edited by John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht and L. Michael White. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 110. Leiden: Brill, 277–290.
- Kroll, Wilhelm. 1894. *De oraculis chaldaicis*. Breslauer philologische Abhandlungen 7. Bratislava: Koebner.
- Kruse, Colin G. 2012. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Kudill, George. 2000. *An Exegetical Study of the Judgment Terminology in Romans 14.1–12 in the Context of the Paraenetic Part of Romans 12–15*. Frankfurt am Main: Hochschule Sankt Georgen (PhD Thesis).
- Kühn, Karl G. (ed.). 2011 [1821]. *Claudius Galen—Opera Omnia*. Cambridge Library Collection—Classics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kuhner, Raphael & Bernhard Gerth. 1955. *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, 2 volumes, vol. 1. Leverkusen: Gottschalk.
- Kurek-Chomycz, Dominika. 2017. 'Fellow Athletes or Fellow Soldiers? συναθλέω in Philippians 1.27 and 4.3.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 39: 279–303.
- Ladikos, Anastasios. 2006. 'The Pursuit of Justice in Plato's Republic.' *Phronimon* 7: 73–88.

- Lakoff, George. 1987. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lambrecht, Jan. 2000. 'Thanksgivings in 1 Thessalonians 1–3.' In *The Thessalonians Debate: Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis*, edited by Karl P. Donfried and Johannes Beutler. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 135–162.
- Lampe, Geoffrey William Hugo. 1954. *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*. London: Mowbray.
- Lampe, Peter. 2016. 'Paul, Patrons, and Clients.' In *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, 2 volumes, vol. 2, edited by J. Paul Sampley. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 204–238.
- Lane, Anthony N.S. 2004. 'Calvin and Article 5 of the Regensburg Colloquy.' In *Calvinus praeceptor Ecclesiae: Papers of the International Congress on Calvin Research, Princeton, August 20–24, 2002*, edited by Herman J. Selderhuis. Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 388. Geneva: Droz, 233–263.
- Lang, T. J. 2018. 'Trouble with Insiders: The Social Profile of the ἄπιστοι in Paul's Corinthian Correspondence.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137: 981–1001.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1987. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Theoretical Prerequisites. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1999. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 2 volumes, vol. 2: Descriptive Application. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 2008. *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Larson, Curtis W. R. 1951. 'The Platonic Synonyms, δικαιοσύνη and σωφροσύνη.' *The American Journal of Philology* 72: 395–414.
- Lauwers, Jeroen. 2015. *Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Sophistry in the High Roman Empire: Maximus of Tyre and Twelve Other Intellectuals*. Leiden: Brill.
- Lavan, Myles. 2013. *Slaves to Rome: Paradigms of Empire in Roman Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laws, Eric & Sophie Laws. 2001. *Epistle of James*. London: A&C Black.
- Le Boulluec, Alain. 2005. 'La foi ("pistis") entre croyance et savoir selon Origène dans le "Contre Celse"?' *Croire et croyances* 13: 59–78.
- Lebedev, Andrei V. 1989. 'Heraclitus in P. Derveni.' *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 79: 39–47.
- Lee, Jae-won. 2014. *Paul and the Politics of Difference: A Contextual Study of the Jewish-Gentile Difference in Galatians and Romans*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick.
- Lee, Michelle V. 2006. *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lehmann, Yves. 1997. *Varron théologien et philosophe romain*. Brussels: Latomus.
- Leppä, Outi. 2005. 'Believers and Unbelievers in 2 Corinthians 6.14–15.' In *Lux humana, lux aeterna*. Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 374–390.

- Levenson, Jon D. 1996. 'The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism.' In *Ethnicity and the Bible*, edited by Mark G. Brett. Leiden: Brill, 143–169.
- Levin, Susan B. 2000. *The Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry Revisited: Plato and the Greek Literary Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lévy, Carlos. 2010. 'The Sceptical Academy: Decline and Afterlife.' In *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism*, edited by Richard Bett. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 81–104.
- Lewy, Yochanan. 1956. *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*. Caïro: Institut français d'archéologie orientale.
- Lieberg, Godo. 1973. 'Die Theologia Tripartita in Forschung und Bezeugung.' In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 1.4, edited by Wolfgang Haase and Hildgard Temporini. Berlin: de Gruyter, 63–115.
- Lieberg, Godo. 1982. 'Die Theologia Tripartita als Formprinzip antiken Denkens.' *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 125: 25–53.
- Lienhard, Joseph T. 1966. 'A Note on the Meaning of Pistis in Aristotle's Rhetoric.' *The American Journal of Philology* 87: 446–454.
- Lietaert Peerbolte, Bert-Jan. 2008. 'Paul and the Practice of Paideia.' In *Jesus, Paul, and Early Christianity: Studies in Honour of Henk Jan de Jonge*, edited by Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, Harm W. Hollander and Johannes Tromp. Leiden: Brill, 261–280.
- Lieu, Judith M. 2018. 'Faith and the Fourth Gospel: A Conversation with Teresa Morgan.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40: 289–298.
- Lightfoot, Joseph Barber. 1889. *The Apostolic Fathers Part 2: S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp (Revised Texts with Introduction Notes, Dissertations, and Translations)*. London: Macmillan.
- Lim, Kar Yong. 2010. 'Paul's Use of Temple Imagery in the Corinthian Correspondence: The Creation of Christian Identity.' In *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, edited by Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker. The Library of New Testament Studies 428. London: T&T Clark, 189–205.
- Lim, Timothy H. 1987. 'Not in Persuasive Words of Wisdom, But in the Demonstration of the Spirit and Power.' *Novum Testamentum* 29: 137–149.
- Lindsay, Dennis R. 1993. *Josephus and Faith: Pistis and Pisteuein as Faith Terminology in the Writings of Flavius Josephus and in the New Testament*. Leiden: Brill.
- Lindsay, Dennis R. 2008. 'Pistis and 'Emunah: The Nature of Faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews.' In *A cloud of witnesses: the theology of Hebrews in its ancient contexts*, edited by Richard Bauckham. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 158–169.
- Lindsay, Dennis R. 2017. 'Πίστις in Flavius Josephus and the New Testament.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Na-

- dine Ueberschaer. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1* 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 183–205.
- Linebaugh, Jonathan A. 2013a. *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to the Romans: Texts in Conversation*. Leiden: Brill.
- Linebaugh, Jonathan A. 2013b. 'The Christo-Centrism of Faith in Christ: Martin Luther's Reading of Galatians 2.16, 19–20.' *New Testament Studies* 59: 535–544.
- Lineberry, John. 1960. *Vital Word Studies in 1 Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Litfin, A. Duane. 1994. *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Litfin, A. Duane. 2015. *Paul's Theology of Preaching: The Apostle's Challenge to the Art of Persuasion in Ancient Corinth*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity.
- Litwa, M. David. 2012. *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 187. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Litwa, M. David (ed.). 2018. *Hermetica II: The Excerpts of Stobaeus, Papyrus Fragments, and Ancient Testimonies in an English Translation with Notes and Introduction*. Translated by M. David Litwa. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ljungman, Henrik. 1964. *Pistis: A Study of its Presuppositions and its Meaning in Pauline Use*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup.
- Lockshin, Martin I. 2013. 'Is Holiness Contagious?' In *Purity, Holiness, and Identity in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Memory of Susan Haber*, edited by Carl S. Ehrlich, Runesson Anders and Schuller Eileen. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1* 305. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Lofland, John. 1969. *Deviance and Identity*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Lohmeyer, Ernst. 1929. *Grundlagen paulinischer Theologie*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Löhr, Winrich. 2010. 'Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project.' *Vigiliae Christianae* 64: 160–188.
- Lohse, Eduard. 1977. 'Emuna und Pistis: Jüdisches und urchristliches Verständnis des Glaubens.' *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 68: 147–163.
- Long, A. A. 2002. *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Long, A. A. & D. N. Sedley. 1987a. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Translations of the Principal Sources with Philosophical Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Long, A. A. & D. N. Sedley. 1987b. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 volumes, vol. 2: Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Long, Fredrick J. 2013. 'Ephesians: Paul's Political Theology in Greco-Roman Political Context.' In *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts*

- for the New Testament*, edited by Andrew W. Pitts and Stanley E. Porter. Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 9. Leiden: Brill, 255–309.
- Longenecker, Richard N. 2016. *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Lorenzen, Stefanie. 2008. *Das paulinische Eikon-Konzept: Semantische Analysen zur Sapientia Salomonis, zu Philo und den Paulusbriefen*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Louw, Johannes P. & Eugene A. Nida. 1988. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies.
- Lucas, Alec J. 2014. 'Assessing Stanley E. Porter's Objections to Richard B. Hays's Notion of Metalepsis.' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 76: 93–111.
- Lührmann, Dieter. 1973. 'Pistis im Judentum.' *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 64: 19–38.
- Luther, D. Martin. 1930. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 18 volumes. Weimar: Böhlau.
- Lutz, Cora E. 1947. *Musonius Rufus, 'The Roman Socrates'*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lutz, Cora E. (ed.). 2020. *Musonius Rufus—That One Should Disdain Hardships: The Teachings of a Roman Stoic*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lyall, Francis. 1969. 'Roman Law in the Writings of Paul: Adoption.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88: 458–466.
- MacCant, Jerry Walter. 1999. *2 Corinthians*. Readings: A New Biblical Commentary. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- MacDonald, Dennis R. 2000. *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- MacDonald, Dennis R. 2003. *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- MacDonald, Dennis Ronald (ed.). 2001. *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity*. Harrisburg: Trinity.
- MacDonald, Margaret Y. 2014. 'The Deutero-Pauline Letters in Contemporary Research.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Pauline Studies*, edited by Matthew V. Novenson and R. Barry Matlock. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 258–279.
- Mackey, Jacob L. 2022. *Belief and Cult: Rethinking Roman Religion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Magny, Ariane. 2014. *Porphyry in Fragments: Reception of an Anti-Christian Text in Late Antiquity*. Farnham & Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Mahoney, Timothy A. 2004. 'Is Assimilation to God in the Theaetetus Purely Otherworldly?' *Ancient Philosophy* 24: 321–338.
- Mahoney, Timothy A. 2005. 'Moral Virtue and Assimilation to God in Plato's Timaeus.' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 28: 77–91.
- Main, W. H. 1824. *The Tusculan Disputations of Cicero*. London: Pickering.

- Majercik, Ruth. 1989. *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation and Commentary*. Leiden: Brill.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 1968. 'The Beasts at Ephesus.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87: 71–80.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 1977. *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 1983. 'Exhortation in First Thessalonians.' *Novum Testamentum* 25: 238–256.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 1989. *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 1992. 'Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament.' In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 2.26.1, edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 267–333.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 2010. 'Godliness, Self-Sufficiency, Greed, and the Enjoyment of Wealth 1 Timothy 6.3–19: Part I.' *Novum Testamentum* 52: 376–405.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 2012. 'Ethics in Context: The Thessalonians and Their Neighbours.' *HTS Theologise Studies | Theological Studies* 68: 1–10.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 2014a. 'Anti-Epicurean Rhetoric in 1 Thessalonians.' In *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity*, edited by James W. Thompson, Gregory E. Sterling, John T. Fitzgerald and Carl Holladay. Leiden: Brill, 367–375.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 2014b. 'The Beasts at Ephesus.' In *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity*, edited by James W. Thompson, Gregory E. Sterling, John T. Fitzgerald and Carl Holladay. Leiden: Brill, 41–51.
- Malina, Bruce J. 2001. *The Social Gospel of Jesus: The Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Mannermaa, Tuomo. 1989. *Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus: Rechtfertigung und Vergottung: zum ökumenischen Dialog*. Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums, Neue Folge 8. Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus.
- Mannermaa, Tuomo. 2005. *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Mansfeld, Jaap & David T. Runia. 1997. *Aëtiana: The Method and Intellectual Context of a Doxographer*, vol. 1: The Sources. Leiden: Brill.
- Marks, Raymond. 2019. 'Fides, Pietas, and the Outbreak of Hostilities in Punica 1.' In *Fides in Flavian literature*, edited by Antony Augoustakis, Emma Buckley and Claire Stocks. Phoenix Supplementary Volumes 56. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 171–186.
- Marques, José M., Dominic Abrams, Dario Páez & Michael A. Hogg. 2001. 'Social Categorization, Social Identification, and Rejection of Deviant Group Members.' In



- McFadden, K.W. 2015. 'Does πίστις Mean "Faith(fulness)" in Paul?' *Tyndale Bulletin* 66: 251–270.
- McFarland, Orrey. 2015a. 'Philo's Prepositional Metaphysics within Early Christian Debates about the Relation of Divine Nature and Agency.' *Studia Philonica Annual* 27: 87–110.
- McFarland, Orrey. 2015b. *God and Grace in Philo and Paul*. Leiden: Brill.
- McKaughan, Daniel J. 2013. 'Authentic Faith and Acknowledged Risk: Dissolving the Problem of Faith and Reason.' *Religious Studies* 49: 101–124.
- McKnight, Scot & Joseph B. Modica. 2012. *Jesus Is Lord, Caesar Is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity.
- McPherran, Mark L. 2010. *The Religion of Socrates*. College Park: Penn State University Press.
- Meeks, Wayne A. 1979. "Since Then You Would Need to Go out of the World": Group Boundaries in Pauline Christianity.' In *Critical History and Biblical Faith: New Testament Perspectives*, edited by Thomas J. Ryan. Villanova: Villanova University, 4–29.
- Meeks, Wayne A. 1983. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Meijer, P.A. 1981. 'Philosophers, intellectuals and religion in Hellas.' In *Faith, Hope, and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, edited by H.S. Versnel. *Studies in Greek and Roman Religion* 2. Leiden: Brill, 216–263.
- Meyer, Heinrich August Wilhelm. 1865. *Kritisch exegetisches Handbuch über den Brief des Paulus an die Römer*. *Kritisch exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.
- Michaelis, Wilhelm. 1942. 'Μιμέομαι κτλ.' In *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (ThWNT)*, 10 volumes, vol. 4, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 661–678.
- Michaelis, Wilhelm. 1968. 'Μιμέομαι κτλ.' In *Theological dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, 10 volumes, vol. 4, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 659–674.
- Miguens, Emanuel. 1975. '1 Corinthians 13.8–13 Reconsidered.' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 37: 76–97.
- Mihaila, Corin. 2009. *The Paul-Apollos Relationship and Paul's Stance toward Greco-Roman Rhetoric: An Exegetical and Socio-historical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–4*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Miller, Dana R. 2003. *The Third Kind in Plato's Timaeus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Miller, Patrick Lee. 2011. *Becoming God: Pure Reason in Early Greek Philosophy*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Minear, Paul S. 2003 [1971]. *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.



- Mitchell, Alan C. 1993. 'Rich and Poor in the Courts of Corinth: Litigiousness and Status in 1 Corinthians 6.1–11.' *New Testament Studies* 39: 562.
- Mitchell, Margaret M. 1991. *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Mitchell, Margaret M. 2005. 'Paul's Letters to Corinth: The Interpretive Intertwining of Literary and Historical Reconstruction.' In *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by D. N. Schowalter and S. J. Friesen. Cambridge, MA: 307–338.
- Mitchell, Margaret M. 2006. 'The Emergence of the Written Record.' In *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 1: Origins to Constantine*, vol. 1, edited by Frances M. Young and Margaret M. Mitchell. Cambridge History of Christianity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 175–194.
- Moberly, R. W. L. 2012. 'Knowing God and Knowing About God: Martin Buber's Two Types of Faith Revisited.' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65: 402–420.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo. 1984. 'The Theological Efforts of the Roman Upper Classes in the First Century B. C.' *Classical Philology* 199.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo. 1987. 'Religion in Athens, Rome and Jerusalem in the First Century BC.' In *Ottavo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 279–296.
- Monti, Richard Ciro. 1981. *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid: Roman Social and Political Values in the Epic*. Leiden: Brill.
- Moo, Douglas J. 1996. *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Moo, Douglas J. 2013. *Galatians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Moreno Leoni, Álvaro M. 2014. 'The Failure of the Aetolian Deditio as a Didactic Cultural Clash in the Histories of Polybios (20.9–10).' *Histos* 8: 146–179.
- Morgan, Teresa. 2007. *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morgan, Teresa. 2015. *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morgan, Teresa. 2017a. 'Πίστις Between Theology, Ethics, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 275–297.
- Morgan, Teresa. 2017b. 'Narratives of πίστις in Paul and Deutero-Paul.' In *Saint Paul and Philosophy: The Consonance of Ancient and Modern Thought*, edited by Gert-Jan van der Heiden, George H. van Kooten and Antonio Cimino. Berlin: de Gruyter, 165–187.

- Morgan, Teresa. 2018a. 'Faith in Dialogue.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40: 299–311.
- Morgan, Teresa. 2018b. 'Quaestiones disputatae: Roman Faith and Christian Faith.' *New Testament Studies* 64: 255–261.
- Morgan, Teresa. 2020. *Being 'in Christ' in the Letters of Paul: Saved Through Christ and in His Hands*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I 449. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Morgan, Teresa. 2021. 'Origen's Celsus and Imperial Greek Religiosity.' In *Celsus in his World: Philosophy, Polemic and Religion in the Second Century*, edited by James Carleton Paget and Simon Gathercole. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 149–186.
- Morrison, Karl F. 2014. *The Mimetic Tradition of Reform in the West*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Morrow, Glenn Raymond. 1960. *Plato's Cretan City: A Historical Interpretation of the Laws*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Moss, Jessica. 2014. 'x—Plato's Appearance-Assent Account of Belief.' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 114: 213–238.
- Most, Glenn W. 2003. 'Philosophy and Religion.' In *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*, edited by David N. Sedley. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 300–322.
- Moulton, James Hope & Nigel Turner. 1963. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Syntax*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Muddiman, John. 2006. 'Making Sense of Romans.' In *What is it that the Scripture Says? Essays in Biblical Interpretation, Translation and Reception in Honour of Henry Wansbrough OSB*, edited by Philip McCosker. The Library of New Testament Studies 316. London: T&T Clark, 89–101.
- Mueller, Hans-Friedrich. 2002. *Roman Religion in Valerius Maximus*. Taylor & Francis.
- Müller, Peter. 1994. 'Der Glaube aus dem Hören: Über das gesprochene und das geschriebene Wort bei Paulus.' In *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays in Honor of Dieter Georgi*, edited by Lukas Bornmann, Kelly del Del Tredici and Angela Standhartinger. Leiden: Brill, 405–442.
- Muñoz Gallarte, Israel. 2017. 'The Meaning of πίστις in the Framework of the Diccionario griego español del Nuevo Testamento.' In *Getting into the Text: New Testament Essays in Honor of David Alan Black*, edited by D. L. Akin and T. W. Hudgins. Washington: Pickwick Publications.
- Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. 1978. 'Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12–20.' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40: 391–396.
- Mutschler, Bernhard. 2017. 'Die Pastoralbriefe als kanonische "Vollender des Glaubens": Integrierender und belastbarer Glaube als Grundbegriff des Christseins und als charakteristischer und zentraler Grundbegriff des Christentums.' In *Glaube:*

- Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I* 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 561–607.
- Mylonopoulos, Jannis (ed.). 2010. *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome*. *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* 170. Leiden: Brill.
- Naddaff, Ramona. 2002. *Exiling the Poets: The Production of Censorship in Plato's Republic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Najman, Hindy. 1999. 'The Law of Nature and the Authority of Mosaic Law.' *Studia Philonica Annual* 11: 55–73.
- Najman, Hindy. 2003. 'A Written Copy of the Law of Nature: An Unthinkable Paradox?' *Studia Philonica Annual* 15: 54–63.
- Nanos, Mark D. 1996a. 'Who Were the "Weak" and the "Strong" in Rome?' In *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish context of Paul's letter*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 85–165.
- Nanos, Mark D. 1996b. *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Nanos, Mark D. 2008. 'The Polytheist Identity Of The "Weak," And Paul'S Strategy To "Gain" Them: A New Reading Of 1 Corinthians 8.1–11.1.' In *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, edited by Stanley E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 179–210.
- Nathan, Emmanuel. 2013. 'Fragmented Theology in 2 Corinthians: The Unsolved Puzzle of 6.14–7.1.' In *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict: Studies in the Exegesis and Theology of 2 Corinthians*, edited by Ma. Marilou S. Ibita, Dominika A. Kurek-Chomycz, Reimund Bieringer and Thomas A. Vollmer. *Biblical Tools and Studies* 16. Leuven: Peeters, 211–228.
- Needham, Rodney. 1972. *Belief, Language, and Experience*. New York: Wiley & Sons.
- Nerlich, Brigitte & David D. Clarke. 2000. 'Semantic Fields and Frames: Historical Explorations of the Interface between Language, Action, and Cognition.' *Journal of Pragmatics* 32: 125–150.
- Neutel, Karin B. 2015. *A Cosmopolitan Ideal: Paul's Declaration 'Neither Jew Nor Greek, Neither Slave Nor Free, Nor Male and Female' in the Context of First-Century Thought*. *The Library of New Testament Studies* 513. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. 2005. 'God, Benefactor and Patron: The Major Cultural Model for Interpreting the Deity in Greco-Roman Antiquity.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27: 465–492.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. 1990. 'Acts 17, Epicureans and Theodicy: A Study in Stereotypes.' In *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, edited by David L. Balch, William E. Ferguson and Wayne A. Meeks. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 118–134.

- Neyrey, Jerome H. 2004. *Render to God: New Testament Understandings of the Divine*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Nguyen, V. Henry T. 2008. *Christian Identity in Corinth: A Comparative Study of 2 Corinthians, Epictetus and Valerius Maximus*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Nicholson, Suzanne. 2014. *Dynamic Oneness: The Significance and Flexibility of Paul's One-God Language*. Cambridge: Clarke.
- Niehoff, Maren R. 2018. *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Nijf, Onno van. 2003. 'Les élites comme patrons des associations professionnelles dans l'orient romain.' In *Les élites et leurs facettes: Les élites locales dans le monde hellénistique et romain*, edited by M. Cébeillac-Gervasoni and L. Lamoine. Rome: École française de Rome, 307–321.
- Nock, A. D. 1933. *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Nock, A. D. (ed.). 1945. *Hermès Trismégiste—Corpus Hermeticum*, vol. 2 (Asclepius, Traités XIII–XVIII). Translated by André-Jean Festugière. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Nock, A. D. (ed.). 1960. *Hermès Trismégiste—Corpus Hermeticum*, vol. 1 (Poimandrès, Traités I–XII). Translated by André-Jean Festugière. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Nongbri, Brent. 2008. 'Dislodging "Embedded" Religion: A Brief Note on a Scholarly Trope.' *Numen* 55: 440–460.
- Nongbri, Brent. 2013. *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Nongbri, Brent. 2015. 'The Concept of Religion and the Study of the Apostle Paul.' *Journal of the Jesus Movement in Its Jewish Setting* 1–26.
- Nörr, Dieter. 1991. *Die Fides im römischen Völkerrecht*. Schriftenreihe / Juristische Studiengesellschaft Karlsruhe 191. Heidelberg: Müller Juristischer Verlag.
- North, John A. 1992. 'The Development of Religious Pluralism.' In *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians: In the Roman Empire*, edited by Judith Lieu, John A. North and Tessa Rajak. London: Routledge, 174–193.
- North, John A. 2014. 'The Limits of the "Religious" in the Late Roman Republic.' *History of Religions* 53: 225–245.
- Oakes, Peter. 2018. 'Pistis as Relational Way of Life in Galatians.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40: 255–275.
- Obbink, Dirk (ed.). 1996. *Philodemus—On Piety*, vol. 1: Critical Text with Commentary. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Obbink, Dirk. 1999. 'The Stoic Sage in the Cosmic City.' In *Topics in Stoic Philosophy*, edited by Katerina Ierodiakonou. Oxford: Clarendon, 178–195.
- Obbink, Dirk. 2002. "'All Gods Are True" in Epicurus.' In *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath*, edited by Dorothea Frede and André Laks. *Philosophia Antiqua* 89. Leiden: Brill, 183–221.

- Obdrzalek, Suzanne. 2006. 'Living in Doubt: Carneades' Pithanon Reconsidered.' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 31: 243–280.
- O'Connor, Jerome Murphy. 1987. 'Relating 2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1 to its Context.' *New Testament Studies* 33: 272–275.
- Oertelt, Friederike. 2014. *Herrscherideal und Herrschaftskritik bei Philo von Alexandria: Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel seiner Josephsdarstellung in De Josepho und De somniis II*. Leiden: Brill.
- O'Keefe, Tim. 2010. *Epicureanism*. Ancient philosophies. Durham: Acumen.
- Olbricht, Thomas H. 1990. 'An Aristotelean Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians.' In *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, edited by David L. Balch, William E. Ferguson and Wayne A. Meeks. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 216–236.
- Oostendorp, Derk William. 1967. *Another Jesus: A gospel of Jewish-Christian Superiority in 2 Corinthians*. Kampen: Kok.
- Oosterhuis, Thomas J. 1992. *The 'Weak' and the 'Strong' in Paul's Epistle to the Romans: An Exegetical Study of Romans 14.1–15.13*. Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit (PhD Thesis).
- Ophuijsen, Johannes M. van. 2000. 'Making Room for Faith: Is Plato?' In *The Winged Chariot: Collected Essays on Plato and Platonism in Honour of L.M. de Rijk*, edited by Maria Kardaun and Joke Spruyt. Leiden: Brill, 119–134.
- Opsomer, Jan. 1997. 'Favorinus versus Epictetus on the Philosophical Heritage of Plutarch: A Debate on Epistemology.' In *Plutarch and His Intellectual World*, edited by Judith Mossman. Havertown: Classical Press of Wales, 17–39.
- Opsomer, Jan. 1998. *In Search of the Truth: Academic Tendencies in Middle Platonism*. Klasse der Letteren 163. Brussels: KAWLSK.
- Opsomer, Jan. 2009. 'M. Annius Ammonius: A Philosophical Profile.' In *The Origins of the Platonic System: Platonisms of the Early Empire and Their Philosophical Contexts*, edited by Mauro Bonazzi and Jan Opsomer. Collection d'Études Classiques 23. Leuven: Peeters, 123–186.
- Opsomer, Jan. 2013. 'Plutarch and the Stoics.' In *Companion to Plutarch*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. New York: Wiley & Sons, 88–103.
- Osborne, Catherine. 1996. *Eros Unveiled. Plato and the God of Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Osten-Sacken, Peter von der. 1975. *Römer 8 als Beispiel paulinischer Soteriologie*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Packman, Zola Marie. 1991. 'The Incredible and the Incredulous: The Vocabulary of Disbelief in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon.' *Hermes* 119: 399–414.
- Palmer, John A. 1999. *Plato's Reception of Parmenides*. Oxford: Clarendon.

- Pao, David W. 2010. 'Gospel within the Constraints of an Epistolary Form: Pauline Introductory Thanksgivings and Paul's Theology of Thanksgiving.' In *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Sean A. Adams, 101–128.
- Parker, Robert. 2011. *On Greek religion*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Pasorek, Günter. 1980. 'Eine historische Notiz zur Scheidung von theologia civilis und naturalis.' In *Symmicta philologica salisburgensia, Georgio Pfligersdorfer sexagenario oblata*, edited by Joachim Dalfen. Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 87–103.
- Patterson, Stephen. 2009. 'A Rhetorical Gem in a Rhetorical Treasure: The Origin and Significance of 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.' *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 39: 87–94.
- Payleitner, Jay. 2012. *One-Minute Devotions for Dads*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House.
- Pearson, Birger A. 1971. '1 Thessalonians 2.13–16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation.' *Harvard Theological Review* 64: 79–94.
- Peels, Saskia. 2014. *Hosios: A Semantic Study of Greek Piety*. Utrecht: Utrecht University (PhD Thesis).
- Pelling, Christopher. 1988. 'Aspects of Plutarch's Characterisation.' *Illinois Classical Studies* 13: 257–274.
- Pépin, Jean. 1958. *Mythe et allégorie: Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*. Paris: Éditions Montaigne.
- Peppard, Michael. 2014. 'Brother against Brother: Controversiae about Inheritance Disputes and 1 Corinthians 6:1–11.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133: 179–192.
- Peppiatt, Lucy. 2015. *Women and Worship at Corinth: Paul's Rhetorical Arguments in 1 Corinthians*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Perin, Casey. 2005. 'Stoic Epistemology and the Limits of Externalism.' *Ancient Philosophy* 25: 383–401.
- Peters, Francis E. 1967. 'Pistis.' In *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*. New York: New York University Press.
- Petrovic, Andrej & Ivana Petrovic. 2016. *Inner Purity and Pollution in Greek Religion*, vol. 1: Early Greek Religion. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Picaluga, Giulia. 1981. 'Fides nella religione romana di età imperiale.' In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 2.17.2, edited by Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini. Berlin: de Gruyter, 703–735.
- Piette, Renée Koch. 2005. 'Paul and the Athens Epicureans: Between Polytheisms, Atheisms and Monotheisms.' *Diogenes* 52: 47–60.
- Pinnoy, M. 1981. 'Metopos en Plutarchus over de ethische deugd.' *L'Antiquité Classique* 50: 655–663.
- Pitts, Andrew W. 2010. 'Philosophical and Epistolary Contexts for Pauline Paraenesis.' In *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form*, edited by Stanley E. Porter. Pauline Studies 6, 269–306.
- Plummer, Alfred. 2000 [1915]. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*. London: A&C Black.

- Plunkett-Dowling, Regina. 2001. 'Reading and Restoration: Paul's Use of Scripture in 2 Corinthians 1–9.' (PhD Thesis).
- Pogoloff, Stephen M. 1992. *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians*. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Pohlenz, Max. 1948. *Die Stoa: Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Poirier, John C. 2008. 'The Measure of Stewardship: Pistis in Romans 12.3.' *Tyndale Bulletin* 59: 145–152.
- Pomeroy, Arthur J. 2010. 'Fides in Silius Italicus' Punica.' In *Silius Italicus: Akten der Innsbrucker Tagung vom 19.–21. Juni 2008*, edited by Florian Schaffnerath. Studien zur klassischen Philologie 164. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Pomeroy, Arthur John (ed.). 1999. *Arius Didymus—Epitome of Stoic Ethics*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Porter, Stanley E. 1995. 'Pauline Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles: Implications for Canon.' *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5: 105–123.
- Porter, Stanley E. 1997. 'The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology.' In *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, edited by Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 148. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 79–97.
- Porter, Stanley E. 2006. 'Further Comments on the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament.' In *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, edited by Thomas L. Brodie, Dennis R. MacDonald and Stanley E. Porter. New Testament Message 16. Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 98–110.
- Porter, Stanley E. & Andrew W. Pitts (eds.). 2013. *Early Christianity in Its Hellenistic Context*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament. Leiden: Brill.
- Pöschl, Viktor. 1980. 'Politische Wertbegriffe in Rom.' *Antike Und Abendland* 26: 1–17.
- Praus Sze, Corinne. 1977. 'Εἰκασία and πίστις in Plato's Cave Allegory.' *The Classical Quarterly* 27: 127–138.
- Premmerstein, Anton von. 1937. *Vom Werden und Wesen des Prinzipats*. München: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Price, Simon R. F. 1984. *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Price, Simon R. F. 1999. *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Punt, Jeremy. 2012. 'Empire and New Testament Texts: Theorising the Imperial, in Subversion and Attraction.' *HTS Theologese Studies / Theological Studies* 68: 11 pages.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

- Quarles, Charles L. 2003. 'From Faith to Faith: A Fresh Examination of the Propositional Series in Romans 1:17.' *Novum Testamentum* 45: 1–21.
- Rabens, Volker. 2013. 'Paul's Rhetoric of Demarcation: Separation from "Unbelievers" (2 Cor 6.14–7.1) in the Corinthian Conflict.' In *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict: Studies in the Exegesis and Theology of 2 Corinthians*, edited by Ma. Marilou S. Ibita, Dominika A. Kurek-Chomycz, Reimund Bieringer and Thomas A. Vollmer. *Biblical Tools and Studies* 16. Leuven: Peeters, 229–254.
- Rabens, Volker. 2014a. 'Inclusion of and Demarcation from "Outsiders": Mission and Ethics in Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians.' In *Sensitivity towards Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, vol. 364, edited by Jacobus Kok, Tobias Nicklas, Dieter T. Roth and Christopher M. Hays. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 290–323.
- Rabens, Volker. 2014b. 'Pneuma and the Beholding of God: Reading Paul in the Context of Philonic Mystical Traditions.' In *The Holy Spirit, Inspiration, and the Cultures of Antiquity: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Jörg Frey and John Levison. Berlin: de Gruyter, 293–327.
- Rabens, Volker. 2016a. 'The Faithfulness of God and its Effects on Faithful Living: A Critical Analysis of Tom Wright's Faithfulness to Paul's Ethics.' In *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of the Pauline Theology of N.T. Wright*, edited by Christoph Heilig, J. Thomas Hewitt and Michael F. Bird. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II* 413. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 555–580.
- Rabens, Volker. 2016b. 'The Holy Spirit and Deification in Paul: A "Western" Perspective.' In *The Holy Spirit and the Church according to the New Testament: Sixth International East-West Symposium of New Testament Scholars, Belgrade, August 25 to 31, 2013*, edited by Predrag Dragutinović, Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and James Buchanan Wallace. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I* 354. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 187–220.
- Raccanelli, Renata. 1998. *L'amicizia nelle Comedie di Plauto. Un'indagine antropologica*. Bari: Edipuglia.
- Rademaker, Adriaan. 2005. *Sophrosyne and the Rhetoric of Self-Restraint: Polysemy and Persuasive Use of an Ancient Greek Value Term*. Leiden: Brill.
- Räisänen, Heikki. 1980. 'Paul's Theological Difficulties with the Law.' In *Studia Biblica 3: Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors*. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 29. Sheffield: JSOT, 301–320.
- Räisänen, Heikki. 1987. *Paul and the Law*. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I* 29. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Ramelli, Ilaria. 2006. *Il basileus come nomos empsychos tra diritto naturale e diritto divino: Spunti platonici del concetto e sviluppi di età imperiale e tardo-antica*. Naples: Bibliopolis.



- Ramsaran, Rollin A. 1996. *Liberating Words: Paul's Use of Rhetorical Maxims in 1 Corinthians 1–10*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity.
- Rauer, Max. 1923. *Die 'Schwachen' in Korinth und Rom nach den Paulusbriefen*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
- Reale, Giovanni. 1990. *A History of Ancient Philosophy IV: The Schools of the Imperial Age*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Reasoner, Mark. 1999. *The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14.1–15.13 in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reed, Jeffrey. 1997. *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate Over Literary Integrity*. The Library of New Testament Studies 136. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.
- Reed, Jeffrey & Stanley E. Porter. 1999. *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results*. London: A&C Black.
- Reinhardt, Karl. 1953. 'Posidonius von Apameia, der Rhodier genannt.' In *Pauly-Wissowa: Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 22.1. Stuttgart: Reuter, 558–826.
- Reinhartz, Adele. 1987. 'On the Meaning of the Pauline Exhortation: "Mimētai Mou Ginesthe—Become Imitators of Me"?' *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 16: 393–403.
- Reiterer, Friedrich V. 2017. 'Glaube und seine Vorstellungsquellen: Das Zeugnis spätalttestamentlicher Schriften in der Septuaginta.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 109–140.
- Reitzenstein, Richard. 1910. *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen: Ihre Grundgedanken und Wirkungen*. Leipzig: Teubner (Vortrag ursprünglich gehalten in dem wissenschaftlichen Predigerverein für Elsass-Lothringen den 11. November 1909).
- Reitzenstein, Richard. 1916a. 'Die Formel "Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung" bei Paulus.' *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse* 367–416.
- Reitzenstein, Richard. 1916b. 'Die Entstehung der Formel "Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung".' *Historische Zeitschrift* 116: 189–208.
- Reitzenstein, Richard. 1920. *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen: Nach ihren Grundgedanken und Wirkungen*. Leipzig: Teubner (Vortrag ursprünglich gehalten in dem wissenschaftlichen Predigerverein für Elsass-Lothringen den 11. November 1909).
- Reitzenstein, Richard. 1978. *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance*. Translated by John E. Steely. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.

- Renn, Stephen D. 2005. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Texts*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Reusser, Christoph. 1993. *Der Fidestempel auf dem Kapitol in Rom und seine Ausstattung: Ein Beitrag zu den Ausgrabungen an der Via del Mare und um das Kapitol, 1926–1943*. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
- Reydams-Schils, Gretchen. 2017. "Becoming like God" in Platonism and Stoicism.' In *From Stoicism to Platonism: The Development of Philosophy, 100 BCE–100 CE*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 142–158.
- Rich, John. 1989. 'Patronage and Interstate Relations in the Roman Republic.' In *Patronage in Ancient Society*, edited by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill. London: Routledge, 117–135.
- Richardson, Peter. 1983. 'Judgment in Sexual Matters in 1 Corinthians 6.1–11.' *Novum Testamentum* 25: 37–58.
- Ridderbos, Herman. 1953. *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Rives, James B. 2007. *Religion in the Roman Empire*. Blackwell ancient religions. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Rives, James B. 2010. 'Graeco-Roman Religion in the Roman Empire: Old Assumptions and New Approaches.' *Currents in Biblical Research* 8: 240–299.
- Roberts, Alexander & James Donaldson. 1869. *Clement of Alexandria*, vol. 2. Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325 12. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Roberts, Ronald D. 2012. 'Deviance or Acceptable Difference: Observance of the Law in Romans 14–15 and "Dialogue with Trypho" 47.' *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 68: 1–10.
- Robinson, Jonathan Rivett. 2018. 'The Argument against Attributing Slogans in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20.' *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 8: 147–166.
- Robinson, Laura. 2021. 'Hidden Transcripts? The Supposedly Self-Censoring Paul and Rome as Surveillance State in Modern Pauline Scholarship.' *New Testament Studies* 67: 55–72.
- Rock, Ian E. 2010. 'Another Reason for Romans—A Pastoral Response to Augustan Imperial Theology: Paul's Use of the Song of Moses in Romans 9–11 and 14–15.' In *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation. Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, edited by Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker. The Library of New Testament Studies 428. London: T&T Clark, 74–89.
- Roetzel, Calvin J. 2010. 'Paul and Nomos in the Messianic Age.' In *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, edited by Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker. The Library of New Testament Studies 428. London: T&T Clark, 113–127.

- Rollins, Peter. 2015. *The Divine Magician: The Disappearance of Religion and the Discovery of Faith*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Rose, Amy R. 1986. 'Power and Powerlessness in Seneca's "Thyestes".' *The Classical Journal* 82: 117–128.
- Rosen-Zvi, Ishay & Adi Ophir. 2015. 'Paul and the Invention of the Gentiles.' *Jewish Quarterly Review* 105: 1–41.
- Roskam, Geert. 2005. *On the Path to Virtue: The Stoic Doctrine of Moral Progress and Its Reception in (middle-)Platonism*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Rothe, Christian. 1978. *Humanitas, Fides und Verwandtes in der römischen Provinzialpolitik: Untersuchungen zur politischen Funktion römischer Verhaltensnormen bei Cicero*. Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur der Antike 12. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Rowe, C. Kavin. 2005. 'New Testament Iconography? Situating Paul in the Absence of Material Evidence.' In *Picturing the New Testament: studies in ancient visual images*, edited by Annette Weissenrieder, Friederike Wendt and Petra von Gemünden. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 289–312.
- Ruhl, Charles. 1989. *On Monosemy: A Study in Linguistic Semantics*. SUNY Press.
- Runge, Steven E. 2010. *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Runia, David T. (ed.). 2001a. *Philo of Alexandria—On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Leiden: Brill.
- Runia, David T. 2001b. 'The Beginnings of the End: Philo of Alexandria and Hellenistic Theology.' In *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, its Background and Aftermath*, edited by André Laks and Dorothea Frede. *Philosophia Antiqua* 89. Leiden: Brill, 281–316.
- Runia, David T. 2008. 'Philo and Hellenistic Doxography.' In *Philo of Alexandria and Post-Aristotelian Philosophy*, edited by Francesca Alesse. *Studies in Philo of Alexandria*. Leiden: Brill, 13–54.
- Runia, David T. 2011. 'Ancient Philosophy and the New Testament—"Exemplar" as Example.' In *Method and Meaning: Essays on New Testament Interpretation in Honor of Harold W. Attridge*, edited by Andrew Brian MacGowan and Kent Harold Richards. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 347–361.
- Rüpke, Jörg. 2001. *Die Religion der Römer: eine Einführung*. C.H.Beck.
- Rüpke, Jörg. 2012. *Religion in Republican Rome: Rationalization and Ritual Change (Empire and After)*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Russell, Daniel C. 2004. 'Virtue as "Likeness to God" in Plato and Seneca.' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 42: 241–260.
- Ryberg, Inez Scott. 1958. 'Vergil's Golden Age.' *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 89: 112–131.

- Saller, Richard. 1989. 'Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction.' In *Patronage in ancient society*, edited by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill. London: Routledge, 117–135.
- Saller, Richard P. 1982. *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sampley, J. Paul. 1991. *Walking between the times: Paul's moral reasoning*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Sampley, J. Paul. 1995. 'The Weak and the Strong: Paul's Careful and Crafty Rhetorical Strategy in Romans 14.1–15.13.' In *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, edited by L. Michael White, Oliver L. Yarbrough and Wayne A. Meeks. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 40–52.
- Sanders, Boykin. 1981. 'Imitating Paul: 1 Cor 4:16.' *Harvard Theological Review* 74: 353–363.
- Sanders, E. P. 1977. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Sanders, E. P. 1983. *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*. London: SCM.
- Sanders, E. P. 2009. 'Paul between Judaism and Hellenism.' In *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, edited by John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff. Indiana University Press, 74–90.
- Sanders, Jack T. 1962. 'The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81: 348–362.
- Sanders, José. 2014. 'Translating "Thinking" and "Believing" in the Bible: How Cognitive Linguistic Analysis Shows Increasing Subjectivity in Translations.' In *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 253–276.
- Sandmel, Samuel. 1962. 'Parallelomania.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81: 1–13.
- Sandnes, Karl Olav. 2002. *Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 120. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sani, F. & S. D. Reicher. 2000. 'Contested Identities and Schisms in Groups: Opposing the Ordination of Women as Priests in the Church of England.' *The British Journal of Social Psychology* 39: 95–112.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1959. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Wade Baskin. Edited by Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye. New York: Philosophical Library (trans. of *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris: Payot, 1916).
- Scheid, John. 2005. *Quand faire, c'est croire: Les rites sacrificiels des Romains*. Collection historique. Paris: Aubier.
- Schellenberg, Ryan S. 2019. 'Οἱ πιστεύοντες: An Early Christ-Group Self-Designation and Paul's Rhetoric of Faith.' *New Testament Studies* 65: 33–42.
- Schenck, Kenneth. 2008. '2 Corinthians and the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate.' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70: 524–537.

- Schlatter, Adolf. 1963 [1882]. *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Schliesser, Benjamin. 2007. *Abraham's Faith in Romans 4: Paul's Concept of Faith in Light of the History of Reception of Genesis 15.6*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Schliesser, Benjamin. 2011. *Was ist Glaube? Paulinische Perspektiven*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich.
- Schliesser, Benjamin. 2012. "Abraham Did not 'Doubt' in Unbelief" (Romans 4.20): Faith, Doubt, and Dispute in Paul's Letter to the Romans.' *The Journal of Theological Studies* 63: 492–522.
- Schliesser, Benjamin. 2015. 'Exegetical Amnesia and Πίστις Χριστοῦ: The "Faith of Christ" in 19th Century Pauline Scholarship.' *Journal of Theological Studies* 66: 61–89.
- Schliesser, Benjamin. 2016. "Christ-Faith" as an Eschatological Event (Galatians 3.23–26): A "Third View" on πίστις Χριστοῦ.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38: 277–300.
- Schliesser, Benjamin. 2017a. 'Glauben und Denken im Hebräerbrief und bei Paulus: Zwei frühchristliche Perspektiven auf die Rationalität des Glaubens.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 503–560.
- Schliesser, Benjamin. 2017b. 'Faith in Early Christianity: An Encyclopedic and Bibliographical Outline.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 3–50.
- Schmithals, Walter. 1972. *Paul and the Gnostics*. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Schmitz, D. Otto. 1924. *Die Christus-Gemeinschaft des Paulus im Lichte seines Genitivgebrauchs*, vol. 2. Neutestamentliche Forschungen 1. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.
- Schneider, Sebastian. 1996. 'Glaubensmängel in Korinth: Eine neue Deutung der "Schwachen, Kranken, Schlafenden" in 1 Kor 11.30.' *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 9: 3–19.
- Schnelle, Udo & Michael Labahn (eds.). 1996. *Neuer Wettstein: Texte zum Neuen Testament aus Griechenland und Hellenismus*, vol. 2.1–2: Texte zur Briefliteratur und zur Johannesapokalypse. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Schnelle, Udo, Michael Labahn & Manfred Lang (eds.). 2001. *Neuer Wettstein: Texte zum Neuen Testament aus Griechenland und Hellenismus*, vol. 1.2: Texte zum Johannesevangelium. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Schnelle, Udo, Michael Labahn & Manfred Lang (eds.). 2008. *Neuer Wettstein: Texte zum Neuen Testament aus Griechenland und Hellenismus*, vol. 1.1: Texte zum Markusevangelium. Berlin: de Gruyter.

- Schnelle, Udo, Michael Labahn & Manfred Lang (eds.). 2013. *Neuer Wettstein: Texte zum Neuen Testament aus Griechentum und Hellenismus*, vol. 1.2–1 Texte zum Matthäusevangelium (1–10). Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Schofield, Malcolm. 1980. 'Preconception, Argument, and God.' In *Doubt and Dogmatism: Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, edited by Malcolm Schofield, Myles Burnyeat and Jonathan Barnes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 283–308.
- Schofield, Malcolm. 1984. 'Ariston of Chios and the Unity of Virtue.' *Ancient Philosophy* 4: 83–96.
- Schofield, Malcolm. 1991. *The Stoic Idea of the City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schol-Wetter, Anne-Mareike. 2014. *Judging By Her: Reconfiguring Israel in Ruth, Esther, and Judith*. Utrecht: Utrecht University (PhD Thesis).
- Schrenck, Gottlob. 1968. 'Δίκη κτλ.' In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, 10 volumes, vol. 2, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 178–225.
- Schröder, Winfried. 2011. *Athen und Jerusalem: Die philosophische Kritik am Christentum in Antike und Neuzeit*. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.
- Schubert, Paul. 1935. *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Divinity School (PhD Thesis).
- Schuller, Tom. 2007. 'Reflections on the Use of Social Capital.' *Review of Social Economy* 65: 11–28.
- Schumacher, Thomas. 2009. 'Der Begriff "pistis" im paulinischen Sprachgebrauch: Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von christlicher und profangriechischer Semantik.' In *The Letter to the Romans*, edited by Udo Schnelle. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 226. Leuven: Peeters, 487–501.
- Schumacher, Thomas. 2012. *Zur Entstehung christlicher Sprache: Eine Untersuchung der paulinischen Idiomatik und der Verwendung des Begriffes pistis*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Schumacher, Thomas. 2017. 'Den Römern ein Römer: Die paulinischen Glaubensausagen vor dem Hintergrund des römisch-lateinischen fides-Begriffs.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament I 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 299–344.
- Schunack, Gerd. 1999. 'Glaube in griechischer Religiosität.' In *Antikes Judentum und Frühes Christentum: Festschrift für Hartmut Stegemann zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by Bernd Kollmann, Wolfgang Reinbold and Annette Steudel. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 97. Berlin: de Gruyter, 296–326.
- Schürmann, Heinz. 1962. *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*. Düsseldorf: Patmos.

- Scott, Gary Alan & William A. Welton. 2009. *Erotic Wisdom: Philosophy and Intermediacy in Plato's Symposium*. Albany, NY: Suny.
- Sedley, David N. 1989. 'Philosophical Allegiance in the Greco-Roman World.' In *Philosophia Togata: Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society*, edited by Miriam T. Griffin and Jonathan Barnes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sedley, David N. 1999. 'The Ideal of Godlikeness.' In *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, edited by G. Fine. Oxford Readings in Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 309–328.
- Seifrid, Mark A. 1992. *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 68. Leiden: Brill.
- Seifrid, Mark A. 2004. 'Paul's Use of Righteousness Language Against its Hellenistic Background.' In *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 2 volumes, vol. 2: The Paradoxes of Paul, edited by D. A. Carson, Peter Thomas O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 39–74.
- Seifrid, Mark A. 2018. 'Quaestiones disputatae: Roman Faith and Christian Faith.' *New Testament Studies* 64: 247–255.
- Sellers, John. 2003. *The Art of Living: The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy*. Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Philosophy. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Shackleton Bailey, D. R. 2000. *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Doings and Sayings*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Books 1–5. Loeb Classical Library 492. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Shantz, Colleen. 2009. *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shaw, David A. 2013. 'Converted Imaginations? The Reception of Richard Hays's Intertextual Method.' *Currents in Biblical Research* 11: 234–245.
- Shead, Stephen L. (ed.). 2011. *Radical Frame Semantics and Biblical Hebrew: Exploring Lexical Semantics*. Leiden: Brill.
- Sherwood, Aaron. 2012. *Paul and the Restoration of Humanity in Light of Ancient Jewish Traditions*. Leiden: Brill.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2014. "'Oefen je dag en nacht daarin!' Pistis als levenshouding in Paulus en de hellenistische wijsbegeerte.' *Tijdschrift Voor Theologie* 54: 220–238.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2015a. "'Say Goodbye to Opinions!' Plutarch's Philosophy of Natural Phenomena and the Journey to Metaphysical Knowledge.' In *Natural spectacles: aspects of Plutarch's philosophy of nature*, edited by Michiel Meeusen and Luc Van der Stockt. Plutarchea Hypomnemata. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 57–72.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2015b. 'Pistis and Fides as Civic and Divine Virtues: A Pauline Concept through Greco-Roman Eyes.' In *Paul's Graeco-Roman Context*,

- edited by Cilliers Breytenbach. *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* 277. Leuven: Peeters, 525–543.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2015c. '(N)iets nieuws onder de zon? Klassieke Oorsprongsnarratieven in de Romeinenbrief.' *Radix* 41: 325–338.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2016. 'Imitation in Faith: Enacting Paul's Ambiguous *Pistis Christou* Formulations on a Greco-Roman stage.' *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 77: 119–153.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2017. 'The Metahistory of *δίκη* and *πίστις*: A Greco-Roman Reading of Paul's "Justification by Faith" Axiom.' In *Saint Paul and Philosophy: The Consonance of Ancient and Modern Thought*, edited by Gert-Jan van der Heiden, George H. van Kooten and Antonio Cimino. Berlin: de Gruyter, 209–230.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2018. 'Geloof in Galaten? *Pistis* als publieke relatie van trouw.' *Schrift* 50: 35–42.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2019. 'Faithfulness as Subhegemonic Antidote to a Precarious Existence: A Response to Peter-Ben Smit.' *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 9: 80–88.
- Sierksma-Agteres, Suzan J. M. 2021. 'Rechtvaardig door geloof of door trouw? Gedachten bij de vertaling van *pistis* en *pisteuô* in de herziening van Romeinen 4.' *Met Andere Woorden* 40: 68–78.
- Silva, Moisés. 1994. *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Silva, Moisés. 2004. 'Faith Versus Works of Law in Galatians.' In *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 2 volumes, vol. 2: The Paradoxes of Paul, edited by D. A. Carson, Peter Thomas O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 217–248.
- Sisson, Russel B. 2005. 'Authorial Ethos in Philippians: The *Agôn Topos* in Paul and Hellenistic Moralists.' In *Rhetoric, Ethic, and Moral Persuasion in Biblical Discourse*, edited by Thomas H. Olbricht and Anders Eriksson. London: A&C Black, 238–254.
- Skidmore, Clive. 1996. *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen: The Work of Valerius Maximus*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.
- Smit, Joop F. M. 1994. 'Tongues and Prophecy: Deciphering 1 Corinthians 14.22.' *Biblica* 75: 175–190.
- Smit, Peter-Ben. 2013. *Paradigms of Being in Christ: A Study of the Epistle to the Philippians*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.
- Smit, Peter-Ben & Toon Renssen. 2014. 'The *Passivum Divinum*: The Rise and Future Fall of an Imaginary Linguistic Phenomenon.' *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 27: 3–24.
- Smith, Andrew. 2002. 'Further Thoughts on Iamblichus as the First Philosopher of Religion.' In *Metaphysik und Religion: Zur Signatur des spätantiken Denkens (Akten des Internationalen Kongresses vom 13.-17. März 2001 in Würzburg)*, edited by Theo Kobusch and Michael Erler. Berlin: de Gruyter, 297–308.



- Smith, Dain Alexander. 2022. 'Reflecting Ancient Ethics: Reconsidering the Mirror Metaphor in 1 Corinthians 13.12.' *Novum Testamentum* 64: 296–317.
- Smith, Daniel Lynwood. 2015. *Into the World of the New Testament: Greco-Roman and Jewish Texts and Contexts*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. 1982. *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. 1990. *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, Julien. 2011. *Christ the Ideal King: Cultural Context, Rhetorical Strategy, and the Power of Divine Monarchy in Ephesians*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Smith, Nicholas D. 2000. 'Plato on Knowledge as a Power.' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 38: 145–168.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. 1962. *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind*. New York: Macmillan.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. 1998. *Believing: An Historical Perspective*. Oxford: OneWorld.
- Söding, Thomas. 1992. *Die Trias Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe bei Paulus: eine exegetische Studie*. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk.
- Solin, Heikki Lauri Abel. 2013. 'Inchriftliche Wunderheilungsberichte aus Epidauros.' *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 17: 7–50.
- Sorabji, Richard. 1995. 'Intentionality and Physiological Processes: Aristotle's Theory of Sense-Perception.' In *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, edited by Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 195–226.
- Sorabji, Richard. 1998. 'Is Theophrastus a Significant Philosopher?' In *Theophrastus: Reappraising the Sources*, edited by Johannes M. van Ophuijsen and Marlein van Raalte. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 203–221.
- Sourvinou-Inwood, Christiane. 1990. 'What is polis religion?' In *The Greek city: From Homer to Alexander*, edited by Oswyn Murray and Simon R. F. Price. Oxford: Clarendon, 295–322.
- Spaeth, Jakob. 2017. 'Der Glaube des Einzelnen und der Glaube der Gemeinschaft im Ersten Korintherbrief.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 369–398.
- Speliotis, Evanthia. 2011. 'Φρόνησις and Law in Plato's Statesman.' *Ancient Philosophy* 31: 295–310.
- Spisak, Art L. 2015. *Martial: A Social Guide*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Spitaler, Peter. 2007. 'Διακρίνεσθαι in Matthew 21.21, Mark 11.23, Acts 10.20, Romans 4.20, 14.23, James 1.6, and Jude 22: The "Semantic Shift" That Went Unnoticed by Patristic Authors.' *Novum Testamentum* 49: 1–39.

- Sprengling, M. 1917. 'Galen on the Christians.' *The American Journal of Theology* 21: 94–109.
- Stanley, David M. 1959. 'Become Imitators of Me: The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition.' *Biblica* 40: 859–877.
- Starks, John H. 1999. 'Fides Aeneia: The Transference of Punic Stereotypes in the Aeneid.' *The Classical Journal* 94: 255–283.
- Starling, David. 2013. 'The ἄπιστοι of 2 Corinthians 6.14: Beyond the Impasse.' *Novum Testamentum* 55: 45–60.
- Starr, James. 2013. 'Letter Openings in Paul and Plato.' In *Early Christianity in Its Hellenistic Context*, 2 volumes, vol. 1: Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Leiden: Brill, 515–549.
- Staveren, Irene van & Peter Knorringa (eds.). 2007. *Beyond Social Capital: A Critical Approach*. Routledge.
- Stead, George Christopher. 1994. *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stegemann, Ekkehard W. 2010. 'Coexistence and Transformation: Reading the Politics of Identity in Romans in an Imperial Context.' In *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation: Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell*, edited by Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker. The Library of New Testament Studies 428. London: T&T Clark, 3–23.
- Stegman, Thomas. 2005. *The Character of Jesus: The Linchpin to Paul's Argument in 2 Corinthians*. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.
- Stendahl, Krister. 1963. 'The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West.' *Harvard Theological Review* 56: 199–215.
- Stenger, Victor J. & Dan Barker. 2012. *God and the Folly of Faith: The Incompatibility of Science and Religion*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus.
- Stephens, William O. 2007. *Stoic Ethics: Epictetus and Happiness as Freedom*. London: A&C Black.
- Sterling, G. 1997. 'Prepositional Metaphysics in Jewish Wisdom Speculation and Early Christological Hymns.' *Studia Philonica Annual* 9: 219–238.
- Sterling, Gregory E. 2003. 'Universalizing the Particular: Natural Law in Second Temple Jewish Ethics.' *Studia Philonica Annual* 15: 64–80.
- Steyn, G. J. 2015. 'Observations on the Text Form of the Minor Prophets Quotations in Romans 9–11.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38: 49–67.
- Stockhausen, Carol Kern. 1989. *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant: The Exegetical Substructure of 2 Corinthians 3.1–4.6*. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.
- Storey, Damien. 2022. 'Dianoia & Plato's Divided Line.' *Phronesis* 68: 1–56 (published online ahead of print 2022).

- Stowers, Stanley K. 2017. 'The Dilemma of Paul's Physics: Features Stoic-Platonist or Platonist-Stoic?' In *From Stoicism to Platonism: The Development of Philosophy, 100 BCE–100 CE*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 231–253.
- Stowers, Stanley K. 1989. 'Ek Pisteōs and Dia Tēs Pisteōs in Romans 3:30.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108: 665–674.
- Stowers, Stanley K. 1994. *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stowers, Stanley K. 2001. 'Does Pauline Christianity Resemble a Hellenistic Philosophy?' In *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 81–102.
- Straaten, Modestus van. 1946. *Panetius: Sa vie, ses écrits et sa doctrine avec une édition des fragments*. Amsterdam: H.J. Paris.
- Straten, Folkert T. van. 1981. 'Gifts for the Gods.' In *Faith, hope and worship: aspects of religious mentality in the ancient world*, edited by H. S. Versnel. Studies in Greek and Roman religion 2. Leiden: Brill, 65–151.
- Strecker, Christian. 2005. 'Fides—Pistis—Glaube: Kontexte und Konturen einer Theologie der "Annahme" bei Paulus.' In *Lutherische und Neue Paulusperspektive*, edited by Michael Bachmann and Johannes Woyke. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 223–250.
- Strelan, Rick. 1999. 'Strange Stares: Atenizein in Acts.' *Novum Testamentum* 41: 235–255.
- Striker, Gisela. 1996a. 'Origins of the Concept of Natural Law.' In *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 209–220.
- Striker, Gisela. 1996b. 'The Role of Oikeiosis in Stoic Ethics.' In *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 281–297.
- Striker, Gisela. 1996c. *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stuckrad, Kocku von. 2010. 'Reflections on the Limits of Reflection: An Invitation to the Discursive Study of Religion.' *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22: 156–169.
- Stuckrad, Kocku von. 2014. *The Scientification of Religion: An Historical Study of Discursive Change, 1800–2000*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Stuhlmacher, Peter. 1986. *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Sweet, J. P. M. 1967. 'A Sign for Unbelievers: Paul's Attitude to Glossolalia.' *New Testament Studies* 13: 240–257.
- Szlezák, Thomas A. 1972. *Pseudo-Archytas über die Kategorien, Texte zur griechischen Aristoteles-Exegese*. Peripatoi 4. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Taglia, Angelica. 1998. *Il concetto di pistis in Platone*. Firenze: Le lettere.
- Tan, Andrew Kimseng. 2018. *The Rhetoric of Abraham's Faith in Romans 4*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

- Tappenden, Frederick S. 2016. *Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Tarrant, Harold. 1985. *Scepticism or Platonism? The Philosophy of the Fourth Academy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, Greer M. 1966. 'The Function of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians.' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85: 58–76.
- Taylor, John R. 1995. *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Taylor, John R. 2002. *Cognitive Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, John R. 2017. 'Lexical Semantics.' In *The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, edited by Barbara Dancygier. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 246–261.
- Taylor, John W. 2004a. *Paul's Understanding of Faith*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge (PhD Thesis).
- Taylor, John W. 2004b. 'From Faith to Faith: Romans 1.17 in the Light of Greek Idiom.' *New Testament Studies* 50: 337–348.
- Taylor, Thomas. 1823. *Select Works of Porphyry (Containing his Four Books 'On Abstinence from Animal Food'; His Treatise 'On the Homeric Cave of the Nymphs'; and His 'Auxiliaries to the Perception of Intelligible Natures')*. London: Rodd.
- Terry, Milton S. (tran.). 1899. *The Sibylline Oracles*. New York: Eaton & Mains.
- Thate, Michael J., Kevin J. Vanhoozer & Constantine R. Campbell (eds.). 2014. 'In Christ' in Paul: *Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 384. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Theissen, Gerd. 1982. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*. Translated by John H. Schutz. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Thesleff, Holger. 1961. *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi.
- The New Yoga. 'Hinduism: Its Contemporary Relevance and Contrast to the Abrahamic Faiths.' <http://www.thenewyoga.org/hinduism.htm> [accessed January 3, 2017].
- Thiselton, Anthony C. 1977. 'Semantics and New Testament Interpretation.' In *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, edited by I. Howard Marshall. Carlisle: Paternoster, 75–104.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. 1980. *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Thom, Johan C. 2003. "'The Mind Is Its Own Place': Defining the Topos." In *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 110. Leiden: Brill, 555–573.

- Thom, Johan C. 2007. 'To Show the Difference by Comparison: The New Wettstein and Cleanthes' Hymn.' In *Reading Religions in the Ancient World*, edited by David Edward Aune and Robin Darling Young. Leiden: Brill, 81–100.
- Thom, Johan C. 2012. 'Popular Philosophy in the Hellenistic-Roman World.' *Early Christianity* 3: 279–295.
- Thompson, James W. 2011. *Moral formation according to Paul: the context and coherence of Pauline ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Thompson, Michael B. 1991. *Clothed With Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1–15.13*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 59. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Thornbury, Scott. 2010. 'What Can a Corpus Tell us About Discourse?' In *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*, edited by Anne O'Keeffe and Michael McCarthy. London: Routledge, 270–287.
- Thorsteinsson, Runar M. 2006. 'Paul and Roman Stoicism: Romans 12 and Contemporary Stoic Ethics.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29: 139–161.
- Thorsteinsson, Runar M. 2010a. 'Stoicism as a Key to Pauline Ethics in Romans.' In *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, edited by Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Ismo Dunderberg. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 15–38.
- Thorsteinsson, Runar M. 2010b. *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thorsteinsson, Runar M. 2010c. *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thrall, Margaret E. 1977. 'The Problem of 2 Corinthians 4.14–7.1 in Some Recent Discussion.' *New Testament Studies* 24: 132–148.
- Thrall, Margaret E. 1994. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on 2 Corinthians 1–7. London: A&C Black.
- Tilling, Chris. 2014. 'Douglas Campbell's Response to Chris Tilling.' In *Beyond Old and New Perspectives on Paul: Reflections on the Work of Douglas Campbell*, edited by Chris Tilling. Philadelphia: Casemate, 251–252.
- Toher, Mark. 1989. 'On the Use of Nicolaus' Historical Fragments.' *Classical Antiquity* 8: 159–172.
- Tomlin, Graham. 1998. 'Christians and Epicureans in 1 Corinthians.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 20: 51–71.
- Tomson, Peter J. 2014. 'Christ, Belial, and Women: 2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1 Compared with Ancient Judaism and with the Pauline Corpus.' In *Second Corinthians in the Perspective of Late Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Didier Pollefeyt, Reimund Bieringer, Peter J. Tomson and Emmanuel Nathan. Leiden: Brill, 79–131.
- Torgerson, Tobias Peter. 2006. 'The εἰδῶς φῶς and the Traditional Dichotomy of Divine and Mortal Epistemology.' *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 24: 25–43.

- Torrance, Thomas F. 1957. 'One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith.' *The Expository Times* 68: 111–114.
- Torrance, Thomas F. 1960. *Conflict and Agreement in the Church*, 2 volumes, vol. 2: The Ministry and Sacraments of the Gospel. Cambridge: Lutterworth.
- Tov, Emanuel. 1999. *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint*. Leiden: Brill.
- Towner, Philip. 2015. *The Goal of Our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Trabattoni, Franco. 2016. *Essays on Plato's Epistemology*. Ancient and Medieval Philosophy 1.53. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Trapp, Michael B. (ed.). 1994. *Maximus of Tyre—Dissertationes*. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum. Stuttgart: Teubner.
- Trapp, Michael B. (ed.). 1997. *Maximus of Tyre—The Philosophical Orations*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Trapp, Michael B. 2013. 'Philosophy and Philosophers in the Imperial Period.' In *A Companion to Plutarch*, edited by Mark Beck. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. New York: Wiley & Sons, 43–57.
- Trebilco, Paul. 2012. *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Trebilco, Paul. 2014. 'Creativity at the Boundary: Features of the Linguistic and Conceptual Construction of Outsiders in the Pauline Corpus.' *New Testament Studies* 60: 185–201.
- Trier, Jost. 1931. *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes: Die Geschichte eines sprachlichen Feldes*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Tronier, Henrik. 2001. 'The Corinthian Correspondence between Philosophical Idealism and Apocalypticism.' In *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 165–196.
- Tuominen, Miira. 2007. *Apprehension and Argument: Ancient Theories of Starting Points for Knowledge*. Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind 3. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Ueberschaer, Frank. 2017. 'Πίστις in der Septuaginta, oder "Der Glaube der Siebzig": Von was spricht die Septuaginta, wenn sie von πίστις schreibt?' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 79–107.
- Ullucci, Daniel C. 2012. *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Ulrichs, Karl Friedrich. 2007. *Christusglaube: Studien zum Syntagma 'pistis Christou' und zum paulinischen Verständnis von Glaube und Rechtfertigung*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Urmson, James O. 1990. 'Pistis.' In *The Greek Philosophical Vocabulary*. London: Duckworth.
- Usener, Hermann Karl (ed.). 1887. *Epicurea*. Leipzig: Teubner.
- V.P. 1859. 'Boekbeschouwing. Exegetische Studiën over ΠΙΣΤΙΣ en ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕΙΝ in het Nieuwe Testament, door J.R. Wernink.' *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* 301–303.
- Vainio, Olli-Pekka. 2010a. *Engaging Luther: A (New) Theological Assessment*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Vainio, Olli-Pekka. 2010b. 'Faith.' In *Engaging Luther: A (New) Theological Assessment*, edited by Olli-Pekka Vainio. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 138–154.
- Vander Waerdt, Paul A. 2003. 'The Original Theory of Natural Law.' *Studia Philonica Annual* 15: 17–34.
- Vanhoye, Albert. 2006. 'The Problematic Reception of πίστις in Romans 12.3.' In *What is it that the Scripture says? Essays in Biblical Interpretation, Translation, and Reception in Honour of Henry Wansbrough, OSB*, edited by Philip McCosker. The Library of New Testament Studies 316. London: T&T Clark.
- VanLandingham, Chris. 2006. *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Van den Berg, Christopher S. 2014. *The World of Tacitus' Dialogus de Oratoribus: Aesthetics and Empire in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Leeuwen, Raymond C. 2007. 'Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Mesopotamia and Israel.' In *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*, edited by Richard J. Clifford. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 67–90.
- Van Nuffelen, Peter. 2010. 'Varro's Divine Antiquities: Roman Religion as an Image of Truth.' *Classical Philology* 105: 162–188.
- Van Nuffelen, Peter. 2011. *Rethinking the Gods: Philosophical Readings of Religion in the Post-Hellenistic Period*. Greek Culture in the Roman World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vegge, Tor. 2005. *Paulus und das antike Schulwesen: Schule und Bildung des Paulus*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Verboven, Koenraad. 2011. 'Friendship among the Romans.' In *The Oxford handbook of social relations in the Roman world*, edited by Michael Peachin, 404–421.
- Vermes, Geza. 1997. *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English: Complete Edition*. New York: Allen Lane.
- Versnel, H.S. 2011. *Coping With the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology*. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 173. Leiden: Brill.
- Veyne, Paul. 1983. *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes? Essai sur l'imagination constituante*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

- Veyne, Paul. 1990. *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*. London: Penguin.
- Viagulamuthu, Xavier Paul B. 2002. *Offering Our Bodies as a Living Sacrifice to God: A Study in Pauline Spirituality Based on Romans 12, 1*. Gregorian Biblical BookShop.
- Voegelin, Eric. 1971. 'The Gospel and Culture.' In *Jesus and Man's Hope*, vol. 2, edited by Dikran Y. Hadidian and Donald G. Miller. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 59–101.
- Vogt, Katja Maria. 2007. *Law, Reason, and the Cosmic City: Political Philosophy in the Early Stoa*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Vorster, Hans. 1974. 'Glaube.' In *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, 13 volumes, vol. 3: G–H, edited by Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Grunder and Gottfried Gabriel. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 627–643.
- Wachsmuth, Curt & Otto Hense (eds.). 1884. *Stobaeus—Anthologium*, 5 volumes. Berlin: Weidmann.
- Wallace, A. J. & R. D. Rusk. 2011. *Moral Transformation: The Original Christian Paradigm of Salvation*. New Zealand: Bridgehead.
- Wallace-Hadrill, Andrew. 1982. 'The Golden Age and Sin in Augustan Ideology.' *Past and Present* 95: 19–36.
- Walzer, Richard. 1949. *Galen on Jews and Christians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Watson, Edward W. & Martin M. Culy. 2018. *Quoting Corinthians: Identifying Slogans and Quotations in 1 Corinthians*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.
- Watson, Francis. 2007. *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Watson, Francis. 2009. 'By Faith (of Christ): An Exegetical Dilemma and Its Scriptural Solution.' In *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, edited by Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 147–163.
- Watson, Francis. 2018. 'Quaestiones disputatae: Roman Faith and Christian Faith.' *New Testament Studies* 64: 243–247.
- Watson, Nigel. 1993. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Epworth Commentaries. London: Epworth.
- Weatherly, Jon A. 1991. 'The Authenticity of 1 Thessalonians 2.13–16: Additional Evidence.' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 13: 79–98.
- Webb, William J. 1993. *Returning Home: New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 85. Sheffield: JSOT.
- Wengert, Timothy J. 2015. 'Building on the One Foundation with Straw: Martin Luther and the Epistle of James.' *Word & World* 35: 251–261.
- Wernink, Jan Reinier. 1858. *Exegetische Studiën over πίστις en πιστεύειν in het Nieuwe Testament*. Rotterdam: Van der Meer & Verbruggen.



- West, Martin. 2001. 'Early Greek Philosophy.' In *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, edited by John Boardman, Jasper Griffin and Oswyn Murray. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 112–123.
- Whelan, Frederick G. 1982. 'Justice: Classical and Christian.' *Political Theory* 10: 435–460.
- White, L. Michael & John T. Fitzgerald. 2003. 'Quod Est Comparandum: The Problem of Parallels.' In *Early Christianity and Classical Culture*. Brill, 13–39.
- Whitlark, Jason A. 2018. 'The Ideal King in Hebrews: The Exemplary and Empowering Rule of the Son of God.' In *A Temple Not Made with Hands: Essays in Honor of Naymond H. Keathley*, edited by Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard Walsh. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 102–116.
- Whitmarsh, Tim. 2016. *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Whittaker, Helene. 2001. 'The Purpose of Porphyry's Letter to Marcella.' *Symbolae Osloenses* 76: 150–168.
- Wieacker, Franz. 1988. *Römische Rechtsgeschichte: Quellenkunde, Rechtsbildung, Jurisprudenz und Rechtsliteratur*. Munich: Beck.
- Wieczorek, Tobias. 2021. *Die Nichtgläubigen: Über die Funktion abgrenzender Sprache bei Paulus*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 163. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Wilde, Marc de. 2011. 'Fides Publica in Ancient Rome and its Reception by Grotius and Locke.' *Tijdschrift Voor Rechtsgeschiedenis | Revue d'Histoire Du Droit | The Legal History Review* 79: 455–487.
- Williams, Drake H. H. 2014. "'Imitate Me": Interpreting Imitation in 1 Corinthians in Relation to Ignatius of Antioch.' *Perichoresis* 11: 77–95.
- Williams, Gareth D. & Katharina Volk. 2015. *Roman Reflections: Studies in Latin Philology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, Sam K. 1987. 'Again Pistis Christou.' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49: 431–447.
- Williams, Sam K. 1989. 'The Hearing of Faith: Ἀκοῇ πίστεως in Galatians 3.' *New Testament Studies* 35: 82–93.
- Wilson, Walter T. 1991. *Love Without Pretense: Romans 12.9–21 and Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Literature*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 11 46. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Wilson, Walter T. 2012. *The Sentences of Sextus*. Wisdom Literature from the Ancient World 1. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Windsor, Lionel J. 2014. *Paul and the Vocation of Israel*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Winter, Bruce W. 1991. 'Civil Litigation in Secular Corinth and the Church: The Forensic Background to 1 Corinthians 6.1–8.' *New Testament Studies* 37: 559–572.

- Winter, Bruce W. 1997. *Philo and Paul Among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Winter, Bruce W. 2003. 'Philodemus and Paul on Rhetorical Delivery (ὑπόκρισις)' In *Philodemus and the New Testament World*, edited by Glenn Holland, Dirk Obbink and John T. Fitzgerald. Leiden: Brill, 323–342.
- Winterling, Aloys A. 2009. *Politics and Society in Imperial Rome*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Wischmeyer, Oda. 2002. 'Paul's Religion: A Review of the Problem.' In *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman world: essays in honour of Alexander J.M. Wedderburn*, edited by Alf Christophersen and Alexander J. M. Wedderburn. Journal for the study of the New Testament Supplement Series 217. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 74–93.
- Wißmann, Erwin. 1926. *Das Verhältnis von Pistis und Christusfrömmigkeit bei Paulus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.
- Wisse, Jakob. 1989. *Ethos and Pathos from Aristotle to Cicero*. Amsterdam: Hakkert.
- Wisse, Jakob. 1994. *Welsprekendheid en filosofie bij Cicero*. *Studies en commentaar bij Cicero, 'De Oratore' 3.19–37a; 52–95*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam (PhD Thesis).
- Witherington III, Ben. 1995. *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Witherington III, Ben. 2009. *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Witherington III, Ben. 2011. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Witherington III, Ben & Darlene Hyatt. 2004. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Witmer, Stephen E. 2006. "θεοδιδάκτοι" in 1 Thessalonians 4:9: A Pauline Neologism?' *New Testament Studies* 52: 239–250.
- Witmer, Stephen E. 2008. *Divine Instruction in Early Christianity*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 246. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 2009. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by Gertrude E. M. Anscombe. Edited by Peter M. S. Hacker, Joachim Schulte. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell (trans. of *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1953).
- Wolde, Ellen José van & Robert Rezetko. 2011. 'Semantics and the Semantics of בָּרָא: A Rejoinder to the Arguments Advanced by B. Becking and M. Korpel.' *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 11: 2–39.
- Wolfsdorf, David. 2013. *Pleasure in Ancient Greek Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Wolter, Michael. 2010. 'The Letter to Philemon as Ethical Counterpart of Paul's Doctrine of Justification.' In *Philemon in Perspective: Interpreting a Pauline Letter*, edited by D. Francois Tolmie. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 169. Berlin: de Gruyter, 169–179.
- Wolter, Michael. 2017. 'Die Wirklichkeit des Glaubens: Ein Versuch zur Bedeutung des Glaubens bei Paulus.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 347–367.
- Wong, G. C. I. 1996. 'A Cuckoo in the Textual Nest at Isaiah 7.9b?' *The Journal of Theological Studies* 47: 123–124.
- Woolf, Gregory D. 1997. 'Polis-Religion and its Alternatives in the Roman Provinces.' In *Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion*, edited by Hubert Cancik and Jörg Rüpke. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 71–84.
- Woyke, Johannes. 2005. 'Götter, 'Götzen', Götterbilder: Aspekte einer paulinischen 'Theologie der Religionen'. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 132. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Wright, Adam Z. 2016. 'Detecting Allusions in the Pauline Corpus: A Method.' *Paul and Gnosis* 59–79.
- Wright, Benjamin G. 2014. 'Hellenization and Jewish Identity in the Deuterocanonical Literature.' In *Canonicity, Setting, Wisdom in the Deuterocanonicals*, edited by Géza G. Xeravits, József Zsengellér and Xavér Szabó. Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 22. Berlin: de Gruyter, 29–68.
- Wright, M. Rosemary. 2009. *Introducing Greek Philosophy*. Stocksfield: Acumen.
- Wright, N. T. 1993. 'On Becoming the Righteousness of God: 2 Corinthians 5.21.' In *Pauline Theology: 1 and 2 Corinthians*, edited by David M. Hay. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 200–208.
- Wright, N. T. 1997. *What St Paul Really Said*. Oxford: Lion.
- Wright, N. T. 2008. 'Faith, Virtue, Justification and the Journey to Freedom.' In *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, edited by J. Ross Wagner, Christopher Kavin Rowe and A. Katherine Grieb. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 472–497.
- Wright, N. T. 2013. *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 4 volumes. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Wydra, Harald. 2015. *Politics and the Sacred*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wyss, Beatrice. 2017. 'Gott denken oder Gott glauben: Zur Rolle der πίστις in den Stromateis des Klemens.' In *Glaube: Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt*, edited by Jörg Frey, Benjamin Schliesser and Nadine Ueberschaer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 1 373. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 721–751.

- Yeung, Maureen W. 2002. *Faith in Jesus and Paul: A Comparison with Special Reference to 'Faith that Can Remove Mountains' and 'Your Faith Has Healed/Saved You'*. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 11 147. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Young, Stephen L. 2015. 'Paul's Ethnic Discourse on "Faith": Christ's Faithfulness and Gentile Access to the Judean God in Romans 3.21–5.1.' *Harvard Theological Review* 108: 30–51.
- Zelnick-Abramovitz, Rachel. 2000. 'Did Patronage Exist in Classical Athens?' *L'antiquité Classique* 69: 65–80.
- Ziegler, Joseph (ed.). 1962. *Sapientia Salomonis*. Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum 12.1–2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Ziegler, Joseph (ed.). 1965. *Sapientia Jesu Filii Sirach*. Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum 12.2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Ziesler, John A. 1972. *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul. A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 20. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zimmermann, Frank. 1966. 'The Book of Wisdom: Its Language and Character.' *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 57: 1–27.
- Zimmern, Alice. 1986. *Porphyry's Letter to his Wife Marcella: Concerning the Life of Philosophy and the Ascent to the Gods*. Grand Rapids: Phanes.
- Zyl, Deon van. 2010. 'Ciceronian Virtues and Values in Contextual Perspective.' *Fundamina* 16: 526–538.

# Index of Ancient Texts

## Biblical writings—Jewish scriptures

### *Genesis*

- 1 699n11, 701
- 12.2 540m188
- 15.1–6 540m188
- 15.6 272, 357, 668n284, 682, 684n332
- 16 358
- 18.18 686
- 19.26 721

### *Exodus*

- 4.1,5,8–9 722n
- 19.9 722n
- 29.37 786n221
- 30.29 786n221
- 33-13 332
- 34 368
- 34.29–35 369

### *Leviticus*

- 6.11 786n221
- 6.20 786n221
- 19.18 278

### *Numeri*

- 12 376–377
- 12.7 377
- 12.8 385n305

### *Deuteronomy*

- 5-31 331, 530
- 6.4–9 678
- 7.9 718n57
- 9.7 361n232
- 11.16 798n265
- 17 774
- 22.10 797n260
- 29.3 771m68
- 30.11 261
- 30.12–14 667
- 30.14 261
- 32.4 361n232, 718
- 32.17 717
- 32.20 242

### *1 Samuel / 1 Reigns (LXX)*

- 26.23 187n62

### *2 Samuel / 2 Reigns (LXX)*

- 7.16 665
- 20.18 718
- 22.36 677

### *Psalms*

- 32.1 (LXX 31.1) 688n339
- 69.23 (LXX 68.24) 123n225
- 101.2–8 (LXX 100.2–8) 719, 774–775
- 116.10 (LXX 115.1) 144, 374, 558–559, 668n284
- 116 (LXX 115) 145
- 143.2 (LXX 142.2) 244

### *Proverbs*

- 3.3 592n58
- 17.6a–7 718
- 22.21 361n233

### *Ecclesiastes*

- 8–9 701–702

### *Isaiah*

- 7.9 354
- 13.6 266
- 17.8 718
- 28.11–12 765
- 28.16 270, 758
- 29.10 771m68
- 40.13 560n242
- 44.18 122n223, 771m70
- 45.14 768
- 52–53 375
- 52.14 375
- 53.1 679
- 53.3 375

### *Joel*

- 3.5 758

### *Habakuk*

- 2.4 282, 407n47

*Malachi*

2.14-15 782n205

**Biblical writings—New Testament***Mark*

4.24 166n360

11.22-23 380

16.16 754

*Matthew*

5.33-37 363

7.2 166

17.20 380

21.21 380

24.51 707

*Luke*

1.17 157n332

6.38b 166n360

12.42 706

12.46 706

17.6 380

*John*

3.18 754

3.35 381n296

5.20 381n296

16.2 128n238

*Acts*

10.46 769n158

17.24b 804

17.28b 198

17.30 245

17.31 245, 399n11

28.24 397-398

*Romans*

1.1-4 407n47

1.1-5 674, 678-679

1.3 665

1.5 407n47, 580, 674

1.8 549, 585, 661, 663, 665, 677n313

1.9 140n284, 665

1.12 475, 585

1.14 124, 125

1.16 468, 756n, 757

1.16-17 115, 281-284, 407n47

1.17 181n37, 242, 539

1.18 115n195, 242, 796n257

1.18-32 115-126, 149, 252, 275

1.19-20 117

1.19-21 116

1.20 120, 326

1.21 796n257

1.23 115, 120, 125, 560

1.24 124, 242, 243, 785n219

1.25 115, 125, 139

1.26 242, 243

1.26-27 252

1.28 115, 125, 135-136, 149, 242, 243,  
796n257, 812

1.32 253

2.8 456

2.13-16 251-255

2.14 116, 117, 119

2.15 214, 262, 267-268, 270

2.17-24 761

2.17-29 178

2.19 457

3 722

3.1-9 667n281

3.3 356, 558n234, 761

3.3-5 564

3.5 775

3.7 564

3.9 262

3.9-20 761

3.21 242, 243, 245, 270, 279

3.21-26 243, 271n295

3.21-31 257-258, 269, 279

3.21-4.25 687n337

3.22 180, 271n295, 279, 282, 563, 564,  
756n, 757, 761

3.24 271

3.25 243, 271

3.25-26 270-271, 399n11

3.26 242, 243, 263, 271n295, 272, 563, 564

3.27 259, 280, 282, 813, 823

3.27-28 257

3.28 279, 487-488

3.29 757

3.29-30 813

*Romans (cont.)*

- 3.29-31 279-280  
 3.31 682, 683*n*  
 4 539-540, 673, 682-686, 761  
 4-5 689  
 4.2 683  
 4.3 357, 668*n*284, 682  
 4.4-5 682, 683  
 4.5 683, 686, 757, 820  
 4.7 688*n*339  
 4.9 686  
 4.10 683  
 4.11 683, 686, 756*n*, 757  
 4.11-12 546  
 4.12 685  
 4.13 686  
 4.13-16 685  
 4.17 358, 668*n*284, 686  
 4.17-18 540  
 4.18 668*n*284, 686  
 4.18-21 357-358  
 4.19 760  
 4.19-21 483*n*294, 539  
 4.20 356-357, 359  
 4.22-25 407*n*47  
 4.24 553, 757  
 5 688*n*341  
 5.1 687*n*337, 762  
 5.1-2 820  
 5.1-3 687  
 5.6 687, 820  
 5.7 820  
 5.8 687, 790  
 5.10 687, 688  
 5.11 820  
 5.18 674  
 5.19 679  
 6.8 398*n*7, 553  
 6.13 128  
 6.16 407*n*47  
 6.19 785*n*219  
 7.7-25 118  
 7.22 259  
 7.23,25 259, 260  
 8.1 263  
 8.2 258, 259  
 8.3 561*n*244, 810  
 8.5-8 157  
 8.7 259  
 8.9 376*n*281  
 8.24 386  
 8.29 150, 554, 560, 561*n*243  
 8.38 457  
 9-11 666-667  
 9.4 128*n*238, 139  
 9.30 252*n*257  
 9.30-10.3 268  
 9.33 758  
 10.2-4 263  
 10.3 269  
 10.4 263, 268, 269, 756*n*, 758, 762, 813  
 10.5 261  
 10.5-10 261  
 10.5-13 538  
 10.6 261  
 10.6-10 667*n*283  
 10.8 261, 459-460*n*219, 661, 663, 667, 668  
 10.8-13 666  
 10.9 667  
 10.9-10a 553  
 10.11 270, 756*n*  
 10.11-12 758  
 10.11-17 679  
 10.12 270, 669  
 10.14 668  
 10.16 668, 670*n*289  
 10.21 456  
 11 178, 771  
 11.4 684*n*330  
 11.6 684*n*330  
 11.8 123*n*225, 771*m*68  
 11.8-10 761  
 11.11 761  
 11.13 252*n*257  
 11.19-23 762  
 11.20 157, 354-355, 356, 771*m*69, 820  
 11.22 762  
 11.23 356, 762, 771*m*69, 820  
 11.25 157  
 11.28-32 763  
 11.30 456  
 11.31 456  
 11.32 456  
 11.36 345*m*194  
 12-13 272-277  
 12.1 126-144, 407*n*47, 812

*Romans (cont.)*

- 12.1-2 133, 138, 158, 561n243  
 12.1-3 126, 136, 140, 274, 814  
 12.2 125, 148-156, 245, 273, 275  
 12.2-21 183  
 12.3 156-169, 215, 261, 274, 539m84, 823  
 12.6-7 163-167  
 12.9 273  
 12.13 273  
 12.16 157n333, 158  
 12.21 273  
 13 272-276  
 13.1-5 777  
 13.1-7 275-276  
 13.3 216, 274  
 13.4 274  
 13.7-8 273-274  
 13.9 277, 278  
 13.10 275  
 13.11 668n284  
 13.12-14 484  
 13.14 133, 484, 563  
 14 789  
 14-15 816-817, 825  
 14.1 162, 483, 484, 557  
 14.1-15.14 477-485, 539m84  
 14.2 483, 484, 485  
 14.3 477, 557, 778m92  
 14.5 477, 483  
 14.8 484  
 14.10 482, 778m92  
 14.14 457, 483  
 14.14-15 477  
 14.15 485  
 14.20 480  
 14.21 477-478  
 14.22 477, 483, 484, 485  
 14.23 481, 483, 484, 485  
 15.1-9 484  
 15.5 157n333  
 15.7-9 484-485  
 15.7-14 479  
 15.9 252n257  
 15.14 457  
 15.15 679  
 15.31 456, 763  
 16.18 464  
 16.19 464

16.26 580, 674

*1 Corinthians*

- 1-4 414  
 1.5 361  
 1.6 361  
 1.8 266, 361  
 1.9 361, 560n239  
 1.10 533, 794  
 1.10-11 778  
 1.12 464  
 1.18-29 118  
 1.21 458, 459m29, 759  
 1.26-29 778  
 1.28 778m92  
 2.1 466  
 2.4-5 459  
 2.5 399m11, 411, 463, 467, 803  
 2.6-7 466  
 2.16 150n314, 466, 560  
 3.1 800  
 3.3 800  
 3.5 464, 668n284  
 3.6 464  
 3.13 535  
 3.16 140  
 3.18 465  
 4.1-2 361  
 4.2 546m99  
 4.6 465  
 4.10 158, 465  
 4.15-17 546  
 4.16 497, 498  
 4.17 361  
 4.18 465  
 4.19 460, 465  
 5 778, 801n280  
 5-6 801  
 5-7 784  
 5.1 774  
 5.2 465  
 5.3-5 776  
 5.5 266  
 5.6 695m9  
 5.9-13 786, 797  
 5.10 705, 801n278, 802  
 5.10-11 774  
 5.11 719, 775



*1 Corinthians (cont.)*

- 5.12 777  
 5.13 774, 775n180, 778, 797  
 6 778, 806-7  
 6.1 775  
 6.1-6 773  
 6.1-11 774n177, 781  
 6.2 774n177  
 6.3 774n177  
 6.4 776  
 6.5 778  
 6.6 772-779, 783, 797, 821  
 6.7 778  
 6.8 774n177, 776  
 6.9 774n177, 775  
 6.9-10 774  
 6.9-11 779  
 6.10 801n278  
 6.11 779  
 6.12 801n279  
 6.13 801, 801n279  
 6.15 785  
 6.16 785  
 6.18 801n279  
 6.19 785  
 6.20 140  
 7 726, 774n179, 786, 806-807  
 7.1-2 786  
 7.10 781  
 7.12 781  
 7.12-13 695n9, 705  
 7.12-15 710n35  
 7.12-16 780-781, 793  
 7.14 783, 786  
 7.15 786, 791, 797  
 7.16 786  
 7.25 361  
 7.31 149  
 8 778  
 8-10 478n268, 784  
 8.1 465, 803  
 8.1-4a 802  
 8.1b-3 384  
 8.3 385  
 8.6 345m194, 358  
 8.7-11 796n258  
 8.10 789  
 8.11 789, 790  
 8.12 789  
 9.1 803  
 9.11 465  
 9.17 662  
 9.19 778, 8.3  
 9.21 259, 705  
 9.22 792, 796n259  
 9.22-23 779  
 9.24-27 531  
 10 778, 806-807  
 10.1-22 788  
 10.7 790  
 10.12-13 362  
 10.13 362, 560n239  
 10.14 790  
 10.27 788, 789, 791, 793, 797, 798  
 10.27-30 788  
 10.28 789, 791  
 10.28-29 791  
 10.29 789  
 10.33 710n35, 790, 796n259  
 10.33-11.1 778  
 11 778  
 11.1 497  
 11.18 665n278, 668n285  
 12 778  
 12.1-31 379  
 12.2 804  
 12.7 379  
 12.8-9 379  
 12.12-31a 380  
 12.17 670n289  
 12.31b-13.13 378-393  
 13.1-3 382  
 13.2 379, 380, 386, 387  
 13.4-7 382-383  
 13.7 382-383, 386, 387  
 13.8 382, 384, 386, 391  
 13.8-13 384-387  
 13.9 384  
 13.10 382, 384, 391  
 13.11 384  
 13.11-12 385  
 13.12 381, 382, 384, 385, 391  
 13.13 378-393, 394, 535m166, 816  
 14 716, 806-807  
 14.5 767m154  
 14.16 770m166

*1 Corinthians (cont.)*

14.18 767m54  
 14.21 767  
 14.21-25 764-765  
 14.22 459, 765, 821  
 14.22-24 710n35, 754  
 14.22-25 728  
 14.23 765, 772  
 14.25 768  
 15.1 662, 665  
 15.1-2 465  
 15.1-19 665n278  
 15.2 554, 665, 668  
 15.10-14 666  
 15.11 464, 668  
 15.14 554  
 15.17 554  
 15.19 801  
 15.28 387  
 15.32 802  
 15.34 802, 803  
 16.11 778m192  
 16.13 354, 391n325

*2 Corinthians*

1-2 539m184  
 1.9 397n6, 398, 457  
 1.13-14 384  
 1.14 363  
 1.15 457  
 1.18 560n239  
 1.18-21 362, 473  
 1.22-23 295n24  
 1.23 473  
 1.24 354-355, 363, 473-474, 816  
 2.3 362, 457  
 2.5 300, 362  
 2.6 78  
 2.14-17 144n  
 2.17 465  
 3-5 334, 364-378, 381  
 3.3 457  
 3.4 374n272, 457, 474  
 3.6 259, 374n272, 377  
 3.7 369  
 3.8 771, 797  
 3.12 374n272  
 3.12-13 377

3.14 150n313, 373  
 3.14-15 369, 771m169  
 3.16 369  
 3.18 149, 150, 370, 381, 385, 560, 561n243  
 4 806-807  
 4.1 374n272  
 4.3 369, 372  
 4.3-4 771m168  
 4.4 150n313, 369, 371, 372, 373, 374, 560,  
 770-772, 794n248, 795n253, 797  
 4.6 146, 772  
 4.7 370  
 4.7-12 376  
 4.10 370  
 4.11 148, 370  
 4.13 140, 144-148, 373, 374, 668n284, 823  
 4.13-14a 558  
 4.13-18 146  
 4.14 802n281  
 4.14-15 797n263  
 4.16 374n272  
 4.16-17 376  
 4.16-18 375  
 4.18 366, 376, 800  
 5.1 377  
 5.1-4 376  
 5.5-8 374n272  
 5.6 375, 386, 800n269  
 5.7 303, 364-378, 382, 385, 394, 816  
 5.8 375, 661-662  
 5.10 801-802n280  
 5.11 372, 457, 458  
 5.12 374, 376  
 5.16 374, 376  
 5.17 374  
 5.18 661-662, 688  
 5.19-20 688n342  
 5.21 554  
 6 806-807  
 6-7 797  
 6.4-5 801n277  
 6.11 460  
 6.11-7.1 702, 709, 785, 786, 792, 797  
 6.12-13 797n263  
 6.14 695n9, 821  
 6.14-16 795n251  
 6.14-7.1 793n244  
 6.15 709, 754

*2 Corinthians (cont.)*

- 6.17 709, 785n219, 797  
 7.1 785n219  
 7.2 797n263  
 8.7 355  
 9.8 535  
 10-12 795n251  
 10-13 476, 794  
 10.7 363, 458, 476  
 10.12 519m121  
 10.15 355  
 11.6 426, 465  
 11.7 465  
 11.14-15 794  
 11.19 158  
 11.22 794n249  
 11.23-30 801n277  
 12.21 785n219  
 13.5 556  
 13.5-6 475  
 13.7 556  
 13.9 556  
 13.11 157n333

*Galatians*

- 1.10 458  
 1.23 468n, 532, 590, 661, 662-664  
 2.7 662  
 2.13 664  
 2.15 251  
 2.16 181, 562, 668n284, 671n293  
 2.20 181, 556, 560n241, 562  
 3.2 671  
 3.2-5 669-674  
 3.4 468  
 3.5 468n, 471, 671, 672n297, 683  
 3.6 272, 668n284, 671n293  
 3.7 272, 540  
 3.9 272, 540, 673  
 3.12 258  
 3.14 260, 673  
 3.17 255  
 3.19 246  
 3.21 259  
 3.21-28 269  
 3.22 562, 759  
 3.22-25 562  
 3.22-26 245-246, 249-250, 255-257

- 3.23 255, 590, 823  
 3.24 255  
 3.24-25 168  
 3.25 823  
 3.25-28 821  
 3.26-27 563  
 3.28 408  
 4.3-9 385n304  
 4.4 250  
 4.6-7 672  
 4.8-9 117  
 4.9 256, 385  
 4.19 554  
 5.1 177  
 5.3-4 278  
 5.5 245, 391n325  
 5.6 260, 383-384, 472, 483, 487-488,  
 535m169  
 5.7-8 456  
 5.10 157n333, 457  
 5.14 278  
 5.15 278  
 5.16 375, 376n281, 536  
 5.17 536  
 5.18 214, 258-259, 260-261, 278  
 5.19 785n219  
 5.19-21 535  
 5.22-23 535  
 5.23 214, 215, 258, 261  
 5.26 278  
 6.2 259, 263, 278  
 6.4 278  
 6.7-9 278  
 6.10 277-278, 710n35  
 6.11 249  
 6.11-16 178  
 6.15 281, 472

*Ephesians*

- 1.8 157n332  
 3.7 468  
 4.11 167  
 4.13 167  
 4.17-18 150n313  
 4.17-19 122n223  
 4.19 785n219  
 4.21 563  
 5.3 785n219

*Ephesians (cont.)*

5.5 785n219

*Philippians*

1.6 265, 457

1.9-10 183

1.9-11 265

1.14 457

1.25 355, 457

1.27 267, 354, 532-534, 663, 818

1.29 534, 561

2.2 140

2.3 818

2.2-5 157n333

2.5 140, 150n314, 534, 818

2.5-11 560

2.6 818

2.7 561, 810, 818

2.7-8 561

2.13 818

2.17 140-144, 561

2.24 457

3.2 157

3.3 140, 264, 456

3.4 264, 269

3.5 264

3.6 264

3.8 264, 269

3.8-9 264

3.9 264, 269, 561

3.9-10 550

3.10 150

3.10-11 561

3.14 533m162

3.15 157n333

3.17 266, 549n205, 550, 562

3.17-21 263, 360

3.19 266

3.20 533, 662, 687

3.20-21 266, 813

3.21 150, 468, 818

4.1 533

4.2 157n333

4.3 797n261

*Colossians*

1.4 541

1.16-17 345m194

1.19-23 360

2.5 355

2.12 472, 553n220

3.2 157

3.5 785n219

4.5-6 710n35

*1 Thessalonians*

1-3 552

1.2-10 548

1.2-3.13 548n201

1.3 391m325, 535

1.4-5 460

1.6 471, 497, 499n43, 550

1.6-8 548

1.7 550, 756n, 758

1.8 559, 758

1.9-10 549

2.1-3.6 552n214

2.3 471, 785n219

2.3-13 460

2.4 471, 662

2.5 471

2.6 471

2.9 471

2.9-13 758-759

2.10 471

2.12 662

2.13 271, 470, 548, 662

2.13-14 550

2.13-16 470, 548n202

2.14 471, 550

3.2 355, 475

3.3 356

3.5 356

3.5-6 354

3.6 391m325

3.7 475

3.8 355

3.9 548

3.10 355, 474

3.12 710n35

4.5 117

4.7 785n219

4.9 219, 560

4.11-12 710n35

4.14 398n7, 553

5.2 266

*1 Thessalonians (cont.)*

- 5.8 391n325  
 5.15 272, 710n35  
 5.23 362  
 5.24 361, 362, 560n239

*2 Thessalonians*

- 1.3 539n183  
 1.3-4 355  
 1.11 472, 535  
 2.12 472  
 3.2-3 557n233, 664, 753  
 3.3 362n236

*1 Timothy*

- 1.2 536n174  
 1.5 536n174  
 1.14 536n174  
 1.19 536n174  
 2.7 536n174, 543  
 2.15 536n174  
 3.9 536n174  
 4.1 536n174  
 4.6 536n174  
 4.11-16 543  
 4.12 536n174  
 5.8 536n174, 752  
 5.12 536n174, 753  
 6.10 536n174  
 6.11 536n174  
 6.11-12 542  
 6.12 536  
 6.21 536n174

*2 Timothy*

- 2.11 557  
 2.13 557, 664  
 2.22 536  
 1.5 536n174  
 3.8 536n174, 753n126  
 3.10 536n174  
 4.7-8 537

*Titus*

- 1.4 536n174  
 1.6 753  
 1.13 536n174  
 1.15 707

- 2.2 536n174  
 3.15 536n174

*Philemon*

- 1 540-542  
 1.5 391n325, 541  
 1.5-6 472, 543n194, 661  
 1.6 541-542, 544  
 1.17 542  
 1.21 457

*Hebrews*

- 3.5 377  
 9.1 128n238  
 9.6 128n238  
 11.27 374  
 13.7 544

*James*

- 1.21 100m158  
 5.12 363

*2 Peter*

- 1.4 559  
 1.7 752, 754

*1 John*

- 5.10 754

*Revelation*

- 17.4 785n219  
 21.8 706

**Early Jewish writings***2 Baruch*

- 57.2 234, 271

*1 Enoch*

- 42.2 198n102  
 89.31-32 373  
 90.35 373

*4 Ezra*

- 5.10 198n102

Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*

13.75 777n191  
17.246–247 644–645

1 *Maccabees*

2.52 359n225  
14.35 187n62

4 *Maccabees*

2.4.18, 21–22 155  
16.22–23 155n329  
18.2 155

Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation*

1.41 131n249  
2.3 329n132  
2.23 131  
2.73 131n248  
2.81 533n163

Philo, *On Dreams*

1.12 330  
2.220 330n140

Philo, *On Drunkenness*

175 329n134

Philo, *On Planting*

49 235n222  
70 332

Philo, *On Providence*

2.72 (112) 330n140

Philo, *On the Change of Names*

181–183 337–338, 358  
182–183 530

Philo, *On the Cherubim*

125–127 345n194

Philo, *On the Confusion of Tongues*

31 331, 354n215, 530  
156 330n140

Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*

37.73 478n263

Philo, *On the Creation of the World*

69 523

Philo, *On the Life of Abraham*

3–4 235n223  
5 234  
5–6 234  
6 235n222  
269 333n153  
270 332  
270–273 235  
271 272  
273 360  
275–276 235  
276 271

Philo, *On the Life of Moses*

1.162 234  
1.90 330, 397n4  
2.4 233  
2.44 177

Philo, *On the Migration of Abraham*

43–44 330–331, 332  
120 235n222

Philo, *On the Posterity of Cain*

12–13 332  
23 331n141  
135 227

Philo, *On Rewards and Punishments*

40 329n132

Philo, *On the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel*

93–94 363

Philo, *On the Special Laws*

1.287 130  
1.290–291 130  
2.176 329n132  
2.227 330n136  
4.156 330n136

Philo, *On the Virtues*

18 235n222  
212 332, 372, 745n111  
213 329n132

Philo, *On the Virtues* (cont.)

- 214 332, 745<sup>n111</sup>  
 215 333<sup>n151</sup>  
 216 333, 745<sup>n111</sup>  
 218 333, 529<sup>n155</sup>  
 228–229 335

Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*

- 2.40 198<sup>m02</sup>  
 2.62 523  
 2.68 329<sup>n132</sup>

Philo, *That the Worse Attacks the Better*

- 46 533<sup>n163</sup>

Philo, *Who Is the Heir?*

- 91 332  
 93 333, 529  
 94 684<sup>n332</sup>  
 95 235  
 191 165  
 205 523  
 206 523

Qumran writings, *Community Rule* (1QS)

- 8.5 147<sup>n308</sup>

*Sibylline Oracles*

- 8.408 129

*Sirach* (*Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach*)

- 34.21–35.13 130  
 34.31–35.2 130  
 35.8–9 130  
 44.19–21 686<sup>n333</sup>

*Wisdom* (*Wisdom of Solomon*)

- 1.1–4 722  
 3.9 389, 397, 782  
 3.9–13 719–720  
 3.10 783  
 3.14 592<sup>n58</sup>, 721, 782  
 3.14–4.1 782  
 4.3 783  
 4.16 783  
 7.25–27 371  
 7.27 556<sup>n231</sup>  
 11.26–12.2 721

12.15–17 723

- 13 117  
 13.1 122<sup>n222</sup>  
 13.10 120<sup>n215</sup>  
 13.13 120<sup>n215</sup>  
 13.16 120<sup>n215</sup>  
 14.5 721  
 14.6–7 721  
 14.22–27 723–724  
 16.24–26 720  
 18.3 722

## Early Christian writings

Augustine, *City of God*

- 4.20 596  
 4.27 81<sup>n86</sup>, 87  
 4.30 83, 84<sup>n96</sup>  
 4.31 82<sup>n89</sup>  
 4.32 83  
 6.5 81<sup>n83</sup>, 83, 84<sup>n98</sup>, 86<sup>m08</sup>  
 6.5–6 85<sup>n102</sup>  
 6.6 84<sup>n99</sup>  
 6.7 107<sup>n178</sup>  
 6.12 81<sup>n85</sup>  
 7.5 82, 145

Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter*

- 45, 48 251  
 47 251<sup>n254</sup>

Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies*

- 2.4.13 326  
 2.22.136 503

Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*

- 14.5 433<sup>n132</sup>, 533  
 15.15.3–5 221

Ignatius, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*

- 5.2–3 795<sup>n252</sup>

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*

- 2.28.3 379<sup>n287</sup>

Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*

- 2.1–2 432<sup>n128</sup>

Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* (cont.)

- 2.3 426m105  
2.6 368

Origen, *Against Celsus*

- 1.9 299, 300  
3.18 300  
3.72 300–301  
8.68 202

Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians*

- 10.1 502

## Classical writings

*Ad Herennium*

- 1.10 418  
4.13.19 190  
4.32 419

Aeschines, *On the Embassy*

- 147 535<sup>n</sup>

Aeschylus, *Persae*

- 818–831 160

Aetius / Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita**Philosophorum*

- 1.6 92

Albinus, *Prologos*

- 6 424<sup>n</sup>99

Alcinous, *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae**(Didaskalikos)*

- 1.1, 152.2–6 315<sup>n</sup>86  
2.2, 153.3–9 133, 522  
7.5, 162.17–19 310<sup>n</sup>71  
28.2, 181.44–46 523  
28.3, 181–182 167<sup>n</sup>, 522<sup>n</sup>135  
28.4 522  
35.1, 189.13–18 427

Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *Rhetoric to**Alexander*

- 1420<sup>b</sup>7 507<sup>n</sup>76

Anonymous Iamblich, *Fragments*

- 7.1 643

Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* (*The Golden Ass*)

- 4.21 201  
11.15 729, 772  
11.28 729

Apuleius, *On Plato and his Doctrine*

- 2.7 185

Aratus, *Phenomena*

- 5 198<sup>m</sup>04  
96–136 198

Aristophanes, *Clouds*

- 226–227 159

Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* (*Ethica Eudemia*)

- 1.5.15–18 (1216b4–26) 153<sup>n</sup>321  
1.5.18 (1216b20–31) 323  
7.2.39 (1237b10–11) 454<sup>n</sup>210  
7.2.40 (1237b13–14) 454  
7.5.3 (1239b16–17) 454<sup>n</sup>210

Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (*Metaphysica*)

- 1074<sup>b</sup>35 320<sup>m</sup>04

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Ethica Nicomachea*)

- 4.8.10 (1128a10–11) 214<sup>m</sup>152, 254  
5.1.15 (1129b30) 186<sup>n</sup>55  
5.3.8 (1131a29–31) 164<sup>n</sup>355  
5.3.14 (1131b17–18) 164  
6.3.4 (1139b33–35) 325  
6.8.6–7 (1142a19–20) 325  
7.3.4 (1146b27–30) 320–321  
8.3.8–9 (1156b28–29) 454<sup>n</sup>210  
8.8.5 (1159b8) 454<sup>n</sup>210  
10.1.3 (1172a34–35) 509  
10.1.4 (1172b3–6) 509<sup>n</sup>83  
10.2.1 (1172b15–16) 418  
10.2.4 (1173a1–2) 750  
10.8.13 (1179a26–27) 131<sup>m</sup>249  
10.9.9 (1180a3–5) 211<sup>m</sup>144  
10.9.17 (1180b23–27) 211<sup>m</sup>144



- Aristotle, *On the Heavens (De caelo)*  
270b12–18 323
- Aristotle, *On the Soul (De anima)*  
428a5 320m104  
428a18 322m109  
428a20–25 322  
248a23 397
- Aristotle, *Physics (Physica)*  
262a19–20 324
- Aristotle, *Politics (Politica)*  
3.8.1–2 (1284a4–15) 214, 254
- Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics (Analytica posteriora)*  
1.1.71a5–12 323–324m114  
1.2.71b20–25 324m116  
1.2.71b33–72a5 326  
2.3.90b14 320m105, 323m111
- Aristotle, *Rhetoric (Ars rhetorica)*  
1.2.2 (1355b) 417  
1.2.3 (1356a) 417  
1.2.4 (1356a) 417  
1.10.3 (1368b7–9) 213, 259  
1.15.4–6 (1375a–b) 213, 254  
1.15.6–9 (1375a–b) 213, 270  
3.10.6 (1410b) 469
- Aristotle, *Topics (Topica)*  
100a27–31 324  
100b18–21 324  
100b18 423n96  
100b19 423n96  
100b21 423n96  
125b35–38 321  
125b35–126a2 448m187  
126b17–20 321m107  
126b25 448m187
- Arius Didymus. *See* Stobaeus / Eusebius
- Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*  
5.13.2 625  
20.1.39–41 625–626
- Caesar, *Civil War*  
1.85.3–4 643
- Caesar, *The Gallic War (Commentarii de bello Gallico)*  
2.14 634
- Catullus, *Poems (Carmina)*  
64.397–408 198, 242  
76.3 594
- Chaldean Oracles (Oracula Chaldaica)*  
46 388–390  
47 389
- Cicero, *Academica*  
2.101 447m181  
2.145 445  
2.84 (nota) 446m178  
2.84 446m180
- Cicero, *De inventione*  
1.47 454
- Cicero, *De officiis (On Duties)*  
1.15 601n92  
1.23 190, 601–602  
1.26 188n65, 652  
1.35 628  
1.39 602m102  
1.40 509n87, 605m104  
1.44 652n242  
1.121 505  
1.124 662  
2.69 653, 672  
2.71 653n243  
3.69 223m178  
3.87 604m103  
3.102 604m103  
3.104 597n77, 602–603  
3.106 604m103  
3.106–107 604  
3.107 604m103  
3.111 602, 626m168
- Cicero, *De partitione oratoria*  
5 419  
9 419

- Cicero, *Philippics*  
 11.5 649n236
- Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*  
 1.16.7 601
- Cicero, *Letters to Friends (Epistulae ad familiares)*  
 7.12 215
- Cicero, *Letters to Quintus*  
 1.1.28 604
- Cicero, *On Ends (De finibus)*  
 2.117 653  
 3.16 225  
 3.20 225  
 3.62 225  
 3.63 225  
 5.65 226, 276–277
- Cicero, *On the Laws (De legibus)*  
 1.18–19 223  
 1.23 222n173  
 1.48 653–654n245  
 3.2 232–233
- Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods (De natura deorum)*  
 1.3 604  
 1.4 190  
 1.18 95–96, 440  
 1.43 96  
 1.44 96  
 1.70 743m07  
 1.121–123 740  
 2.3 135n269  
 2.61 600  
 2.62 600  
 2.70 96–97  
 2.79 599–600  
 2.154 221  
 3.5 98, 99m151  
 3.6 99m153  
 3.13 97m144  
 3.15 98m149  
 3.17 96  
 3.20 98m147
- 3.40 467n288  
 3.60 97, 98m147  
 3.61 98m146, 600  
 3.63 98m146  
 3.77 98  
 3.95 95m34
- Cicero, *On the Orator (De oratore)*  
 2.343–344 189, 505, 594  
 3.52–81 421n84
- Cicero, *On the Republic (De re publica)*  
 1.2 188n65, 601n92  
 1.49 652n241  
 1.52 223, 232  
 2.26 202  
 2.61 188n65  
 3.8 188n65  
 3.27 188  
 3.33 224, 253  
 6.16 505n67
- Cicero, *Pro Flacco*  
 9–10 598  
 12.13 614n
- Cicero, *Pro rege Deiotaro*  
 8 643
- Cicero, *Pro Roscio*  
 111 619
- Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations (Disputationes Tusculanae)*  
 1.30 93  
 1.32–35 93–94  
 1.52 146n301  
 1.64–65 94  
 1.65 94–95  
 3.7 440  
 3.7–3.21 440  
 4.80 440m156, 511  
 4.84 441
- Cicero, *Verrine Orations*  
 2.2.2 634  
 2.2.90 634m191  
 2.3.12 634

Cicero, *Verrine Orations* (cont.)

- 2.5.83 634*m*191  
2.5.124 634*m*191

Commentary on Plato's *Theaetetus*

- 5 227

*Corpus Hermeticum*

- 1.26 730*n*79  
1.31 134  
9.5 729  
9.10 729–730  
13.21 134

Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander*

- 6.4.23–24 631  
8.8.12 632  
9.1.23 631

Demonsthenes, *Against Lacritus*

- 40 425, 464

## Derveni papyrus

- column 5.1–14 307, 715–716

Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*

- 1.24.8 150*n*315  
3.4.2 534  
11.66 187–188  
14.25.6 632  
19.44.2 632–633*m*188  
19.65.2 633, 717  
23.1.4 629–630  
37.22b.1 633

Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*

- 7.41–42 449  
7.47 449*m*191  
7.50 446  
7.88 (Zeno) 220–221, 678  
7.92–93 449*m*191  
7.94 (Zeno) 136  
7.130 454–455  
9.22 (Parmenides) 305*n*54  
10.63 (Epicurus) 436  
10.85 (Epicurus) 399, 436, 511  
10.124 (Epicurus) 517  
10.154 (Epicurus) 436–437*m*41

Diogenes of Oenoanda, *Fragment*

- 56 207, 256

Dio Chrysostom (Dio of Prusa), *Orations*

- 12.14–16 426  
12.15 425  
12.27 101, 118, 194, 196  
12.28 100, 101*m*160, 194  
12.29 101, 194  
12.36 123, 159, 369*n*254, 740*n*98  
12.38 102  
12.39 100, 103, 103*m*170  
12.40 103  
12.43 102  
12.44 100*m*157, 103  
12.46 102, 397*n*4  
12.47 101, 103, 103*m*170  
12.50 102  
12.51 102  
12.53 121  
12.59–61 102*m*163  
12.60 102, 102*m*164  
12.63–64 102*m*162  
12.78 102*m*162  
32.11 426  
42.3 426*m*106  
54.1 426*m*105  
63.7 712*n*43  
74.4 713  
74.10 188, 712*n*44

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*

- 2.9.2–3 621  
2.10.4 621  
2.75.1 599  
2.75.1–4 202–203  
2.75.3 506*n*75, 599

Diotogenes. *See* StobaeusEcphantos. *See* Stobaeus

## Empedocles (Diels &amp; Kranz)

- B133 438

Epictetus, *Discourses* (*Diatribae*)

- 1.3.4 450, 725*n*69

Epictetus, *Discourses (Diatribae)* (cont.)

- 1.4 533m163  
 1.16.20–21 136–137  
 1.20.15 450, 517  
 1.24.1–2 510  
 1.25.3–6 218–219  
 1.28.3 398  
 1.28.23 725n70  
 1.29.1–24 480  
 1.29.4 219m161  
 2.4.1 188  
 2.4.1–4 188n67  
 2.4.2–3 191  
 2.4.3 725n70  
 2.8.28 528n  
 2.9.11–13 725–726  
 2.9.11–14 512  
 2.14.11 135n269  
 2.14.11–13 528  
 2.16.10 465  
 2.16.28 219m161  
 2.19.23 513  
 2.19.25 448m188  
 2.19.26–28 520  
 2.19.29 515  
 2.19.30–34 515  
 2.19.34 431m24  
 2.20.4–5 431m24, 750  
 2.20.7 431m24, 439, 750  
 2.20.20 751  
 2.20.21 163  
 2.20.22 749  
 2.20.23 749  
 2.20.37 373, 751, 772  
 2.22.20 725n70  
 2.22.25 537  
 2.22.25–27 450–451, 513n99  
 2.22.29–30 188n67, 69  
 2.22.30 451n201  
 3.7.36 725n70  
 3.10.16 537  
 3.14.13–14 188n67, 188–189  
 3.16.7–9 775m181  
 3.16.16 775m181  
 3.22.27–28 507  
 3.23.17–18 513  
 3.23.18 725n70  
 3.23.24 427

- 3.23.28 427  
 4.1.161 725n70  
 4.3.12 219, 529  
 4.8.3 481  
 4.9.17 511–512, 725n69  
 4.13.15 452, 513n99  
 12.9.1–5 136

Epictetus, *Encheiridion*

- 24.4–5 188n67, 191n76  
 24.5 725n70  
 31.5 137n275  
 33.6 770m163, 798  
 46 508n81  
 49 509

Epicurus, *Fragments*

- 68 436m138

Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*. See Diogenes  
Laertius, *Lives*Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*

- 123–124 194–195  
 135 509

Epicurus, *Letter to Pythocles*. See Diogenes  
Laertius, *Lives*Epicurus, *Principal Doctrines*

- 40 436–437m141

Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings*

- 34 454

Euripides, *Bacchae*

- 995 703n23

Euripides, *Oedipus*

- fragment 543, 545 159n342

Florus, *Epitome of Roman History*

- 2.2 614n

Galen, *De differentiis pulsuum*

- 2.4 295  
 3.3 296, 432

- Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*  
8.1.13 296–297
- Galen, *Εἰς τὸ πρῶτον κινῶν ἀκίνητον*  
Walzer 1949, 14, ref. 5 295
- Galen, *Method of Medicine*  
10.4 296
- Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen*  
13 422
- Heraclitus, *Fragment*  
86 306
- Herodotus, *Histories*  
1.8 397  
8.144.2 603n97
- Hesiod, *Works and Days*  
109 204n119  
127 204n119  
134–135 197  
143 204n119  
156–158 204n119  
174–201 198  
176 204n119  
191–193 197  
276–280 195
- Homer, *Iliad*  
2.204–206 202  
5.127–128 372
- Horace, *Carmen Saeculare*  
57–60 205
- Horace, *Odes*  
1.5.5–6 593  
1.35.21 199
- Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorae*  
24.107 132n251
- Juvenal, *Satires*  
15.147–158 194  
15.159 196
- Livy, *History of Rome (Ab urbe condita)*  
1.21.4 596n75  
5.27.12–14 686  
5.27.12–15 612  
5.28.1 612  
8.25.3 634m194  
9.3.1–3 380  
21.4.9–10 614  
21.19.5 634  
22.6.12 614n  
28.32.5 634m194  
28.34.3 630  
30.30.27 614n  
36.28.1–2 578m18  
36.28.4 578  
37.54.16–18 638  
39.54.7 636  
44.9.1 629  
45.4.7 629
- Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia)*  
1.177, 182 642  
2.253 642n219  
10.407–411 642
- Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet*  
25 803  
38 298, 406, 702, 703, 728, 780, 803
- Lucian, *Hermotimus*  
64 429  
68 429–430  
70 430
- Lucian, *Navigium*  
45 380
- Lucian, *Nigrinus*  
4 373  
7 515
- Lucian, *The Passing of Peregrinus*  
13 297–298
- Lucian, *The Runaways*  
10 373n268, 466  
13 728  
13–14 434

Lucian, *The Runaways* (cont.)

17 212

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*

1.423–425 437

2.479 437<sup>m</sup>1452.523 437<sup>m</sup>1453.1071–1075 436<sup>m</sup>137, 802<sup>n</sup>2824.463 437<sup>m</sup>144

4.481–482 437

5.43–54 436<sup>m</sup>137, 802<sup>n</sup>282

5.97–106 437–438

5.925–1457 194

Martial, *Epigrams*10.78.1–3 199<sup>m</sup>108

12.5 649

Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophical Orations*

2.2 111

2.3 522

4.3 111–112

4.7 113

4.8 112

6.4 112<sup>m</sup>190

13.2 522

16.4 428, 466

16.6 111

18.1 159<sup>n</sup>34218.5 111<sup>m</sup>186, 112<sup>m</sup>189

20.2 383

21.4 381–382<sup>n</sup>297

27.8 427

33.1–2 800<sup>n</sup>275

36.1 212

41.1 111

41.2 433, 739

Musonius Rufus, *Fragments*

6 (p. 22, 7–8) 509

6 (p. 23, 15–16) 509

34 442<sup>m</sup>162Musonius Rufus, *Discourses*

8.6 442

Numenius. See Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

1.29 199

1.89–93 196, 256

Parmenides, *Fragments*24 150<sup>n</sup>315Parmenides, *On Nature*1.9–10 369<sup>n</sup>2541.29–30 305, 369<sup>n</sup>2546.6 123<sup>n</sup>2248.28 305<sup>n</sup>558.50 305<sup>n</sup>55Petronicus, *Satyricon*

124.246–253 199–200, 242

Philodemus, *On Piety*

col. 71 (Obbink) 521

1.560 739<sup>n</sup>93Pindar, *Nemean Ode*10.54 361<sup>n</sup>232Plato, *Apology*

18c 733

19c 733

24b–c 733

26c 733

Plato, *Charmenides*170d 381<sup>n</sup>297Plato, *Cratylus*428d 733<sup>n</sup>86Plato, *Critias*118c 733<sup>n</sup>86Plato, *Euthydemus*295a 733<sup>n</sup>86301e 381–382<sup>n</sup>297Plato, *Gorgias*

454c 316

454d–e 316–317

454d–455a 317<sup>n</sup>93

455a 421

Plato, *Gorgias* (cont.)

483d 479  
493a-d 308  
507a-b 187n60

Plato, *Laws*

630c 185  
701b-c 197  
705a 731  
710b-c 197  
713a 212  
713b-c 195  
713d 195  
713e-714a 211  
714a 257, 259  
715d 275-276  
716a 212, 259  
716b 88  
716c 88, 212, 518, 519m121  
716c-d 132n255, 167-168  
716d-e 88  
720d 210  
721b-d 210m140  
728a4-5 214m154  
730b-c 312  
730c 453, 726  
875c-d 210  
888b-c 737  
957c 211m143  
966d 318-319, 735  
966d-967d 735

Plato, *Phaedo*

70a 732  
83a-b 334m154, 365-366  
88c 733n86  
107b 732

Plato, *Phaedrus*

229b 735  
229c-230a 736  
245c 734n89  
246e-247a 525  
248a 525  
248d 525  
250b 311n76, 372  
253a 525  
253b-c 525

Plato, *Protagoras*

322c 195n92

Plato, *Republic*

380a-b 87m13  
409d 424m100  
442d 186n57  
443a-b 732  
450c 733  
450c-451a 733  
450d 733  
451a 733  
493a 466n234, 770  
499a ff. 424m100  
500c 519  
500d 520m122, 524m146, 527  
500d-e 527, 737  
507b 366n244  
509d-511e 310-311  
516e ff. 318  
517d 318  
533b 423  
533e-534a 310n72  
534a 311  
576a-b 732  
595a-608b 524  
596c-d 735  
598b 120-121  
600e 87, 525m148  
601d 317  
601e-602b 316-318  
602a 319  
605a-c 87m14  
611d-e 213m147, 516m104  
618d-619a 186n58

Plato, *Sophist*

231b 423n93  
263e ff. 322m108  
268a 423

Plato, *Statesman*

294b 228  
269c 229  
271e 229  
276a 229m199  
294a 229

- Plato, *Statesman* (*cont.*)  
300e–301a 229n201
- Plato, *Symposium*  
210e 366  
211c 316, 366  
212a 366  
212b 422
- Plato, *Theaetetus*  
146e 381–382n297  
152a 166n361  
170c 733n86  
176a–b 518  
176b 563  
176b–c 213m147, 516m104  
176b–d 89–90  
176c 424m100  
189e–190a 322m108
- Plato, *Theages*  
130d 733n86
- Plato, *Timaeus*  
29b–c 312  
29c 371  
29c–d 314  
31c 165  
32c 165  
37b–c 312  
40d–e 737  
41d–47c 213m147, 516m104  
92c 366
- Plautus, *Asinaria*  
198 614n
- Plautus, *Poenulus*  
967 615
- Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*  
2.5.26 742m03  
2.7.20 742  
2.7.26 742
- Pliny the Younger, *Letters*  
1.5 505n70
- Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*  
42.2 650  
74.2–3 650
- Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*  
131A 427
- Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus*  
2.6 188, 506
- Plutarch, *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions*  
1058F 746  
1059A 424n97
- Plutarch, *Agis et Cleomenes*  
13.5 630
- Plutarch, *Aratus*  
35.3 632  
47.4 632  
50.5–6 631
- Plutarch, *Beasts Are Rational*  
987A 536
- Plutarch, *Camillus*  
6.4 352, 742  
10.1–7 612m26
- Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*  
44.6 642  
44.7–8 192, 265n, 507, 635
- Plutarch, *Comparison of Alcibiades and Coriolanus*  
2.7 630, 635m199
- Plutarch, *Concerning Talkativeness*  
503B–C 767–768
- Plutarch, *Consolation to His Wife*  
611D 399, 433–434, 747  
612A–B 747–478
- Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love*  
750D–E 454n212  
750E 536



- Plutarch, *Dialogue on Love (cont.)*  
 756B 340  
 757B 340m180  
 757B–C 98m146  
 763C 106  
 763C–D 107  
 763D 107  
 763E 108, 340, 352  
 764E 367n247  
 764E–765A 367  
 765A 367, 381  
 765A–B 367  
 766A 368  
 767E 383n302  
 769B 189
- Plutarch, *Fragment. See also Stobaeus*  
 178 748, 780
- Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry*  
 35E 141m184  
 35F 110  
 52A–B 153
- Plutarch, *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*  
 52A–B 153
- Plutarch, *Marcus Coriolanus*  
 38.3–4 351  
 38.4 306
- Plutarch, *Numa*  
 7.4 202  
 8.4 109  
 8.7 109  
 8.7–8 109  
 15.1 108–109  
 20.8 154, 238–239, 267
- Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris*  
 351C–D 105  
 352C 105  
 355C–D 105  
 355D 742  
 369B 104, 141m184  
 372F 368n249  
 379C 480n276
- 379E 480  
 382A–B 368n249
- Plutarch, *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively*  
 545D 635
- Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions*  
 1034B 135n267  
 1034B–C 137n275  
 1037C 347  
 1038B 224–225, 276
- Plutarch, *On Superstition*  
 165C 349, 740  
 167D–E 107  
 170E 349  
 170F 349, 740  
 171A 350
- Plutarch, *On Talkativeness*  
 503D 398–399
- Plutarch, *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance*  
 550D–E 520  
 560C–D 727
- Plutarch, *On the Fortune of the Romans*  
 318A 712  
 321B 154
- Plutarch, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander*  
 328B 435  
 329A–B 208  
 329B 220
- Plutarch, *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus*  
 1017A 165n357
- Plutarch, *On the Malice of Herodotus*  
 855E–F 141m184
- Plutarch, *On the Principle of Cold*  
 948C 344  
 955C 347n200

- Plutarch, *On Tranquillity of Mind*  
477C 147
- Plutarch, *On Virtue and Vice*  
100F–101A 153
- Plutarch, *Pelopidas*  
26.4 192
- Plutarch, *Platonic Questions*  
2, 1001C 345*n*194, 523  
2, 1001D–E 367*n*247  
3, 1001D 310*n*71  
3, 1002A 368*n*249  
3, 1002E 343–344
- Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft*  
808B 618*n*145  
812F 635*n*199  
821B–C 193, 265*n*
- Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*  
12.7 507
- Plutarch, *Reply to Colotes*  
1114F 305*n*54  
1115E 344  
1122D 800*n*271  
1123A 744  
1123C–D 743  
1124B 744–745  
1124D–E 214  
1125A 800*n*272  
1125D 802*n*281
- Plutarch, *Roman Questions*  
275A (42) 195
- Plutarch, *Sulla*  
3.3 614
- Plutarch, *Table-Talk*  
624A 141*n*184  
725B 141*n*184
- Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*  
1087D 801
- Plutarch, *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*  
151F 141*n*184  
160E 453
- Plutarch, *The E at Delphi*  
391E–394C 523*n*136
- Plutarch, *The Obsolescence of Oracles*  
436D–E 345
- Plutarch, *The Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse*  
402B 350*n*210
- Plutarch, *Titus Flaminius*  
16.4 637  
12.4–5 637  
12.5 680
- Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler*  
779F 237  
780B 238, 525  
780C 237  
780D 507  
780E 237  
780E–F 525  
780F 238  
781B 215  
781F 368  
781F–782A 346  
800A–B 238, 265*n*
- Polybius, *Histories*  
1.46.5 632–633*n*188  
3.100.3–4 633*n*189  
6.56.13–14 598*n*83  
8.18.10 633*n*189  
8.23.3 717  
11.25.9 632–633*n*188

Polybius, *Histories* (cont.)

20.9.10–12 578  
20.10.6 578

Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella*

8 515–516  
21 388  
23 388  
24 387–388  
25 268  
25–27 215–216

Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food*

2.15 90  
2.60–61 90, 133

Propertius, *Elegies*

1.16 200

Pseudo-Andronicus of Rhodes, *Peri pathôn*

2.8.3 322m109  
4.5.27–28 594

Pseudo-Archytas. *See* StobaeusPseudo-Aristotle, *On the Cosmos*

399a31–33 326  
399b10–17 326

Pseudo-Aristotle, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*

0.4 (1420a, 23–28) 230

Pseudo-Diogenes, *Epistles*

34.2 150n315

Pseudo-Metopus, *On Virtue*

117.2–5 463

(Pseudo-)Plato, *Epistles*

10(358c) 424, 511

Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia*

391–403 206  
429–434 200  
449–452 680  
449–457 646  
527 646n231

(Pseudo-)Simplicius, *On Aristotle's De Anima*

3.3 322

Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*

1.8.10–11 420  
2.2.8 505n72  
4.1.54 420  
4.1.6 420  
4.1.6–7 420  
4.2.125 420  
4.2.119 420  
4.3.9 798n264  
5.7.8 420  
5.7.32 420  
5.10.8 419  
5.10.27 420  
5.10.37 420  
5.12.8 420  
5.13.28 420  
5.13.51 420  
5.14.35 420  
6.2.1 151  
6.2.18 420  
6.2.18–19 420  
6.4.16 420  
7.2.34 420  
7.3.57 420  
8.1.23 420  
8.3.62 469  
8.6.73 420  
9.2.19 420  
9.2.53 420  
9.4.1 420  
9.4.17 420  
11.3.67 420  
12.1.13 420  
12.2.1–2 421  
12.2.5–6 421n84  
12.2.8 421  
12.2.27 506n73  
12.2.29–30 506  
12.2.31 506n73

*Res gestae divi Augusti*

32 644

Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*

33.3 629n179

Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha* (cont.)

33.4 629  
108.3 614

Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*

11.4 712

Seneca, *Epistles*

6.1 151  
6.5–6 514  
6.6 455  
9.34 217, 259  
11.8–10 513  
16.2 444, 476  
21.9 803  
27.1 445, 476n256  
31.8 521  
32 533m163  
33.4 438n149  
41.1–2 522  
42.2 444  
64.9 514  
64.10 514m100  
66.10 187  
71.32 356  
71.34–35 443  
71.35 356, 443  
71.37 510n88  
73.16 521  
75.9 444  
78.16 510  
88.29–30 163  
89.2 450  
90.1 522m130  
90.4–5 236, 479–480  
90.28 147, 372  
90.34 372n266  
90.35 739  
90.38 198, 256  
90.40 197  
90.44 198  
92.13 481n280  
94.37 217  
94.39 217  
94.46 153, 198  
94.48–49 152  
94.50 152n319, 514m101  
94.51 505n70

95.48 135  
95.50 135, 522  
95.52 136  
121 224m81  
121.14 225

Seneca, *On Benefits*

1.1.9 658–659  
2.1.7.7 655  
2.22.1–23.3 654  
2.30.2 658n259  
2.31.1–3 655–656  
3.7.2–3 655n247  
3.14.2 657, 672  
3.15.1–4 657  
3.15.2 684  
3.15.4 672  
3.19.4 623  
3.25.1 623m161  
4.21.6 656n249  
4.25.2 658  
4.26.1 659  
4.28.1 659  
4.34.5 443m166  
5.10.4 656  
5.16.3 630  
5.21.1 218, 604, 654, 686  
6.23.7 658  
6.30.3–5 623, 680  
6.33.2 443  
6.34.3 657  
7.15.4 658  
7.16.3 658n254  
7.26.5 443m168  
7.31.2–5 659  
7.32 659

Seneca, *On Mercy*

1.4.1 236n224  
1.5.1 236n224

Seneca, *On the Happy Life*

12–13 800n274

Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind*

11.1 443m165  
11.2–3 443

- Seneca, *Thyestes*  
 213–218 191  
 294–295 633m189
- Sententiae Pythagoreorum*  
 20 132  
 66 132  
 66a 132
- Servius, *In Vergilii carmina comentarii*  
 1.292 596n75
- Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians*  
 2.76–78 428  
 7.23 449  
 7.60 166n361  
 7.111 305n54  
 7.248 446  
 7.252 446m178  
 7.253–254 446m176  
 7.426 446  
 11.169 470
- Sibylline Oracles*  
 3 204  
 8.217–250 730  
 8.220 730  
 8.259 730  
 8.650–663 730
- Silius Italicus, *Punica*  
 1.56–57 615  
 1.303–304 615  
 1.571–572 616m139  
 1.598 616  
 1.634 615  
 2.484–486 191, 527  
 2.494–506 201, 528  
 2.495 562  
 2.505 241–242  
 2.515–517 527–528  
 6.63–64 616m140  
 6.516–520 616
- Simplicius, *Metaphysics*  
 1.1 (Diels 3.16–19) 345m194
- Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*  
 384–386 715
- Statius, *Thebais*  
 7.216–217 597
- Stobaeus, *Anthologium*  
 3.1.173 (maxim 128, 142) 508
- Stobaeus, *Eclogues*  
 2.7.3f 517  
 2.7.5 158, 441m159  
 2.7.5b 455  
 2.7.11b 453n206  
 2.7.11m 447–448, 452–453, 482n288  
 2.7.106 517  
 2.49.23–25 167n  
 2.249.8 517
- Stobaeus, *Florilegium*  
 4.1.136 231  
 4.7.61 231  
 4.7.64 231n206  
 4.7.65 231  
 4.34.15 123n224  
 4.52.49 748, 780
- Tacitus, *Annals*  
 1.31–52 496
- Tacitus, *Histories*  
 1.2–3 622  
 1.76 647  
 2.60 648n233
- Terence, *The Eunuch*  
 886–887 626m169
- Theophrastus, *The Opinions of the Natural Philosophers*  
 6a 305n54
- Theognis, *Elegiac Poems*  
 147 186n55  
 283 673n299  
 1135–1142 199  
 1139–1140 598  
 1143–1146 201

Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*

- 1.praef 645–646  
 5.1a 612n126  
 6.5.1b 636  
 6.6.praef 613  
 6.8.praef 622

Velleius, *Compendium of Roman History*

- 2.126.2–3 206

Vergil, *Aeneid*

- 1.292–293 204, 259  
 6.791–794 204–205  
 7.203 196, 256

Vergil, *Eclogues*

- 4.4–7 203

Xenophanes, *Elegeia*

- B1.13–15 137

Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*

- 8.1.21 507n76  
 8.1.21–23 229  
 8.1.22 268

Xenophon, *Hellenica*

- 2.3.28 634

Xenophon, *Memorabilia*

- 1.1.5 734  
 2.6.19 453  
 4.4.14 209  
 4.4.17 209  
 4.4.19 210

## References to collections of texts and images

## Electronic Archive of Greek and Latin

## Epigraphy (EAGLE)

- EDR032865 593  
 EDRI06424 593  
 EDRI42066 199n108  
 EDRI50356 593n59  
 EDRI50372 593n59

## Greek Inscriptions (PHI)

- IG I3 53, line 9–16 608  
 IG II3 1 1292  
   line 7–8, 17–19, 44–46 608  
   line 12–14 608  
 IG IV2 1 121, line 24 715  
 IG IV2 1 121, lines 31–33 715

## Online Coins of the Roman Empire (OCRE)

- 'Fides' 649

## Oxyrhynchus Papyri

- 1380, line 152 725

## Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (SVF)

- 1.66 445  
 1.264 135n267  
 3.4 220–221  
 3.76 136  
 3.179 225n182, 276  
 3.262 158  
 3.615 678n316  
 3.625 453n206  
 3.661 517  
 3.717 455n213

# Index of Selected Modern Authors

Included are those authors that have been mentioned in the main text.

- Agamben, G. 3, 468–473, 496  
Agosto, E. 661  
Albrecht, M. von 77–78, 570, 615n133,  
700m14  
Alexander, L. 7n21, 33n120, 432, 474n251,  
723n61  
Algra, K.A. 97, 113–114, 135n269, 138n277,  
195n90, 449m195  
Ando, C. 65, 72–73, 75n70, 85–86, 87n111, 99,  
580n25  
Annas, J. 167n, 226m84, 227m191,  
449m195, 196, 450m197, 517m107, 518  
Arnold, B. 532n, 532–533  
Assmann, J. 76, 77  
Athanassiadi, P. 35n124, 125, 138, 517m107,  
700m14  
Atkins, J.W. 641  
  
Babut, D. 313–314, 338–342, 346, 348n202,  
352, 701m17  
Badiou, A. 3, 31m11, 171, 280, 285, 289  
Barclay, J.M.G. 477n258, 260, 478n263, 264,  
480n277, 481, 483n290, 291, 294, 492m16,  
589–590, 655n248, 670n291, 682n326,  
708, 823  
Barr, J. 5, 6m14, 33m19, 117n203, 214m53, 248,  
492m17, 493, 808m1  
Bartera, S. 643n223, 647–648, 649n235  
Barth, G. 19, 405  
Barton, C.A. 57–59  
Barton, S.C. 774m178, 775m182, 781n201, 784,  
785n218, 786n220, 223  
Bates, M.W. 7n20, 573, 822  
Becker, A.S. 102–103  
Behm, J. 122  
Bellantuono, A. 711, 715n48, 716n53, 717n,  
723, 734n88  
Benitez, R. 35m124, 36, 302, 701m18  
Ben-Yehuda, N. 709  
Berlage, H.P. 491  
Bertschmann, D.H. 273n300, 275  
Betegh, G. 307–308, 716  
Betz, H.D. 16, 53m13, 65n40, 102, 103m171, 109,  
121n218, 141–144, 150, 352n212, 462n225,  
535–536, 670n291  
Binder, H. 18n60, 183, 247–248, 404–405  
Blanton, T.R. 589, 658n256, 660n266  
Boer, M.C. de 183n44, 248–249,  
670n289, 292, 671n293  
Boer, W.P. de 498  
Boghossian, P. 289  
Bonhöffer, A.F. 31, 451n200, 481  
Bontempi, M. 305  
Boyancé, P. 80n82, 572, 596n72, 74, 75,  
597n79, 649n236  
Boyarin, D. 58–59  
Boys-Stones, G.R. 35m124, 43, 226m1187,  
301m44, 343m189, 347–348, 347m199, 200,  
348n201, 394n329, 431m21, 433m128,  
700m16  
Brant, J.-A.A. 498–500  
Brehier, E. 335, 336m168  
Bremmer, J.N. 67n48, 301m45, 711n40  
Breytenbach, C. 585n43, 587–588, 688  
Brookins, T. 396n3, 414–415  
Brouwer, R. 315n86, 87 444m169, 447m184,  
449m192, 518, 520  
Bryan, C. 115m196, 125n230, 126n232,  
162n348, 494  
Buber, M. 20, 401–408  
Bultmann, R.K. 18–19, 161n346, 347, 162n348,  
174n12, 182, 334–335, 396, 403–405,  
445m172, 508n80, 662n270, 668n286,  
707n26, 731  
Burkert, W. 231n203, 307n63, 308, 463n227  
Bushak, L. 290  
  
Campbell, D.A. 41m142, 115m195, 117–118,  
118n207, 179n28, 30, 181n37, 242n234,  
244n239, 271n295, 281, 676n310  
Casadio, G. 59–60  
Castelli E.A. 499–500  
Chesnut, G. 228n197, 231n203, 232n211, 239

- Chester, S.J. 379n288, 487n4, 766–767, 769,  
770m66
- Christian, E. 781–783
- Clarke, A. 500
- Collins, C.J. 27n99, 100, 254–255
- Cooper, J.M. 510
- Copan, V.A. 500
- Coutsoumpos, P. 172, 660n265
- Daniélou, J. 328n128, 329n131, 331m42, 336
- Davies, G.N. 676–677
- Dawes, G.W. 788–790
- Deissmann, G.A. 16, 555n229
- Deming, W. 38n137, 480n277, 533m163, 726
- Derrett, J.D.M. 774m176, 178, 776, 777m188
- De Saussure, F. 8–9
- deSilva, D.A. 586–587
- DeWitt, N.W. 379n286, 385n304, 436m139,  
438–439, 799, 804n285
- Dihle, A. 36m128, 143, 511, 513n95
- Dmitriev, S. 579n21, 627
- Dobbeler, A. von 7m19, 19, 405, 412
- Dodd, B.J. 497n34, 499n43, 500, 563
- Dodds, E.R. 293
- Downing, F.G. 370n256, 494–496, 695n9
- Dunn, J.D.G. 116m198, 120n212, 122, 126n232,  
130, 154, 161n346, 172, 174m13, 176m16, 17,  
252n256, 283n325, 284n327, 357n221,  
359n226, 479n270, 491n9, 493, 667n281,  
678n315, 692m1
- Dunson, B.C. 162, 538, 667, 669
- Edwards, M.J. 306n60, 312n80, 336, 430m118
- Ehrensperger, K. 21n76, 580n28, 584–585,  
680
- Ellington, D.W. 500
- Elliott, N. 177n20, 275n, 583–584, 639n209
- Engberg-Pedersen, T. 22n80, 30, 222m171,  
223m175, 224m180, 260n279, 272–273,  
276, 409, 467, 481–482, 678
- Erler, M. 89m123, 213m148, 433m132,  
438m147, 148, 517m107, 522m132, 524, 526,  
700m14
- Esler, P.F. 118n209, 126, 131n249, 161n346,  
276n307, 477n260, 708n30, 769m158
- Fee, G.D. 379n289, 384n, 770m166, 777, 788,  
793n244, 797n261
- Feeney, D. 65n39, 71, 749n119
- Filmore, C.J. 13
- Finkelberg, A. 305
- Finlan, S. 129, 559n238
- Fiore, B. 498–499, 504n66, 551, 799, 801n278
- Fisk, B.N. 788
- Fitzgerald, J.T. 14n49, 16n55, 56, 24, 146n302,  
442m64, 522m129
- Fitzgerald, T. 56–57
- Fitzmyer, J.A. 116m198, 117, 118n208, 119n,  
126n232, 168n364, 244n241, 256n256,  
361n235, 378n284, 285, 379n286,  
384n385–386n306, 386n309, 389,  
459n218, 219, 477n260, 478n266,  
765m47, 766m149, 768m157, 774m178,  
775m183, 777m188, 789, 790n237,  
793n242
- Foucault, M. 25
- Fox, R.L. 294
- Fraenkel, E.D.M. 3–4, 597n76, 611
- Frazier, F. 325m21, 340–341, 367n246
- Frede, M. 43, 97m145, 700m14
- Freyburger, G. 4, 5, 570, 580n26, 595,  
596n72, 73, 611m25, 624m165, 626m170,  
639, 648, 649n236
- Friedrich, G. 18n60, 248, 493, 535m169,  
663n274, 670n291, 292, 677–678, 681
- Fuchs, J. 253–254
- Furnish 291–292, 668n287, 771m169,  
793n242, 794n248, 795n254
- Galinsky, K. 570–571
- Garlington, D.B. 172n6, 675–677
- Garnsey, P. 622m158, 640n211, 214, 641
- Gathercole, S.J. 118n207, 179–180, 252n255,  
253n259, 255n268, 279, 280n318,  
296n28, 30
- Georgi, D. 248, 583
- Gerson, L.P. 322m110, 429m113, 437, 445m173,  
449, 738
- Getty, M.A. 498, 535m168, 549n207, 563n251
- Gillihan, Y.M. 781n201, 784n216, 785,  
786n222
- Given, M.D. 413, 478n265
- Gonzalez, E. 172
- Goulder, M. 795, 797n261, 262
- Goulet-Cazé, M.-O. 37m134, 38
- Grant, R.M. 351–352



- Grimal, P. 569, 597, 611<sup>m</sup>23, 627<sup>m</sup>72  
 Gruen, E.S. 4<sup>n</sup>8, 5<sup>m</sup>11, 204<sup>m</sup>23, 408<sup>n</sup>48,  
 577<sup>m</sup>15, 578<sup>m</sup>19, 579–581, 607<sup>m</sup>112,  
 615<sup>m</sup>32, 636, 681  
 Gupta, N.K. 8, 22–23, 146, 283<sup>n</sup>324, 461,  
 491<sup>m</sup>13, 796<sup>n</sup>252, 819, 822  
 Hadas-Label, M. 328<sup>m</sup>130, 338  
 Hadot, P. 510  
 Hagen Pifer, J. 23<sup>n</sup>82, 290  
 Harnack, A. von 389, 392<sup>n</sup>326  
 Harrison, J.R. 381<sup>n</sup>296, 504, 505<sup>n</sup>67, 551<sup>n</sup>213,  
 587–588, 688<sup>n</sup>341  
 Harrison, T. 64<sup>n</sup>35, 36, 67<sup>n</sup>46, 68–69  
 Hatch, W.H.P. 17<sup>n</sup>59, 31, 396<sup>m</sup>1, 401, 489,  
 710<sup>n</sup>36  
 Hatzimichali, M. 302<sup>n</sup>49, 418<sup>n</sup>78, 432  
 Havelock, E.A. 186  
 Hay, D.M. 45<sup>m</sup>154, 172, 246–247, 330, 375,  
 379<sup>n</sup>286, 399<sup>m</sup>11, 539, 554<sup>n</sup>226,  
 662<sup>n</sup>270, 665<sup>n</sup>278, 681<sup>n</sup>325, 754<sup>m</sup>128  
 Hays, R.B. 27, 29<sup>m</sup>105, 244, 246–247, 255,  
 379<sup>n</sup>286, 289, 384<sup>n</sup>303, 386<sup>n</sup>308,  
 491<sup>n</sup>9, 10, 493, 495–496, 502<sup>n</sup>56,  
 559<sup>n</sup>236, 562<sup>n</sup>245, 564, 574<sup>n</sup>, 575–576,  
 670<sup>n</sup>291, 761<sup>m</sup>38  
 Heath, J.M.F. 30<sup>m</sup>110, 146, 370<sup>n</sup>256, 257,  
 371<sup>n</sup>261, 375, 501<sup>m</sup>54  
 Heilig, C. 28–29, 144<sup>n</sup>300  
 Heinze, R. 4, 576<sup>n</sup>14, 597<sup>n</sup>77, 610–611, 626,  
 627<sup>m</sup>75  
 Heliso, D. 181<sup>n</sup>36, 37, 374–375  
 Hellegouarc'h, J. 5<sup>n</sup>9, 594<sup>n</sup>64, 595, 599<sup>n</sup>84,  
 610, 624<sup>m</sup>165, 656<sup>n</sup>251  
 Hirsch-Luipold, R. 35–36, 328<sup>m</sup>126, 341–342,  
 348<sup>n</sup>204, 349<sup>n</sup>206, 353<sup>n</sup>214, 368<sup>n</sup>249,  
 700<sup>m</sup>14  
 Hodge, C. Johnson 357<sup>n</sup>222, 359<sup>n</sup>227, 409,  
 540, 563<sup>n</sup>249, 754<sup>m</sup>130, 787, 795<sup>n</sup>252  
 Hoffmann, P. 389<sup>n</sup>316, 390–392, 399<sup>n</sup>313  
 Hölkeskamp, K.-J. 4<sup>n</sup>3, 577<sup>m</sup>15, 635  
 Hooker, M. 115<sup>m</sup>196, 502  
 Huttunen, N. 242<sup>n</sup>231, 253–254, 481  
 Inwood, B. 43, 99<sup>m</sup>152, 217<sup>m</sup>160, 223<sup>m</sup>176,  
 314<sup>n</sup>84, 442<sup>m</sup>161  
 Irwin, T.H. 210–211, 424<sup>n</sup>98  
 Jedan, C. 16<sup>n</sup>53, 36, 518  
 Jewett, R. 157<sup>n</sup>331, 162<sup>n</sup>348, 493, 667<sup>n</sup>281  
 Johanson, B.C. 765<sup>m</sup>146, 766, 769  
 Johnson, L.T. 127<sup>n</sup>234, 152<sup>n</sup>320, 155, 161<sup>n</sup>343,  
 162<sup>n</sup>349, 165, 370<sup>n</sup>258  
 Judge, E.A. 16<sup>m</sup>107, 33<sup>m</sup>120, 121, 38, 58, 61–62,  
 142<sup>n</sup>291, 143, 197, 293, 295<sup>n</sup>26  
 Karris, R.J. 478  
 Käsemann, E. 243<sup>n</sup>237, 248, 252<sup>n</sup>258,  
 478<sup>n</sup>262, 266, 268  
 King, C. 67<sup>n</sup>45, 69, 71–72  
 Kinneavy, J.L. 291, 415–416, 417<sup>n</sup>70, 430<sup>m</sup>119  
 Klauck, H.-J. 75<sup>n</sup>68, 76–78, 87<sup>m</sup>110, 107<sup>m</sup>77  
 Klostergaard Petersen A. 28<sup>m</sup>101, 34<sup>m</sup>122,  
 35<sup>m</sup>124, 303–304, 738<sup>n</sup>91, 815<sup>n</sup>7  
 Konstan, D. 7<sup>n</sup>21, 185<sup>n</sup>50, 194<sup>n</sup>87, 452<sup>n</sup>204,  
 619–620, 631<sup>m</sup>184, 666<sup>n</sup>279, 738<sup>n</sup>92,  
 775<sup>m</sup>181  
 Kooten, G.H. van 31<sup>m</sup>111, 33<sup>m</sup>120, 34<sup>m</sup>122,  
 35<sup>m</sup>124, 116, 118<sup>n</sup>208, 209, 127<sup>n</sup>234,  
 132<sup>n</sup>256, 139<sup>n</sup>281, 152<sup>n</sup>316, 280<sup>n</sup>317, 341,  
 345<sup>m</sup>194, 349<sup>n</sup>207, 358<sup>n</sup>223, 371<sup>n</sup>262,  
 412, 504<sup>n</sup>63, 516<sup>m</sup>106, 517<sup>m</sup>107, 111,  
 519<sup>m</sup>121, 523<sup>m</sup>140, 524<sup>m</sup>145, 525<sup>m</sup>149,  
 560–561, 796<sup>n</sup>257, 800<sup>n</sup>273  
 Krenth, E. 412, 425<sup>m</sup>103, 104, 459, 462<sup>n</sup>225  
 Kruse, C.G. 127–128  
 Lampe, G.W.H. 488  
 Lampe, P. 496, 591, 640<sup>n</sup>213, 660<sup>n</sup>265, 266  
 Lang, T.J. 695–696, 754, 768<sup>m</sup>156, 771<sup>m</sup>70,  
 778<sup>m</sup>192, 787, 789, 795<sup>n</sup>252  
 Langacker, R.W. 8<sup>n</sup>24, 10–14  
 Larson, C.W.R. 187  
 Lavan, M. 628<sup>m</sup>176, 634<sup>m</sup>192, 638  
 Lee, M.V. 150<sup>n</sup>314, 155  
 Levenson, J.D. 176–177  
 Lieberg, G. 76, 84<sup>n</sup>95, 100, 86<sup>m</sup>106, 107, 108,  
 87<sup>m</sup>110, 91–93, 104<sup>m</sup>173, 113  
 Lim, K.Y. 139, 793<sup>n</sup>245  
 Lim, T.H. 460–461, 465<sup>n</sup>231, 232  
 Lindsay, D. 19–20, 329<sup>m</sup>133, 334,  
 334<sup>m</sup>155, 156, 158, 405–408, 710<sup>n</sup>36  
 Linebaugh, J.A. 115<sup>m</sup>196, 117<sup>n</sup>205, 181,  
 244<sup>n</sup>238  
 Litfin, A.D. 413–414  
 Lohmeyer, E. 247

- Lohse, E. 17, 405-407, 668n286  
 Long, A.A. 43, 219, 450n198  
 Lührmann, D. 6, 18-21, 405-406
- Mackey, J.L. 70  
 Macris, C. 35n124, 126, 138, 517n107  
 Malherbe, A.J. 16, 23n82, 33n120, 37, 39n140, 219n63, 499, 515n103, 552, 799, 802n281  
 Martens, J.W. 118n208, 228n196, 230n202, 234n214, 237n225, 252n257, 254-255  
 Martyn, J.L. 51n3, 257-258, 670n291, 292  
 Maslov, B. 519, 559n238  
 Mason, S. 34, 64-65  
 Matlock, R.B. 12n42, 41n142, 492n16, 493, 495, 756n132, 761n139  
 McFadden, K.W. 495  
 McFarland, O. 345n194, 589, 687n338  
 McKaughan, D.J. 53n9, 289  
 McKnight, S. 583, 65n  
 Michaelis, W. 497-499, 551  
 Mitchell, A.C. 776, 778, 779n196, 792n  
 Modica, J.B. 583, 65n  
 Momigliano, A. 5n10, 75n69, 95n135, 580  
 Moo, D.J. 45n154, 243n235, 255n268, 487n1, 667n281  
 Morgan, T. 4n3, 7, 5n11, 7, 21n75, 22n81, 25n86, 31-32, 161n346, 192n81, 206n129, 212n170, 271n294, 277, 282n321, 290, 299, 302n47, 306n60, 319-320n103, 335-336, 353n213, 214, 375n276, 382, 399n11, 409, 474n250, 495-496, 537n179, 540n188, 544n196, 547, 553n219, 556n230, 574n, 577n15, 580n25, 591n56, 592n57, 605-606, 609n116, 611n125, 620n155, 622n159, 623-624, 649n236, 650n239, 658, 663-664, 666n279, 280, 682n326, 693n3, 712n42, 717n56, 723n61, 724, 728n73, 755, 769, 781n200, 201, 783, 794n247, 814, 818-819, 821-822  
 Morrison, K.F. 503  
 Morrow, G.R. 89  
 Moss, J. 319  
 Mueller, H.-F. 595
- Najman, H. 233  
 Nanos, M. 177n22, 477n260, 483n290, 675n301, 677, 678n315, 790, 796n258
- Needham, R. 18n61, 67  
 Neyrey, J.H. 618, 658n257, 672, 673n298, 802n280  
 Nock, A.D. 134n260, 261, 431-432, 730n78  
 Nongbri, B. 57-59, 61, 66  
 Nörr, D. 581, 627n173, 628  
 North, J.A. 63n30, 65n39, 76, 79-80, 84n97, 101, 86, 582n35, 738n91
- Obbink, D. 195n89, 222, 521n126  
 Opsomer, J. 342n87, 343n188, 347, 348n202, 203, 429n115, 430n120, 431n122, 523n136, 747n113, 115, 749n120
- Parker, R. 64n33, 68n52, 69, 738n91  
 Pasorek, G. 87-88  
 Piccaluga, G. 206-207, 595  
 Pitts, A.W. 552, 662n268  
 Polenz, M. 481  
 Pöschl, V. 569-570, 577n15, 595, 598n83, 636n201, 639n208  
 Premerstein, A. von 640  
 Price, S.R.F. 65n39, 67, 68n53, 582n35
- Quarles, C.L. 282-283
- Rabens, V. 262n281, 370n255, 559n238, 563n250, 794-795  
 Räsänen, H. 115n196, 257-258  
 Reale, G. 327  
 Reinhardt, K. 102  
 Reinhartz, A. 499  
 Reitzenstein, R. 18, 134, 388-389, 391, 403, 405, 711, 725, 729n76, 730n78, 731  
 Reydam-Schills, G. 431, 518, 519n117, 523n137  
 Rich, J. 618n147, 625  
 Rives, J.B. 34n123, 63n29, 68n50, 76, 77  
 Roetzel, C.J. 263  
 Runia, D.T. 39n140, 91n128, 328n126, 127, 336-337, 338n171  
 Rüpke, J. 57, 70n57, 85  
 Ryberg, I.S. 194n83, 204n119, 122, 205
- Saller, R. 617n144, 618n145, 147, 622n157, 158, 640-641  
 Sampley, J.P. 161n346, 478-480, 483n290  
 Sanders, B. 498

- Sanders, E.P. 30, 39*n*140, 115*n*196, 175*n*14, 176*n*6, 659
- Schellenberg, R.S. 755*n*, 760*n*, 769
- Schenck, K. 558–559
- Schlatter, A. 329*n*133, 335, 403*n*24, 530*n*156
- Schliesser, B. 22*n*81, 183, 247*n*243, 248–249, 290, 359*n*227,228, 403*n*24, 491*n*11, 493, 536*n*174, 539, 693*n*1, 809*n*, 814
- Schröder, W. 294–295, 301
- Schumacher, T. 5*n*10, 12*n*42, 22*n*81, 23, 162*n*348,351, 282*n*322, 475*n*254, 484*n*296, 492*n*16, 541, 549*n*206, 557*n*232, 560*n*241, 580*n*26, 581, 583
- Schunack, G. 4*n*7, 19, 106*n*176, 199*n*107, 309*n*68, 350*n*211, 723, 734*n*88
- Sedley, D.N. 43, 423, 432–433, 442*n*160, 517*n*107, 519*n*121, 738*n*92
- Seifrid, M.A. 7*n*21, 32*n*118, 173, 280*n*315, 292*n*14, 693
- Sellars, J. 508*n*81, 510
- Shantz, C. 409
- Smith, D.L. 410, 493, 558*n*234
- Smith, J. 232*n*210, 263
- Smith, J.Z. 17*n*58, 44*n*151, 56, 58
- Smith, W.C. 52–53, 59
- Sourvinou-Inwood, C. 63–64, 68
- Stanley, D.M. 497–498
- Stegeman, E.W. 580*n*28, 582*n*36, 585
- Stegman, T. 559*n*236,237, 798
- Stendahl, K. 182, 264, 688
- Storey, D. 311
- Stowers, S.K. 17*n*58, 33*n*120, 115–116, 119, 126*n*232, 177*n*22, 183–184, 281*n*319, 283*n*325, 479*n*271,272, 554*n*224
- Strecker, C. 22*n*81, 23*n*83, 176*n*17, 191*n*78, 403*n*27, 580–582, 584–585, 603*n*98, 680, 822
- Sweet, J.P.M. 765–766, 768*n*157
- Taglia, A. 309, 317–319, 422
- Tarrant, H. 35*n*124, 36, 302, 701*n*18
- Taylor, G.M. 574–576
- Taylor, J.W. 22*n*81, 282–283, 539, 705–706
- Thom, J. 22*n*81, 37*n*133, 38–39
- Thorsteinsson, R.M. 61*n*24, 126*n*231, 128*n*240, 135*n*266, 137*n*276, 152*n*318, 158, 272–273, 276, 480–481, 482*n*287, 483*n*290
- Thrall, M.E. 377*n*282, 793*n*244, 794
- Tomlin, G. 799, 802*n*282
- Torrance, T.F. 5*n*12, 283*n*325, 363*n*237, 492
- Towner, P. 532, 537
- Trabattoni, F. 312*n*80, 315, 317*n*94, 366*n*244
- Trapp, M.B. 112*n*188, 381–382*n*297, 383*n*300, 432*n*126, 511, 522*n*133
- Trebilco, P. 270*n*293, 696, 705–710, 714*n*, 715*n*51, 754, 755, 756, 762, 763*n*142, 769, 796
- Tronier, H. 169, 303, 771*n*167, 815*n*7
- Turner, N. 494
- Ullucci, D.C. 138–139
- Vainio, O.-P. 181*n*39, 182
- VanLandingham, C. 180, 553*n*222
- Van Nuffelen, P. 35, 65–66, 81*n*88, 83*n*91, 84*n*100,101, 86–87, 109*n*181, 194*n*88, 228*n*196, 230*n*202, 302*n*147, 699*n*10, 700*n*14, 738*n*91, 739*n*93,95, 749
- Van Ophuijsen, J.M. 313, 318
- Verboven, K. 620*n*153,154, 624, 627*n*174
- Versnel, H.S. 67*n*46, 69, 73–74, 71*n*41, 715*n*48, 725*n*68, 731
- Veyne, P. 99, 618*n*147, 749
- Viagulamuthu, X.P.B. 126*n*232, 127*n*236, 131*n*249, 134, 137*n*275
- Voegelin, E. 809, 810*n*
- Vogt, K.M. 208*n*136, 220*n*166, 222
- Wallace-Hadrill, A. 198*n*104, 204
- Watson, N. 146*n*302, 366*n*241, 371*n*259, 375*n*276, 793
- Wernink, J.R. 491
- Wettstein, J.J. 16
- Whitlark, J.A. 263
- Whitmarsh, T. 66–67, 696, 698–705, 716, 739*n*94, 806
- Whittaker, H. 294, 390–392
- Wieczorek, T. 694–695
- Wilde, M. de 3*n*12, 602*n*93, 610
- Williams, D.H.H. 500, 501*n*55, 502*n*56
- Wilson, W.T. 126*n*232, 129–130, 132*n*252
- Wischmeyer, O. 140–141
- Winter, B.W. 399*n*11, 412–416, 467, 776, 777*n*190, 778*n*195
- Winterling, A. 619*n*149, 640–641

- Wolter, M. 20n74, 472, 492m6, 542n195,  
553n221, 663, 692n1,2, 707n27, 771n168
- Woyke, J. 107, 125
- Wright, B.G. 724
- Wright, N.T. 12n42, 67, 176m6, 262n281, 279,  
379n286, 489n6, 662n267
- Yeung, M.W. 380, 407
- Young, S.L. 683n, 687
- Zimmermann, F. 724

# Index of Selected Names and Subjects

A handful of ancient authors is included here, see for a complete overview the Index of Ancient Texts.

- Abraham 13, 411143, 144, 180, 234–236, 255, 263, 271–272, 330–337, 357–360, 529–531, 539–540, 546–547, 575, 673, 682–686, 745, 757, 760–761
- Adiaphora* (morally indifferent things) 38, 158, 480–485, 530, 611
- Aeneas 196, 204, 572, 578, 606–607, 615–616
- Alexander the Great 111, 208, 230, 280, 435, 608, 631–632
- Ambiguity of language 3, 121142, 52, 159, 237, 269–270, 282, 283, 369, 374, 451, 489, 492–495, 5211127, 571, 607, 63711204, 695, 766, 776–777, 80811
- Dative case and 483–484
- Genitive case and 161, 181, 243, 246–248, 264, 35511, 3611234, 472, 487–566 (esp. 490–496, 534, 541–542), 670–671, 675–678, 68711337
- See also Wordplay; *Pistis* (and cognates)—*Pistis Christou*, Polysemy and multifariousness of
- (Anti-)imperialism 211176, 2911, 504, 571–574, 576–586, 591–593, 617, 628–651, 661, 675, 680–681, 689–691, 820, 822
- See also Patronage and benefaction; Fides—As a Roman social virtue, As Roman propaganda
- Antiochus of Ascalon 43, 841101, 225, 276, 442
- Apistia* 111, 193, 306–308, 337, 349, 351–352, 356–357, 372, 44611176, 448, 453, 456, 48311295, 507–508, 613–616, 642, 64311220, 692–807, 820–821
- As a denial of divine interference 106, 349–352, 740–742, 815
- Indicating deviant insiders versus general outsiders 695, 697, 704, 707–710, 714, 730, 751–756, 76011, 769–770, 781, 784, 788, 79411247, 795–799, 804–806
- In inter-philosophical polemic 738–751.  
See also Epicureans and Epicurean philosophy
- In Plato's works 731–738
- In Paul's letters (just the noun) 356, 48311295, 55811234, 564, 760–763
- In the New Testament excl. Paul 752–753  
See also *Pisteuontes*, *pistoi*, *apistoi*; *Pistis* (and cognates)
- Aquinas, Thomas 164
- Aristotle 271100, 44, 88, 13111249, 153, 15511327, 164–165, 1861155, 208, 2111144, 213–214, 254–255, 259, 270, 290–291, 320–327, 330, 336, 34511194, 356, 393, 397, 417–418, 421, 4231196, 4481187, 453–454, 46311227, 469, 498–499, 508–509, 514, 5161106, 518, 701118, 750, 7671154, 816
- Assimilation to God. See Becoming like God
- Atheism 66, 98, 105–106, 141, 340, 349–350, 696, 698–705, 711–712, 735, 738–746, 750, 815
- Augustine of Hippo 6, 75, 80–86, 107, 145, 182, 251, 27711310, 409, 54411226, 596
- Augustus (Octavian) 204–205, 447, 540, 582, 58411, 592, 640, 644, 64611231, 68811341, 712, 725
- Barth, Karl 51, 116, 282
- Becoming like God 88, 89, 121, 127, 133, 135–136, 168, 212–213, 227, 231–232, 265, 277, 3121181, 346, 36211236, 370, 372, 490, 502–503, 516–531, 554, 55611230, 559–565, 600, 689, 817–818
- Belief. See *Pistis* (and cognates)—Cognitive versus relational
- Benefaction. See Patronage and benefaction
- Calvin, John 179

- Carneades 43*m*49, 227, 343, 430, 435, 446–447
- Celsus 202, 295, 299–302, 391
- Christ. *See* Jesus
- Christianity / Early Christ movement  
 As a philosophical movement 33*m*20  
 As opposed to Graeco-Roman philosophy/religion 61–74, 698–705  
*See also* Religion in antiquity
- Cognitive Linguistics 8–15, 24, 26, 39, 496, 576, 588  
*See also* Semantic domains
- Co-occurrence of words (collocation) 11, 26–27, 33, 42, 46, 129, 129*n*243, 150, 155*n*329, 159, 163, 184, 185, 193, 201, 265, 304, 305, 397, 418, 468, 472, 535, 572, 574, 592, 592*n*58, 629, 632, 632*m*87, 633, 634, 681, 688, 748, 756–757, 776, 811  
*See also* Database searches (TLG, LLT); Semantic domains
- Credo, credere* 4, 53, 71, 98*m*49, 99*m*53, 135, 153, 190, 443, 444, 467–470*n*243, 514, 596, 606*m*108, 633*m*89, 646, 648*n*233, 650, 657, 712, 742*m*02
- Cronus. *See* Saturn (Cronus)
- Cynics and Cynic philosophy 212, 222–223, 297, 434, 442*m*61, 163, 507, 728
- Database searches (TLG, LLT) 42, 46, 76*n*71, 129, 150–151, 154, 159, 165, 184, 282, 304*n*52, 339*m*54, 469, 504, 540*m*189, 592, 715*n*46
- Disbelief, disbelievers. *See Apistia; Atheism; Pisteuontes, pistoi, apistoi*
- Discourse analysis 2, 11, 24–29, 33, 380, 390–391, 461, 488, 538, 552–553, 572, 576, 606 651, 695, 763–764*m*45, 811  
 As compared to ‘topos’ 39  
 As opposed to direct influence 439*m*53  
*See also* Golden Age, Patronage and benefaction, (Anti)imperialism, Becoming like God, Law
- Dynamis, potestas, vis* (power) 94, 131, 191, 192, 223, 344, 351, 380, 426, 459–464, 468–473, 577*m*15, 581, 592, 594, 600, 628, 630, 635–637, 642, 649, 670–672, 674–675, 722–723
- Energieia* (working, actualisation) 266–267, 383–384, 468–473, 486, 535, 550
- Epicureans and Epicurean philosophy 76, 95–96, 194–195, 207–208, 256, 292, 454, 470, 509, 513, 526, 533
- Anti-Epicurean polemic 112–113, 123, 159, 163, 214–215, 219*m*63, 298, 342, 369*n*254, 372, 440, 703, 728, 738–747, 750–751, 763, 772. *See also Apistia*—In interphilosophical polemic
- On becoming like God 517–520, 524–526, 560, 817
- On *pistis* 399, 431–433, 436–439, 441, 486
- Paul and 28, 124*n*226, 385*n*304, 439*m*53, 533, 799–804, 820
- Euangelion* (good news, gospel) 251, 267–268, 283, 371, 373, 459*n*219, 532, 534, 546, 573, 662, 674, 678–679, 770, 806
- Existentialist interpretations of faith 174, 461
- Faith  
 As a form of knowledge 289–395, 770–772, 815–816  
 As a form of (transformative) persuasion 396–486, 689, 734, 759, 767–768, 816–817. *See also Peithō* (to persuade)  
 As a moral virtue and mimetic attitude 487–566, 759–760, 772–779, 817–818  
 As an ancient religious notion 51–170, 712–731, 734–738, 779–791, 804  
 As a social bond 569–691, 819–820  
 As a social identity marker 692–807, 820–821. *See also Pisteuontes, pistoi, apistoi*  
 As opposed to belief. *See* Cognitive versus relational  
 As opposed to doubt 483*n*293  
 As opposed to religion and cult 51, 54–55, 67–70, 396  
 As opposed to reason, knowledge, wisdom 70–74, 289–395, 445–451, 458–467  
 As opposed to sight. *See* Sense-perception and  
 As opposed to works, law 250–262, 487–566, 591, 625, 657–659, 669–674, 681–689. *See also* Law

Faith (*cont.*)

- Cognitive versus relational 51–52, 400–411, 553–555, 572, 668, 668n285, 671, 674–681, 706–707, 750–751, 754–755, 760, 762
- Existentialist notion of 174, 461, 815
- Faithfulness and 359–360, 487–566, 668, 706–707. *See also Pistis Christou*
- Greek as compared to Jewish or Hebrew faith 15–24, 354, 364, 400–408, 485, 492
- Human versus divine 250, 283, 304–308, 360, 395, 473, 488–489, 535–536, 546, 560, 670
- Inclusive, bridging, transethnic quality of 585, 587, 602–616, 651, 659–660, 669, 681–690, 693, 755, 756–763, 821
- Individual versus collective 241–250, 538–544, 669, 681n325
- Interiority and public acknowledgement 654–657, 660, 665, 667–668, 669–674
- Levels and growth of 301, 316–319, 354–360, 388, 444, 474, 483
- Modern notions of 51–53, 289–290, 569, 671, 751, 823–826
- Proclamation of 261, 411, 458–467, 554, 661–670, 678, 759
- Reciprocity in 4, 7, 8, 239, 265, 271–272, 360, 473–477, 495, 570–574, 580, 586–591, 623–624, 631–632, 638, 653–660, 664–666, 671–673, 674–781, 822
- Sense-perception and 82, 146–147, 308, 329–330, 364–378, 393, 743–746, 751, 770–772, 800, 819
- Transjuridical faith beyond oaths, laws 363, 594–617, 681–690, 820, 822–823
- See also Pistis* (and cognates); *Fides*; *Apistia*
- Fideism. *See* Faith—As opposed to reason, knowledge, wisdom
- Fides*
- As a Roman social virtue 569–572, 594–651
- As Roman propaganda 205, 582–586, 636–638, 643–646
- Deditio in fidem* 576–582, 635, 636n202, 680–681
- Depicted on coins 649
- Diachronic semantic approach to 3–4, 610–611
- Fidei commissum* 574–576, 610–611
- Fides quae/qua* 6, 406, 409, 553n218, 668n286, 670. *See also Pistis* (and cognates)—Indicating the kerygma (the faith) or not
- Goddess and cult of 191, 199n108, 249, 527, 596–603, 684
- Punica fides* 190, 613–617, 769n159
- Semantic overlap between *pistis* and 3–4, 419, 437, 571, 576–586, 630
- Galen 33n120, 129n243, 165, 295–297, 394, 430n120, 432, 469
- Grace and gift-giving. *See* Patronage and benefaction
- Golden Age 44, 116, 118, 149, 169, 184–185, 193–208, 211–212, 236, 241, 244, 253, 256, 259, 270, 284–285, 479–480, 538, 644, 813
- Heraclitus 306–308, 351, 429
- Homoiōsis Theōi*. *See* Becoming like God
- Idiōtēs / Idiōtai* (uninitiated, untrained) 426, 460, 465, 728, 764, 769–770, 775, 798
- Idolatry and religious unfaithfulness 87n111, 120, 125n229, 146, 169, 361, 549n206, 684n330, 718, 723–724, 730, 758, 774, 779–804, 807, 821
- Imitation (moral) 13, 102, 150, 211, 238, 264, 269, 407, 484, 486, 492, 497–566, 600, 817–818
- Christ as a model/example or living law 246–247, 261, 262–272, 407, 553–566
- Mimetic chain 407, 486, 490, 503, 512–516, 546–547, 553, 559, 758
- Of a ruler 231–232, 265
- Of teachers in philosophy 508–516
- Of Paul and early christian teachers 266, 471, 497–501, 544–553
- Plato's critique of artistic 87, 120–121, 317–319
- See also* Becoming like God

- Immanence versus transcendence of the  
divine 219, 221, 336–337, 345,  
348–349, 519–524, 554–555, 746, 817
- Imperialism. *See* (Anti)imperialism
- Inscriptions 28m04, 44, 199m08, 207, 256,  
504, 584n, 587, 593, 608–609, 644, 711,  
715, 723, 736
- Jesus  
As image of God 146, 238, 371–373, 525,  
560–561  
As living law 262–272, 758, 813–814  
As intermediary between humanity and  
God 363–364, 553–565  
*See also Pistis Christou*
- Justification by faith 45, 171, 173–184,  
239–286, 487, 675, 681–689, 814  
*See also Faith—As opposed to works, law*
- Law  
Internal law, law of faith 180, 209–216,  
250–262, 269, 280–282, 285, 813, 823  
Living law 228–239, 247, 262–272, 285,  
488n, 533, 565, 758  
Mosaic Law 172–173, 175–178, 182–184,  
233–235, 251–262, 269–270, 278–281,  
334, 377, 403–404, 477–478, 497, 551,  
589, 675, 682–685, 784  
Universal and natural law 216–227, 253,  
259, 262, 272–285, 758  
Unwritten law 209–285, 682, 813
- Lexicons and (theological) dictionaries  
5m13, 10, 14, 17n59, 18 40m14, 159n337,  
161n346, 164, 231n231, 290, 291, 365n238,  
455–456, 497, 537, 545, 546m198, 706,  
763, 770m165, 166, 777m188, 191
- Love and friendship  
In Platonic epistemology 315–316,  
367–368, 381–384  
Different types of 381n296, 382, 453–455  
Keeping bonds of trust versus 605  
Patronage and 618–622, 624–625,  
633–635, 646, 650  
Paul on faith and 378–393, 472, 483–485,  
535, 541  
Stoic sagehood and 451–455  
The good versus 272–278
- Lucian 76, 212, 295, 297–299, 373, 380, 394,  
405, 406, 429–430, 434, 466, 515, 616,  
702–703, 725, 728–729, 768, 780, 803,  
805
- Luther and Lutheran interpretation of Paul  
117, 174, 178–179, 181–182, 260, 264,  
487–488, 521, 535, 589n52, 590, 659, 683
- Mimēsis*. *See* Imitation (moral)
- Mind (*nous*)  
Approaching the divine through the  
82–83, 109  
And *pistis/fides* 730, 812  
Body versus 373n270, 408–411  
Meaning of *nous* 148–156  
Paul on debased minds and renewal of  
the 115–126, 148–156  
Spirit versus 155–156, 260
- Moses 150, 165, 233–235, 261, 263, 295,  
330–332, 335, 338, 362, 368–371,  
376–377, 529–531, 722n59, 771  
Song of Moses 242, 717  
*See also Law—Mosaic Law*
- Mystery cults and mysticism 17n59, 18, 31,  
63, 82, 83n91, 107, 122, 134, 182–183, 298,  
337, 341, 361, 367, 388–390, 396m, 401,  
403, 433–434, 519, 521, 555–556, 711,  
724, 727–729, 731, 747–751, 768, 780, 820
- Natural theology and natural law 116–118,  
183–184, 241, 251–255, 262, 280  
*See also Universal law and natural law*
- New Perspective on Paul. *See* Paul—New  
Perspective on Paul and Paul within  
Judaism
- Nomos empsychos*. *See* Living law
- Numa 108–109, 132, 154, 202–203, 238–239,  
266–267, 596, 599, 812
- Obedience 18, 232, 234–235, 271–272,  
279n314, 359, 403–404, 455–456,  
474n251, 497, 539, 551, 576–582, 623,  
637, 641, 647–648, 650–651, 674–681,  
690, 699, 763, 820  
*See also Pistis* (and cognates)—*Hypakoē*  
*pisteōs*
- Oikeiōsis* 224–227, 276–278, 519, 537m180,  
559n238



- Paralleomania 1, 2, 15, 23–24, 27, 255  
*See also* Discourse analysis
- Parmenides 123n224, 150n315, 214, 291,  
 304–306, 309, 342, 369n254, 393, 397,  
 508n82
- Pastoral and deuteropauline epistles 472,  
 532, 536–537, 542–543, 544–546,  
 557–558, 563, 752–753
- Scope and in-/exclusion of 45  
*See also* Index of Ancient Texts, Biblical  
 Writings—New Testament
- Patronage and benefaction 571–572,  
 586–593, 617–628, 651–690, 819–820
- Commerce versus 653, 657–660,  
 672–673, 683–684
- Friendship and. *See* Love and  
 friendship—Patronage and
- In Paul's letters 660–689
- Philosophical critique of 651–660, 665
- Political patronage as in the Roman  
 republic 627–639
- Political patronage in the early Roman  
 empire 639–651  
*See also* (Anti)imperialism
- Paul
- Apocalypticism and 30, 182–183,  
 244–250, 256, 262–263, 303–304
- Authorship questions. *See* Pastoral and  
 deuteropauline epistles—Scope and  
 in-/exclusion of
- Graeco-Roman philosophy and 28–40,  
 462n225, 561n243, 809–810
- Graeco-Roman rhetoric and 411–416,  
 458–467
- His concept of religion 140–144
- New Perspective on Paul and Paul within  
 Judaism 173–184, 260–262, 270,  
 278–285, 491n13, 572–573, 659, 675,  
 681–689. *See also* (Anti)imperialism
- Peithō* (to persuade) 4, 397–398, 433,  
 455–458, 474n253, 483n292, 733n86,  
 735, 737, 763
- Pisteuontes, pistoi, apistoi* 272, 470–471, 549,  
 692–804, 820–821
- Development as a religious-philosophical  
 designation 713–731
- In the Septuagint 717–724
- In Paul's letters 751–806
- Pisteuontes* 756–760
- Pistis* (and cognates)
- Aorist tense of *pisteuō* 435, 562, 666,  
 668, 669, 671n293, 754, 759n
- As a designation. *See Pisteuontes, pistoi,*  
*apistoi*
- Difference between *fides* and. *See*  
*Fides*—Difference between *pistis* and  
 Goddess and cult of. *See Fides*—Goddess  
 and cult of
- Hypakoē pisteōs* 576–582, 674–681, 690.  
*See also* Obedience
- Innovation and development in meaning  
 707, 713–731, 755, 764, 796, 804–805, 821
- In the meaning of 'proof' 40n, 213,  
 246–247, 320, 329, 330, 398–399, 411,  
 418, 436–437, 467, 526, 633, 635, 816
- In the meaning of 'protection' 11,  
 484n296, 625–628
- Indicating the kerygma ('the faith') or not  
 164, 403, 531–537, 543, 565, 662–669,  
 662n270, 668n286, 669–674, 752n125
- Pisteuō hoti* (believe that) 398, 553–554,  
 668
- Pistōō* 545
- Polysemy and multifariousness of 10,  
 12n42, 41, 44–47, 451, 488–489, 531, 573,  
 611, 670, 692–693, 695, 695n9, 713, 756,  
 763–764n145, 764, 766, 806–807, 821
- Word group and differences between  
 verbs, nouns, adjectives 40–42, 332,  
 360–364, 546, 673, 694, 754–755  
*See also Apistia; Faith; Fides; Pistis*  
*Christou, Translation*
- Pistis Christou* 7, 41n42, 45n154, 175, 181,  
 238, 239, 245–246, 249, 264, 271, 272,  
 407, 489, 490–496, 501–566 (esp.  
 561–566), 575, 670n292, 687, 755n, 759,  
 808n1, 818, 826
- See also* Ambiguity of  
 language—Genitive case and  
 Philosophy in antiquity
- As a practice or art 508–516
- Convergence with religion. *See* Religion in  
 Antiquity—Convergence with  
 philosophy

- Philosophy in antiquity (*cont.*)
- Dogmatism within philosophical movements 352–353, 424–425, 429–436, 438
  - Popular philosophy 37–39
  - Relationships between and adherence to multiple schools 432, 442
  - Sophists, philosophers and persuasion. *See* Sophists and anti-sophistic polemic
- Platonic dualism and idealism 303–304, 309–320, 747n114, 771. *See also* Faith—Sense-perception and
- Posidonius 43, 81n88, 86, 217, 431, 236, 480n274, 740
- Porphyry 44, 90, 133, 215–216, 260, 268, 274, 295, 387–393, 405, 515–516
- Power. *See* *Dynamis, potestas, vis* (power)
- Pythagoras, Pythagoreans, and Neopythagoreanism 109–110, 132, 230–232, 238, 265, 266, 270, 328, 463, 478n266, 517
- Reason and faith dichotomy. *See* Faith—As opposed to reason, knowledge, wisdom
- Regulus 506, 602–605, 616, 652, 685
- Religion in antiquity
- Aniconic religion and criticism of images 81–83, 87, 116
  - Convergence with philosophy 34–36, 61–67, 302, 700, 747, 749, 798–799
  - Polis religion 63–64, 688, 703–704
  - Polytheism, monotheism, and henotheism 72, 118, 698–705, 725, 731, 738n91, 768–769, 779–791, 821
  - The concept and study of 20, 56–80
  - See also* *Theologia tripartita*, Christianity / Early Christ movement
- Sacrifice 88–91, 104–106, 126–140, 144–148, 203, 596, 717, 788–791, 811
- Sages and the ideal of the wise 97, 132, 216, 220, 233, 235, 237n225, 332, 338, 399, 411, 416, 428, 443–452, 454, 457, 467, 474, 482, 484n295, 486, 510, 529–530, 560, 713, 725, 778–779, 816
- Saturn (Cronus) 195–196, 201–207, 211–212, 241, 540
- Scaevola (Quintus Mucius) 75n69, 76, 80–86, 87n110, 811
- Semantic domains
- As a method or approach 11–15, 20, 24, 44–47, 456n, 488, 576, 628–629, 663–664, 668, 687, 760, 767, 792n, 805, 808, 811
  - Cultural frames and 8n24, 11, 13–14, 16, 24, 39, 42, 146, 271, 285, 385n305, 469, 471, 496, 537, 576, 585, 590, 671, 771, 808
  - Discourse analysis and 26–27, 811. *See also* Discourse analysis
  - Overlap and passages partaking in more than one 408, 410, 565, 676, 720, 759–760
  - See also* Co-occurrence of words (collocation)
- Septuagint 71n9, 8, 17–18, 20–21, 122n221, 223, 123n225, 128, 129, 144–145, 173, 187n62, 219n163, 242n232, 244, 261, 266, 270, 272, 282, 329, 332, 336, 354, 361n232, 233, 386n305, 393, 402, 559n236, 560n242, 563n250, 572, 592, 665n277, 668, 677–678, 681, 686, 688n339, 706, 711, 717–724, 722n59, 723n60, 758, 765, 771n170, 775, 782n205, 798n265, 815
- Slavery 561, 578, 583, 622–624, 638, 650, 706–707, 710, 755, 778, 789, 818, 821
- Socrates 89n121, 111n186, 152–153, 159, 209–210, 214, 216, 297, 308, 310, 315–316, 323, 367n247, 422–423, 426, 435, 510, 513, 514, 517, 701, 732–736, 770
- Sophists and anti-sophistic polemic 209, 297, 301, 316, 411–416, 421–428, 461–467, 471, 486, 519, 735, 770, 794
- Textual variants and textual criticism 140n283, 198, 266, 322n109, 360n231, 361n234, 378n285, 459, 466n235, 468n240, 560n241, 562n246, 646n229, 674, 687n336, 718, 730n78, 758n133, 759n, 773n174
- Theologia tripartita* 55–56, 58–60, 64, 74–80, 80–114, 118, 122, 124–125, 141, 148, 169, 241, 700, 804, 811–812

- Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. *See* Database searches (TLG, LLT)
- Torah. *See* Law—Mosaic Law
- Theophrastus 90–91, 129n243, 133, 305n54, 463n227
- Transcendence. *See* Immanence versus transcendence of the divine
- Translation
- Translatability of Hebrew into Greek 402
  - Discussion of bible translations and versions 115, 164, 251n253, 269, 382, 456, 475, 483n293, 532, 537n177, 541, 541n192, 545n, 550n209, 666n279, 670, 673, 678, 682n328, 685, 720, 735, 753, 753n126, 762, 763n144, 773, 776–777, 781, 782n205
  - Discussion of translations of
    - Graeco-Roman texts 98n146, 104n172, 188n65, 200n110, 441n158, 598n82, 605n105, 630–631, 637n204, 646n228, 656n250, 740n97, 743n108, 745n110
  - Word play and 157n331, 251n253, 743n108, 679
- See also* Wordplay
- See also* Lexicons and (theological) dictionaries
- Unbelief, unbelievers. *See* *Apistia*; *Pisteuontes, pistoi, apistoi*. *See also* Atheism
- Universalism and universal law. *See* Law—Universal and natural law. *See also* Faith—Inclusive, bridging, transethnic quality of
- Varro 59, 60, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80–86, 92, 100, 102, 104, 107, 109, 111, 116, 118, 121, 145–146, 241
- Virtue(s)
- Fruit and 536
  - Gods as personified 198–201
  - See also* Faith—As a moral virtue and mimetic attitude
- Wordplay 157, 160, 167, 211, 257, 298, 314, 354, 469, 648n233, 679, 743n108
- Translation and. *See* Translation—Wordplay

The notion of faith experienced a remarkable surge in popularity among early Christians, with Paul as its pioneer. Yet what was the wider cultural significance of the *pistis* word group? This comprehensive work contextualizes Paul's faith language within Graeco-Roman cultural discourses, highlighting its semantic multifariousness and philosophical potential. Based on an innovative combination of cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, it explores 'faith' within social, political, religious, ethical, and cognitive contexts. While challenging modern individualist and irrational conceptualizations, this book shows how Paul uses *pistis* to creatively configure philosophical narratives of his age and propose Christ as its ultimate embodiment.

Suzan Sierksma-Agteres, Ph.D. (2023, University of Groningen) is Assistant Professor of New Testament at the Protestant Theological University in the Netherlands. Combining expertise in classics and theology, she focuses on the interactions between early Christian thought and ancient philosophical traditions.

ISBN: 978-90-04-54908-1



9 789004 549081

Ancient Philosophy & Religion, 12

ISSN 2542-3576

[brill.com/aphr](http://brill.com/aphr)