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Rom 12:6–8: The Seven Χαρίσματα and their Cultic Antecedents

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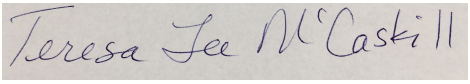
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where it states otherwise by reference of acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.



ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the transition gentile Christ-followers faced as they emerged as monotheistic worshipers in first-century Rome. Abandoning myriad cultic practices, this group must now find appropriate activities through which they may engage with God, their own community, and others. Paul's Roman epistle affirms their new commitment, and also re-orients their formerly polytheistic perspectives, arguably in recognition of their uniquely gentile dilemma. I contend that Paul accordingly presents the seven gifts that appear in Rom 12:6–8 as functional replacements for previous cultic practices. As examples of the "reasonable worship" that Paul advocates in Rom 12:1–2, the χαρίσματα that appear in Rom 12:6–8 are ideas that were already known to Roman gentiles. Paul thus re-purposes familiar concepts to help this burgeoning group progress in their new Christ-following belief system.

I begin by situating the χαρίσματα within the purview of modern scholarship. Here I find a pronounced lack of consensus about how the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8, which have sometimes been viewed under the umbrella term “spiritual gifts,” should be defined and understood. The lack of textual detail within these verses has presented scholars with real challenges in understanding Rom 12:6–8. This is because Paul offers little description as to these gifts, nor does he tell us much about how they ought to be practiced. Commentators state their opinions about Paul's purposes in writing his letter, but few attempt to show how the χαρίσματα support his agenda. Perhaps because of Paul's own Jewish heritage and debate over the ethnic make-up of his addressees, scholars have paid attention to the Jewish background of the χαρίσματα. However, the Greco-Roman context within which Paul's gentile auditors lived has largely been ignored. It is this gentile audience and context that are the focus of my thesis.

After identifying gaps in the scholarship as concerns the seven χαρίσματα, I turn to the verses that precede Paul's list, especially Rom 12:1–2. I argue that these verses create a backdrop from which the χαρίσματα may emerge and ultimately be assessed. This backdrop establishes the primacy of worship for Paul's audience as a means for them to live out a life that reflects their devotion to God. The χαρίσματα serve as practical examples of how they may do this.

I then look at various aspects of divine-human interaction from the standpoint of the first-century milieu within which Paul's Roman addressees lived. Here I draw upon primary literary and material evidence to sketch a portrait of the activities and viewpoints commonly associated with traditional gentile ritual and cult. I conclude this chapter by hypothesizing that all seven of the χαρίσματα Paul lists in Rom 12:6–8 have cultic antecedents that would have been familiar to his Roman audience. More specifically, I argue that in his letter, Paul is addressing a community with a polytheistic past that is transitioning into a world that he perceives to be filled with apocalyptic exigencies. This will permit me to examine, in the seven chapters that follow, the purposes and potential applications for the seven χαρίσματα in light of their arguably pagan cultic roots.

Beginning with a chapter on προφητεία, and continuing on to chapters on διακονία, ὁ διδάσκων, ὁ παρακαλῶν, ὁ μεταδιδοὺς, ὁ προϊστάμενος, and ὁ ἐλεῶν, I test my hypothesis by investigating each of these words within literary and material evidence from the ancient world. I take particular aim at instances where these seven words are used in contexts that speak to divine-human relations. Each chapter is concluded with my own translation of the gift under consideration based upon my

analysis of relevant Greco-Roman sources.

I then compile the data that I have gathered as to the cultic antecedents of the seven χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 and draw several conclusions. I note how the seven χαρίσματα each represent a portal into some of the various forms of divine-human interaction that existed in first-century Rome. To a gentile recipient of Paul's letter, the seven χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 can be shown to relate to the traditional state cult, as well as to popular gods such as Apollo, Hermes, and Dionysus. There are also identifiable connections with household gods and the imperial cult. I argue that in presenting familiar concepts in the form of gifts from God, Paul has proposed a construct that fills the ceremonial vacuum that this audience may have felt in transitioning from their former cultic practices.

In this regard, the χαρίσματα are not only practices that reflect worship, they are also activities that can further Paul's missional purpose. With an eye to a forthcoming world where time is of the essence because of Christ's imminent return, and in which the gospel must therefore be quickly spread, this urgency creates the resonant plane against which Paul’s message can project.

LAY SUMMARY

My thesis, which is entitled "Rom 12:6–8: The Seven *Charismata* and Their Cultic Antecedents," focuses on the Roman gentiles who received Paul's famous letter. This group had left behind myriad polytheistic practices and were in need of sanctioned activities of worship for use in their new belief system as Christ-followers. I investigate the possible extent to which these individuals could have already known about concepts such as prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, and mercy via their previous experiences as polytheistic worshipers in Rome. Since Paul puts the seven gifts in Rom 12:6–8 in a context of worship in Rom 12:1–2, I examine the seven Greek words that Paul uses to describe these gifts. I found that each word in Paul's list had previously appeared in reference to relations between humans and the divine in both ancient artifacts and literature. In Paul's hands, however, these qualities are re-oriented as gifts from the one God that Paul's formally pagan audience had begun to worship, and they are to be exercised with His purposes in mind. I maintained that Paul may have been seeking to help this burgeoning group of Christ-followers as they transitioned out of paganism into a new belief system by presenting them with seven gifts that they could use as acts of worship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'm told that the first vocal solo that I ever performed was "Chances Are," an old standard that Johnny Mathis recorded decades ago. I was two years old when I did this, and I was supported by a console stereo unit that my parents had in their living room. Folks told me back then that I had a marvelous singing voice. Comments like this filled my schooldays and spurred me to pursue a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance degree at Indiana University following high school. After being awarded my degree, I embarked upon a career as a professional singer and performed around the world at various theme parks, dinner theaters, and on cruise ships. My voice opened doors for me, and I tried to capitalize on every opportunity.

I eventually began singing at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. When my dear college friend, Tim Tracey, took a position at a church in Orlando and offered me an opportunity to use my voice at a full-time position in the worship department there, I jumped at the chance. I spent over 18 years working at Northland, A Church Distributed, where I sang every type of music imaginable and collaborated with stellar musicians and artists.

I met my husband of 11 years in 2006 at a tea room in Orlando. Paul was the one singing this time, and I was a happy audience member. I never dreamed that this man would help me find a new voice, the voice that you hear in this thesis. I always knew that my vocal abilities would wear out eventually. An interest in spiritual gifts in the church accompanied by the desire to mentor young persons began to make me want to seek something new. When I told my friends Laurie Groves, Michelle Lindahl, Susan Eissele, Sharon Diacheysn, Lisa Hunter, and Kathleen Pulver that I was considering pursuing a PhD in Edinburgh, they were surprised but supportive. I received more encouragement from other beloved coworkers at Northland such as Tim and Eleanor Tracey, Vernon and Connie Rainwater, Joel and Becky Hunter, Pete Geiger, Stephen and Leanna Thomas, Scotty Alderman, and Dale Burket. I owe so much to each of these friends who have sustained me in their prayers, emails, and other communications. Northland also contributed financially to my work at New College, and I will always be grateful for this generosity.

Paul and I never dreamed that we would make so many wonderful new friends in Edinburgh. A few days after our arrival here, we found ourselves at St. Paul's and St. George's Church--Ps and Gs to the congregants there. The welcome we received from Vanessa and Cameron Conant, Dave Richards, and especially the practical help and love that was given to us from Rosie and Paul Benham was both warm and real.

The community of New College also proved to be a rich and stimulating one for me. Seth Ehorn welcomed me, helped me find a desk in the Wesley study room, and showed me the ropes. I also owe gratitude to Daniel Jackson, with whom I spoke about my project for endless hours, and to his lovely wife, Rebecca. Others with whom I have had excellent "kitchen conversations" at New College (as well as tea and scones at other venues) include Sydney Tooth, Sarah Agnew, Elizabeth Corsar, Joanna Leidenhag, Sarah Lane Ritchie, and Nomi Pritz-Bennet. These are all amazing wo-

men whom I admire and greet on the threshold of what I am certain will be promising careers.

I want to deeply thank my supervisor, Dr Alison Jack, who has sustained an interest throughout a project that has had its share of twists and turns. I have trusted her sharp intellect and tried to learn from her wealth of experience at every chance. I am also grateful to my secondary supervisor, Dr Matt Novenson, who generously provided feedback and support throughout my years in New College.

No one sacrificed more on my behalf than my dear, dear parents, David and Betty Lee. Upon arriving in Florida to begin their retirement to be close to Paul and me, we promptly announced that we were moving to Edinburgh for three years. Three years eventually turned into five years. The support of my parents, however, did not flag one bit throughout this time. Words cannot express how grateful Paul and I are for their emotional, spiritual, and financial help. They never once complained about managing the loose ends that remained from our lives in Florida after we moved to Scotland, nor did they flinch from taking care of our beloved papillon, Dexter. Paul and I look forward to the day when we will be with mom and dad for many years to come. We love them so very much.

I now return to Paul, the man who sacrificed everything to help me complete this mission. He was willing to move himself halfway around the world, spend countless solitary hours remotely pursuing his law practice, and fly back and forth to Florida for trials and hearings. He made me laugh, cooked me dinner, and gave me love through all the ups and downs of this difficult process. If not for Paul, I would not have been able to fulfill the dream of writing this thesis. He believed that I could cultivate a voice suitable for academia and supported me in countless ways as I strived to achieve this ambition. Honey, I love and thank you. I dedicate this thesis, this aria, to you.

Ἐξηρεύξατο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν,
λέγω ἐγὼ τὰ ἔργα μου τῷ βασιλεῖ,
ἡ γλῶσσά μου κάλαμος γραμματέως ὀξυγράφου.

My heart overflows with a goodly theme;
I address my verses to the King,
My tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe (Psalm 44 (45) LXX).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Romans 12:6–8

6 ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν
τῆς πίστεως, 7 εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, 8 εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ
παρακλήσει· ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι, ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ, ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἱλαρότητι.

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. (Rom 12:6–8 NRSV)

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. (Rom 12:6–8 ESV)

. . . having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. If your gift is prophecy, then prophesy in proportion to your faith; 7 if your gift is service, use it to serve; if you are a teacher, then teach; 8 if you have the gift of encouragement, then use it to encourage; if you are able to give, give generously; if your gift is leadership, lead with zeal; if it is showing mercy, then do it with cheerfulness. (Rom 12:6–8 Mounce NT)

And we have different gifts according to the grace given to us. If the gift is prophecy, that individual must use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is service, he must serve; if it is teaching, he must teach; 8 if it is exhortation, he must exhort; if it is contributing, he must do so with sincerity; if it is leadership, he must do so with diligence; if it is showing mercy, he must do so with cheerfulness. (Rom 12:6–8 NET Bible)

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (Rom 12:6–8 NIV)

The dearth of detail that Paul gives us about the seven χαρίσματα he lists in Rom 12:6–8 challenges those who seek to understand them.[1] This textual sparseness has affected the scholarship on this passage in several significant ways. The first is an inclination on the part of writers to refer to texts extrinsic to Rom 12:6–8, such as 1 Cor 12–14. Scholars have also applied anachronistic terms that are more suitable for the organizational progression of the early Jesus-groups,[2] and have offered the contemporary term, "spiritual gifts," under which the Pauline texts where he discusses the χαρίσματα are treated.[3] Another aspect that results from Paul's limited textual description is that meaningful discussions of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 within their own historical context have been given short shrift. Yet the words that Paul does use in Rom 12:6–8 carry resonances from the historical past from which they emanated, and these resonances would have been present when they were received by Paul's Roman audience.

I maintain that the experiences of the intended audience of Paul's letter to Rome are important for understanding his teaching. I join others, such as Stanley Stowers, who have contended that there was a significant group of gentiles within the Roman gatherings.[4] Paul outlines the target audience for his letter in Rom 1:5, 11:13, and 15:16 using τὰ ἔθνη.[5] This term means "the nations," and is also commonly translated as "gentiles." Paul's use of τὰ ἔθνη signals his acknowledgment of the ethnic divide between the Jewish people who belong to the nation of Israel and non-Jews who come from all other nations. Both groups are meant to worship Israel's God.[6] Paul has discovered

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[1] The seven χαρίσματα are tersely condensed into three verses in Romans without much elaboration from Paul.

[2] Examples of this trend wherein some of the χαρίσματα are described in terms of "church offices" (e.g., prophecy becomes "preaching" and διακονία becomes "deacon") appear throughout the thesis as I examine what the commentators have to say about each χάρισμα.

[3] For a refutation of the appropriateness of the term "spiritual gift," see Hughson T. Ong, "Is 'Spiritual Gift(s)' A Linguistically Fallacious Term? A Lexical Study of Χάρισμα, Πνευματικός, and Πνεῦμα," *The Expository Times* 125, no. 12 (2014), 583-92.

[4] See Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); E. P. Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 617-18. Peter Oakes states that Paul "appears to have a broad range of gentiles in mind" and that he "firmly places the letter and its addressees in the context of his mission to the gentiles as a whole." Peter Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii* (SPCK: Ebook ISBN: 9780281059317, 2009), 78. See also A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

[5] For Das, Paul's intended audience, or "encoded reader," is the "audience as constructed from the letter itself." A. Andrew Das, "'Praise the Lord, All You Gentiles': The Encoded Audience of Romans 15.7-13," *Journal for the study of the New Testament* 34, no. 1 (2011), 91, n. 3.

[6] For a discussion of the Jewish god's "claims to cross-ethnic supremacy," see Paula Fredriksen, "How Jewish is God?:

that the gospel of Jesus Christ, which he notes was promised in the holy scriptures (Rom 1:3), is to be shared with gentiles. This group is of interest to Paul and should thus be important to scholars who seek to understand Paul's letter to this group. Matthew Theissen states that "at virtually every point modern readers need to interpret Paul's letters in light of this intended gentile audience."[7] It is, moreover, "historically more accurate to read [Paul's] letters as addressing gentiles," in light of his "own explicit claims that he is the apostle to the gentiles."[8] Even though I have purposely limited the scope of my investigation to Greco-Roman resources and influences on Paul's Roman letter, I do not maintain that there were no Jewish persons in Paul's audience in Rome.[9] Paul greets many Jewish friends throughout Rom 16:3–16 with Prisca and Aquila at the top of his list of co-workers. Since Paul's mission was focused upon gentiles, then we may consider those who work with Paul as colleagues who have also joined him in his mission. This Jewish group may thus serve to "reinforce the gentile encoded audience."[10] Paul's current thinking takes on importance for both

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Divine Ethnicity in Paul's Theology," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137, no. 1 (2018), 193-212. In this thesis, I will refer to divine beings worshiped by non-Jews as "gods," and the singular divine being worshiped by Jews and Christ-followers as "God."

[7] Matthew Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 11.

[8] Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem*, 11. I find Paul's relationship with his own Jewish heritage to be intact even as he lives out his calling to gentiles. His teaching should therefore not be interpreted as "anti-Jewish." See Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem*, 8. This view extends into the discussion about the plausibility of identifying the interlocutor of Rom 2 in terms of a "judaizing gentile" instead of the more traditional view that hears anti-Jewish tones in this voice. On this issue, see the essays in Rafael Rodriguez and Matthew Thiessen, eds. *The So-Called Jew in Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016). Paul's discussion of the "weak" and "strong" in Rom 15:7–13 has been taken as proof for a mixed group of Jewish and gentile auditors. See Richard Hays' criticism of Stanley Stowers' view that the expected audience of Paul's letter to Rome is all-gentile in Richard B. Hays, "'The Gospel is the Power of God for Salvation to Gentiles Only'? A Critique of Stanley Stowers' *A Rereading of Romans*'," *CRBR* 9 (1996), 37. Das has addresses the so-called "Achilles heel" of 15:1–6, and argues that gentiles could fit into both categories as they wrestled with taking on Jewish law-keeping. See Das, "'Praise the Lord, All You Gentiles': The Encoded Audience of Romans 15.7-13." For a full argument in favor of identifying Paul's intended audience as gentile, see Runar M. Thorsteinsson, Matthew Thiessen, and Rafael Rodríguez, "Paul's Interlocutor in Romans: The Problem of Identification," in *The So-Called Jew in Paul's Letter to the Romans*, ed. Rafael Rodríguez and Matthew Thiessen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 13-17.

[9] For this thesis, I focus on the Greco-Roman culture of Paul's gentile audience, a group that I imagine would have been more familiar with religious proceedings as practiced and discussed in Greco-Roman society rather than Jewish cult. On the other hand, some of Paul's addressees may well have been "relatively familiar with–and attracted to–Jewish customs." See Thorsteinsson, Thiessen, and Rodríguez, "Paul's Interlocutor in Romans: The Problem of Identification," 14.

[10] Das, "Gentiles," 105, n. 52.

his Jewish and gentile auditors as he elaborates upon the role of Israel and the nations throughout Rom 9–11. In these chapters, Paul affirms the importance of Jewish Christ-followers who support gentiles in light of what Paul understands to be the role of τὰ ἔθνη in the salvation of Israel. At the same time, Paul reminds gentile Christ-followers to respect the Jewish heritage of their salvation.

Scholars have produced a wealth of scholarship that may be taken from Paul's association with Second-Temple Judaism,[11] but have averred taking seriously the background gentiles brought with them in terms of divine-human relations.[12] From the time of Justin Martyr's *Apologia*, writers have considered ancient Greco-Roman encounters with gods other than the Christian God merely as a foil for the Christian faith.[13] Christianity is thus defended against so-called "pagan religions" and it is here that the discussion often halts. By avoiding the background of Paul's gentile audience, however, we miss a hermeneutical key to more deeply understand Paul's teaching. This is no less true for the discussion about the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8.

Hence this thesis. I approach the χαρίσματα through a consideration of Greco-Roman data that pertains to divine-human relations as they appear in the ancient world in which Paul's audience lived. The rationale behind this decision is two-fold. The first is that Paul has situated the χαρίσματα within a context of worship that he establishes in Rom 12:1. As his gentile audience thinks about what it might mean to present their bodies as sacrifices to God in worship, I propose that Paul provides seven χαρίσματα that are examples of activities he sanctions for them that might carry out his exhortation. The second reason underlying my method is also grounded in the general tone of worship that Paul has sounded in Rom 12:1, and it is with this in mind that the pagan past of Paul's Roman audience becomes especially important.

In this thesis, I will employ the words gentile as well as *pagan* to describe the people Paul includes in his term ἔθνη in his letter. Mary Beard and her co-authors note that the word "pagan" is "a

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[11] For a recent commentary that fully explores the influence of Judaism on Paul and his letter to Rome, see Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

[12] I first encountered the helpful term "divine-human relations" in Teresa Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[13] For a more contemporary example of a scholar who favorably contrasts early Christianity with its pagan counterpart, see Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 297-300. For a different approach, see Adolf Deissmann and Lionel R. M. Strachan, *Light From the Ancient East or the New Testament Illustrated By Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2003).

specifically Christian way of describing its enemy. . . ."[14] Paula Fredricksen, however, finds the term useful, since the word reminds us that those who were "non-Jews" were "intrinsically in relationship with their gods."[15] Moreover, as Martin Goodman has written, "[i]n the first centuries AD pagans themselves had no need of a term to describe the religious beliefs they had in common. . . ."[16] The term may still be useful as long as it is not used in a pejorative sense. In the end, Beard, et al, acquiesce to using the term "pagan" or "paganism" even as they acknowledge that it is a "loaded term."[17] I use it without judgment to capture the myriad experiences of polytheistic worship that were available for persons who were not born Jewish in the ancient world. It seems then that "paganism" and "gentile" are terms that we must accept, albeit with reservation.

I also find it unavoidable to occasionally refer to divine-human relations with the word, "religion." In so doing, I acknowledge the conclusions of Jonathan Z. Smith, who has asserted that "[r]eligion is not a native term" but is a term "created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define."[18] I adopt Brent Nongbri's definition of "religion" as "things involving the gods or other superhuman beings and the technologies for interacting with such beings."[19] I thus deploy the word religion in a non-essentialist way for the "purposes of analysis" to treat the myriad expressions that refer to divine-human relations in first-century Rome.[20] Thomas Blanton concurs that we may use the term religion in relationship with the writings of Paul:

> Although the category of 'religion' may well have been foreign to Paul–there is no exact equivalent in the Koine Greek in which he wrote and spoke–nevertheless it is of utility to the contemporary

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[14] Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 1: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), ix, n. 2.

[15] Paula Fredriksen, "Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look At Galatians 1 and 2," *The Journal of Theological Studies, New Series* Vol 42, No. 2 (1991), 804, n. 7.

[16] Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 287.

[17] Beard, et al, xi.

[18] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 281. For more discussion on the responsible use of "religion," see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[19] Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of A Modern Concept* (London: Yale University Press, 2013), 157.

[20] Ibid., 155. For a differing viewpoint, see Carlin A. Barton and Daniel Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (Fordham University Press, 2016). These authors would jettison "religion" as a category within which to consider divine-human relations in ancient history.

> observer, as the classification invites comparisons and contrasts with other individuals and groups whose discourses and practices make significant reference to culturally postulated divine beings.[21]

As for Paul's letter to the Romans, Hans Dieter Betz reminds us that "a specific term designating 'religion' is not found" in the text, but that "the Greek language had a variety of terms pointing to different aspects of religion, [with] none of them covering all."[22] Betz maintains that "[t]his situation should not, however, be misconstrued as evidence that the Greeks had no concept of religion."[23] I use the word religion as merely another way to talk about divine-human relations in the ancient world.

There is no question that past religious experiences held currency for Paul's audience in Rome, an audience that was transitioning away from former cultic activities that were attached to the various stages of their everyday lives.[24] Paying attention to this background is not only historically relevant, it may also be scholarly profitable. Cultic activity occurred in both public and private places and was performed by specialists and laypersons. The publicly-financed cult [*sacra publica*] had its own scared sites and temples where a god or goddess (or emperor) could be worshiped.[25] Public spaces such as the Pantheon were places of veneration where statues of the gods received cult. Edmund Thomas states that "[n]owhere else in Rome had so many gods as the Pantheon, so it was the obvious place of resort for seeking divine sanction."[26] Numerous gods also existed "in the forms of statues, statuettes, images, or mere names . . ." in places that were not as prominent, perhaps located outside of public ritual.[27] These were places people could go to address deities during

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[21] Thomas R. Blanton IV, *A Spiritual Economy: Gift Exchange in the Letters of Paul of Tarsus* (*Synkrisis*) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 11.

[22] Hans Dieter Betz, "Christianity as Religion: Paul's Attempt At Definition in Romans," *The Journal of Religion* 71, No. 3 (1991), 218-19.

[23] Betz, 219.

[24] The English word "cult" is from the Latin *cultus* and means "religious worship." See Edmund Thomas, "The Cult Statues of the Pantheon," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 107 (2017), 204. Warrior states that the noun *cultus* is "connected with the verb *colere*, which has a variety of meanings: to till, cultivate, tend, care for, honor, revere, and thus to worship." Valerie M. Warrior, *Roman Religion* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

[25] Jörg Rüpke, "Roman Religion - Religions of Rome," in *A Companion to Roman Religion* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 4.

[26] Thomas, "The Cult Statues," 204-5.

[27] Rüpke, "Roman Religion," 4. Rüpke notes that there were also "stories about these gods, practices to venerate them, molds to multiply them, knowledge about how to build temples for them, even religious specialists, priests, accom-

a personal crisis.[28] Cultic performances could be enacted by priests in the various temples and also during circus processions where the gods were publicly presented. Kaufmann-Heinimann states that religion "was present everywhere in the Roman house" as appropriate rituals pertaining to divine-human relations were performed by family members.[29] This brief survey is only a taste of the myriad practices and experiences pertaining to divine-human relations that were on offer to any Roman inhabitant, no less so for Paul's gentile addressees.

At the same time, individuals in Paul's audience would have understandably been in doubt about what practices would have been appropriate for them in their new belief system as Christ-followers. I maintain that the seven χαρίσματα may be viewed as replacements for the former pagan cultic practices of this group, and I test this theory over the course of seven chapters, each of which examines a particular χάρισμα in light of its potentially cultic antecedents. These chapters draw together the data I have collected and ask how each of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 might have been received by Paul's gentile audience. I find that in order to better grasp the χαρίσματα from the perspective of Paul's gentile addressees, the evidence that I gather from the ancient sources may sometimes result in an expanded glossary of terms, as well as an adjustment in perspective that takes the first-century context into account. Each chapter concludes with a proposed translation of the specific χάρισμα under consideration. Worship is also tied to a theme that I develop throughout this thesis, which is that the seven χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8 may be means to further the mission of spreading the gospel to the gentiles. These χαρίσματα are expressions of a life devoted to God.

1. THE GREEK TEXT OF ROM 12:6–8

Although the sigla of Nestle-Aland's *Novum Testamentum Graece* (NA) point to minor variants in the extant texts, none of these are essential to its meaning.[30] The analysis regarding the primary

panied them or were invented on the spot" (ibid).

[28] Rüpke, "Roman Religion," 4.

[29] Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann, "Religion in the House," in *Roman Religion – Religions of Rome*, ed. Jörg Rüpke (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 188.

[30] All Greek texts are provided by *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013).

text of this thesis, Rom 12:6–8, reflects the primacy of P^{46} (c. 200). Variants present in the papyri and manuscripts for the text of Rom 12:6–8 do not evidence the need to contradict the conclusions drawn by Nestle-Aland. The working Greek text for this thesis is as follows:

> 6 ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, 7 εἴτε διακονίαν[31] ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων[32] ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, εἴτε[33] 8 ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει· ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι, ὁ προϊστάμενος[34] ἐν σπουδῇ, ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἱλαρότητι.

I present my own translation of each of the χαρίσματα at the conclusion of their respective chapters and will present my full translation in my conclusion.[35]

Even though Paul's letter to the Romans is my primary text, I will, in this thesis, also consult the so-called undisputed letters of Paul. These are commonly listed as Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon. I thus determine from the outset that the account of Paul's activities in the Acts of the Apostles, the letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, as well as the Pastoral Epistles contain further developments of the themes under consideration and fall outside of the parameters I set forth now.

2. THE ΧΑΡΊΣΜΑΤΑ OF ROM 12:6–8 IN SCHOLARSHIP

Little attention has been paid to the grouping of χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 on their own apart from the related material in 1 Cor 12–14. Investigating such related material has its advantages, especially since similar subject matter is being discussed and elaborated upon by the same author. The text of 1 Corinthians 12–14 is often called upon to make sense of and elaborate upon Paul's brief comments in Rom 12:6–8. Both passages begin with similar themes of worship (Rom 12:1–2ff

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[31] The apparatus of NA[28] shows that in $\aleph^2$ 1241, 1506, the participial form, ὁ διακονων is substituted for the accusative noun form, διακονίαν. Jewett and Cranfield think that this is perhaps an attempt to harmonize with the participial form of the gifts that follow (e.g., ὁ διδάσκων). See Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 736; C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1977), 621.

[32] Alternatively, in A, διδασκαλιαν replaces ὁ διδάσκων. Jewett acknowledges this alternative reading and suggests that it accomodates the preceding noun forms διακονίαν and προφητείαν. See Jewett, *Romans*, 736.

[33] P^{46vid}, D✱, F, G latt, all omit εἴτε, perhaps in an attempt to assimilate this phrase with the verses that follow.

[34] P^{318} has an alternate spelling for προϊστάμενος, which is προιστανομενος. Jewett finds this to be a reduplication and the meaning is unchanged. See Jewett, *Romans*, 736.

[35] All Bible translations in this thesis are my own unless otherwise noted. English translations of ancient texts are taken from the Perseus Libary and the Loeb Library.

and 1 Cor 12:1–3ff) and proceed to teach about gifting for the body of Christ:

> Ὑμεῖς δέ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους [Now you are the body of Christ and individually members in it] (1 Cor 12:27)
>
> καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν, τὰ δὲ μέλη πάντα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πρᾶξιν, 5 οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἓν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ καθ᾽ εἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη [For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same use, so the many are one body in Christ (individually, we are members one of another)] (Rom 12:5)

Prophecy is listed in Rom 12:6 as well as in 1 Cor 12:10, 28, 29.[36] Teaching appears in both Rom 12:7 and 1 Cor 12:28. Διακονία is one of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6 that is perhaps offered as a category-type in 1 Cor 12:5.

While the teaching in Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12 might be thematically similar, the material that is focused on the gifts is not identical. There is an absence of what some call "miraculous gifts" such as glossolalia, miracles, and healings in Romans. Moreover, while πνεῦμα is a prominent part of the discussion throughout 1 Cor 12–14, it is not mentioned in association with any of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. Paul also makes it clear in 1 Cor 5:9 and again in 2 Cor 3:2, 7:8, and 10:11 that his letters to Corinth represent only one side of a conversation. It follows that his teaching on gifting is tailored to the questions that the Corinthians have perhaps written to him about this subject. While the material in 1 Cor 12–14 is certainly a sensible co-text for Rom 12:6–8, I submit that the differences have not seriously been taken into account. The unique settings of these letters, the specific choices as to terminology that each contains, and the geographical and cultural variances that distinguish them contextually naturally affect authorial content and bear upon how addressees perceive instruction. This conclusion applies even when the same issues are under discussion. I maintain that both of the letters where Paul speaks of the so-called "gifting" of the early Christ-following communities deserve an historical investigation into their own respective cultural contexts before they are synthesized into a theological project. We must take care when surveying a single topic throughout the Pauline corpus. His letters do not share the same audience, situation, or cultural context. Parallel to this subject is the question of whether Paul's thought on the χαρίσματα developed over time, a possibility that goes unaddressed if we simply merge the two

[36] Prophecy and its practice within the Corinthian worship gatherings is also discussed by Paul throughout 1 Corinthians 13 and 14.

passages.

I have found only a few scholarly treatments devoted to the list of χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8.[37] Andrei B. du Toit offers a short discussion of Rom 12:6–8 that is included within a larger article about "translation headaches" in Paul's Roman missive.[38] Focusing especially upon the second, third, and fourth gifts in Rom 12:7–8, which he determines suffer from a translation that "does not make much sense" in the NIV translation of the Bible,[39] Du Toit suggests that the χαρίσματα in vv. 6–8 should be governed by what he believes is Paul's main argument in v. 3. In Rom 12:3, Du Toit finds a warning against "self-conceit" that he then carries into his treatment of the three χαρίσματα in vv. 7–8.[40] Du Toit's conclusions about these verses align with some of the commentators I survey in this thesis, especially as to their acceptance of an admonitory force that extends into the list of gifts. I am unpersuaded, however, that du Toit's translation is an improvement over the one he has criticized and I later propose an alternative reading of Rom 12:3 that has Paul discussing the limitations and boundaries that are inherent for specific *callings*. I therefore discuss the χαρίσματα in light of this perspective. I also offer herein that the call to worship in Rom 12:1 is the main concern of the passage in which the χαρίσματα appear, and my translation of Rom 12:6–8 takes in the themes of worship, mission, and calling.

William Michael Victor discusses three gifts that appear in Rom 12:8 and attempts to show how the concepts of "sharing, leading, and caring" would have been "performed within the voluntary association and the synagogue."[41] Victor asserts that the first four gifts in Rom 12:6–7 are concerned with matters related to corporate worship, but that the final three gifts are concerned with "matters outside of corporate worship," specifically, "how the members of the church related to each

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[37] There are a few articles and monographs that treat specific χαρίσματα within the list in Rom 12:6–8. I will engage with scholarship that pertains to each particular χαρίσματα in the seven chapters devoted to them.

[38] Andrie B. du Toit, "Some More Translation Headaches in Romans," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31, no. 1 (2010), 4.

[39] Du Toit quotes the NIV (1984) translation of Rom 12:7–8 as "If it is serving, let him serve. If it is teaching, let him teach. If it is encouraging, let him encourage," (ibid.).

[40] Du Toit offers: "If it is serving, let us concentrate on it/let us fully apply ourselves to it. If it is teaching, let us concentrate on that/let us fully apply ourselves to it. If it is encouraging, let us concentrate on that/let us fully apply ourselves to it," (ibid.).

[41] William Michael Victor, "Giving, Leading, Caring: A Socio-Exegetical Examination of Romans 12:8," diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 1.

other in the context of the community as a whole."[42] He argues that the gifts of "sharing, leading, and caring" in particular would have been familiar to Paul's audience "because Paul was borrowing ideas from the institutions in which the recipients would have been previously involved."[43] I concur that there is value in considering the experiences of Paul's addressees, but as I will show, these three gifts are not solely linked by their efficacy for service. Victor's goals differ from mine in that he hopes to shed light on how Paul used institutions such as the voluntary associations and the synagogue to "provide organizational models" for the early Jesus-groups.[44]

Kenneth Berding's short study entitled: "Romans 12.4–8: One Sentence or Two?" is another example that pertains to a different aspect of grouping. I agree with Berding, who argues that this passage should be taken as one sentence.[45] Berding believes that the two-sentence approach has erroneously added a "hortatory" purpose to Paul's list of χαρίσματα.[46] That Rom 12:4–8 might be one sentence, however, supports Berding's argument that the χαρίσματα should be viewed as "spiritual ministries"[47] and not "spiritual-gifts-as-special-abilities."[48] A polemic against construing the χαρίσματα as ministries rather than special abilities is also foundational for Berding's exhortation, via James Barr, that the term "spiritual gifts" itself should be jettisoned.[49]

Material that discusses the text of Rom 12:6–8 without reference to the broader umbrella of

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[42] Victor, 2.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Victor, 12.

[45] Kenneth Berding, "Romans 12:4-8: One Sentence or Two?," *New Testament Studies* 52, Issue 3 (2006), 433-39. Berding observes the absence of a main verb for vv. 6–8 and argues that "if there is an acceptable way to read vv. 6–8 together with vv. 4–5, that approach should be given preference" (435).

[46] Berding, 434. Some Bible translations read a hortatory impulse to Paul's text. See ESV: "[h]aving gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *let us use them*" (it. mine) and NET: "If the gift is prophecy, that individual *must use it* in proportion to his faith . . . if it is service, he *must* serve . . ."; (it. mine). Berding states that, "in this view, Paul is not only listing the *charismata* that we are said to 'have'; he is encouraging their use" (434). By contrast, see the translation in the NRSV in Introduction I. Berding understands "ἔχοντες . . . χαρίσματα to mean: *participating in a particular function of ministry*" (it. orig., 436). I revisit this tendency to insert additional meaning into the text of Rom 12:6–8 throughout this thesis.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Berding, 436.

[49] Berding, 439. Berding has also produced a book for a popular audience. Kenneth Berding, *What Are Spiritual Gifts?: Rethinking the Conventional View* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006). I return to Barr and his exhortations in section 3.2 of this chapter.

the term "spiritual gifts" is difficult to find.[50] Dunn states that spiritual gifts have encompassed the attributes listed in Isaiah 11:2 and Acts 2:1–11 (also 10:46ff; 19:5), but are "now largely confined to the *charismata/pneumatika* [almost exclusively Pauline terms] spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12."[51] Because the topic of my thesis is not "spiritual gifts," the focus of my research will not include this literature.[52] The gifts, whether in Rom 12:6–8, 1 Cor 12–14, or Eph 4, are viewed together under the broad topic of the Spirit by these scholars and may be treated with care and skill. Both Turner's and Dunn's work[53] fill a need for scholarly attention to pneumatology. Dunn's commentary on Romans and his discussion on each of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8, however, will be discussed throughout my project. Scholars have not set out to do what I propose to do in this thesis, which is

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[50] Examples of scholarly examinations of "spiritual gifts" include Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996); Max Turner, "Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Formation in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22 (2013), 187-205; Siegfried Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987); D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987); Arnold Bittlinger, *Gifts and Graces: A Commentary on 1 Cor 12–14,* trans. H. Klassen (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1967); Arnold Bittlinger, *Gifts and Ministries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973); Ronald A. Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church: An Exploration Into the Gifts of the Spirit During the First Three Centuries of the Christian Church* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Pub, 1984); Ronald Y. K. Fung, "Ministry, Community and Spiritual Gifts," *EvQ* 56 (1984), 3-20; Anthony D. Palma, "Spiritual Gifts-Basic Considerations," *Pneuma* 1, no. 1 (1979), 3-26; Kenneth S. Hemphill, *Spiritual Gifts: Empowering the New Testament Church* (Baptist Sunday School Board, 1988). See also Hemphill's PhD dissertation: K.S. Hemphill, "The Pauline Concept of Charisma: A Situational and Developmental Approach," PhD dissertation, Cambridge, 1977. On the issue of cessation of the gifts, see Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Postbiblical Miracles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

[51] See Lewis, Ioan M., Oeming, Manfred, Dunn, James D.G., and Wainwright, Geoffrey. 'Spirit and Spiritual Gifts'. In Religion Past and Present. Accessed July 14, 2018. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_COM_08268. For a discussion of the term "spiritual gifts" in 1 Corinthians 12:1, see J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Spiritual Gifts, Spiritual Persons, or Spiritually-Gifted Persons? A Creative Translation of τῶν πνευματικῶν in 1 Corinthians 12:1a," *Neotestamentica* 46, no. 2 (2012), 260-73.

[52] In a future project, I wish to build upon Max Turner's preliminary engagement with the χαρίσματα in light of Judaism. In *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, Turner evaluates spiritual gifts in light of Jewish Scriptures, including intertestamental material, and the NT records that manifest various views of the Spirit. For related material on χάρις and its Judaic background, see Jonathan A. Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to the Romans: Texts in Conversation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); James A. Montgomery, "Hebrew Hesed and Greek Charis," *HTR* 32 (1939), 97-102; Cilliers Breytenbach, "'Charis' and 'Eleos' in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *The Letter to the Romans* (*Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium*), ed. U. Schnelle (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2009), 247-77.

[53] See especially, James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

to consider the χαρίσματα in light of the pagan antecedents of their terms. In the materials that I have listed, the χαρίσματα that appear in Rom 12:6–8 are considered merely as co-texts for what is considered by many the more primary text of 1 Cor 12.[54] Fee spends a few pages discussing Rom 12:3–8 apart from 1 Cor 12.[55] He asserts that even though there is a lack of "specific reference to the Holy Spirit," especially in light of "clear verbal and conceptual ties with 1 Cor 12:4–14," there can be "little question" that in Paul's thinking the Spirit lies directly behind the body imagery and exhortations. . . ."[56] Fee determines, however, that "how much the Romans could have known that without the aid of 1 Corinthians is moot."[57] Since the focus of this thesis is on the Roman addressees, I may consult, but I will not rely upon, similar material in 1 Corinthians that may or may not have been available or known to them.

Other intersecting topics that touch on the subject of the χαρίσματα include scholarly tomes on the Spirit,[58] the application of the χαρίσματα as ministries for the contemporary church[59] the etymological roots of the Greek word, χαρίσματα, especially its association with the noun χάρις[60] and the verb χαρίζομαι.[61] Writers have also been interested in the Greco-Roman use and influence

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[54] For example, Dunn states that "Rom 12 shows that the vision of 1 Cor. 12.12–30 applies to all Pauline communities, not simply to Corinth." Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 430, n. 34.

[55] Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 604-11.

[56] Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 605.

[57] Ibid.

[58] For example, see Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit: In Biblical Teaching, Through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013); Paul Robertson, "De-Spiritualizing Pneuma," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 26 (2014), 365-83. Dunn's *Jesus and the Spirit* underlines the importance of the experience of χάρις in the life of Christ, Paul and the believer.

[59] Ernst Käsemann, "Ministry and Community in the New Testament," in *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM Press, 2012), 63-134. Käsemann states that the text of Rom 12:6–8 is a "polemic against enthusiasm" in line with Paul's experiences in Corinth (332). He maintains that the whole of Rom 12 is an exhortation that is "decisively directed against enthusiasm" and may be "explained in detail from that perspective" (332). Käsemann also states that in the early Jesus-groups, "[o]rganization is still in its infancy," (340) but also that the χαρίσματα are "archetypes of later ecclesiastical institutions" that invoke "the beginnings of the formation of fixed offices. . . ." (341). For more on Käsemann's thoughts about the χαρίσματα see Ernst Käsemann, "Worship in Everyday Life: A Note on Romans 12," in *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 188-95.

[60] See Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*. For Dunn, the χαρίσματα derive their meaning from χάρις are thus concrete experiences of χάρις (grace).

[61] See Max Turner, "Modern Linguistics and Word Study in the New Testament," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 189-217. Turner seeks to separate the

on our understanding of χάρις.[62] Blanton applies Paul's discussions on "spiritual gifts" within the spiritual economy of gift exchange. According to Blanton, the gifts are meant to re-orient Paul's auditors' views on matters pertaining to status.[63] They are thus useful for Paul in light of the "hierarchical ranking system" he proposes for organizing the "early Christian assemblies."[64] In later chapters, we will return to the subject of whether Paul means to rank the χαρίσματα or use them to promote a hierarchical system.

Scholars also discuss how the χαρίσματα contribute to the formation of group identity for the early Christ-followers. The work of John Barclay on Paul and the notion of gift is the most notable example of these efforts.[65] In his section on Rom 12–15:13, Barclay briefly addresses the gifts that appear in Rom 12:6–8 in the context of community.[66] These are "divinely distributed *gifts*" (it. orig.) apportioned to each person in the Roman group that represent roles of "communal responsibility."[67] Philip Esler sees the χαρίσματα as the "first illustration of the general message of vv. 1–2,"

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term χαρίσματα from χάρις and link it to the verb χαρίζομαι to assert that χάρισμα and the χαρίσματα are merely the results of the act of giving or the gift itself.

[62] I am unable to fully cover the history of research pertaining to the significant themes related to χάρις in the Pauline corpus. I will, however, address this terminology as it relates to divine-human interaction in Chapter One, sections 2.1 and 5. On the popular topic of χάρις in terms of gift-exchange and benefaction, see Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8 on the Logic of God's Χάρις and Its Human Response," *HTR* 101 (2008), 15-44; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Gift-Giving and God's Charis: Bourdieu, Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8," in *The Letter to the Romans*, ed. Udo Schnelle (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 95-111; Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: An Epigraphic Study of A Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982); Judith M. Gundry, "'Or Who Gave First to Him, So That He Shall Receive Recompense?' (Rom 11,35): Divine Benefaction and Human Boasting in Paul and Philo," in *The Letter to the Romans*, ed. Udo Schnelle (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 25-53; Brad Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); James Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Blanton IV, *A Spiritual Economy: Gift Exchange in the Letters of Paul of Tarsus* (*Synkrisis*); Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004).

[63] Blanton IV, *A Spiritual Economy*, 90-94. In this section, Blanton treats both 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12:6–8 in terms of hierarchical organization. The gifts represent roles and are thus various types of positional status for both Corinth and Rome. The highest status, which is that of an apostle, is Paul's. Next in this "ranking system" (95) is the role of the prophet (93-95) and also teacher (95).

[64] Blanton, 105.

[65] John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

[66] Barclay, 510.

[67] Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 510. Campbell also addresses the material in Rom 12:1–15:13 together and finds the gifts related the notion of humble obedience. William S. Campbell, "The Rule of Faith in Romans 12:1–15:13: The Obligation of Humble Obedience to Christ as the Only Adequate Response to the Mercies of God," in *Pauline Theology* Volume 3 *Ro-*

which deal with how adherents might offer themselves in worship to God and they are therefore "vital to the maintenance of community life."[68] Esler believes that Paul is "delineating and recommending a 'norm' of identity" for the group that would set them apart as unique in their society.[69] Here the χαρίσματα contribute to a "cognitive sense" of group belonging, or "how they understood the utterly distinctive nature of the group. . . ."[70] Seen in this way, the χαρίσματα are "ministries" that helped the Roman Christ-followers evaluate themselves in comparison with other groups, as well as to experience the emotional aspects of belonging.[71] Thompson evaluates the χαρίσματα that appear in Rom 12:6–8 in light of the body of Christ.[72] The gifts are christological in that they reflect Christ's body and are to be practiced in faithfulness to each person's God-given role.[73] Examples of how the χαρίσματα may uniquely address the needs of the burgeoning Christ-following community include the provision of proper roles of individuals in this group, and in the formation of group identity. The χαρίσματα are also activities that reflect Christ to the world.

Commentators have also considered the role the χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8 might have in the letter as a whole.[74] For example, Moo finds that Romans is thoroughly doctrinal with an emphasis

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mans, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 259-86. As for the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8, Campbell states that the "Holy Spirit gives gifts to all and through the Christian community will guide each one (whether as individual or group) to live in obedience to Christ" (279). Campbell reads Rom 12:3 in terms of an individuated "rule of faith" that determines ones convictions, which in turn are expressed in "how one lives the life in Christ" (278). He reasons that this faith (or conviction) is "one's own charisma" (279). This gifting leads to adopting particular lifestyles which Campbell asserts are what Paul means by the activities of the "weak" and "strong" in Rom 14–15:2 (279). Since this faith comes from God, the various lifestyles that the convictions motivate must be accepted by others (279).

[68] Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 315.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Michael B. Thompson, *Clothed With Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.11–15.13* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2011), 87-89. Thompson does not, however, go into any detail on any particular gift in Rom 12:6–8.

[73] Thompson, 89.

[74] Due to the limitations of space in this thesis, I have selected a core group of standard commentators from which I will draw representative views for each χάρισμα. These are Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992); C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: A & C Black, 1957); Cranfield, *Romans*; Par M.-J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul, Epître Aux Romains* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1950); Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980); James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1988); William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Com-*

on Christology as well as the timeless truth of the gospel.[75] The χαρίσματα that appear in Rom 12:6–8 are not a part of the the theological discourse of Rom 1–11. They belong in the practical portion of the letter as prescriptive examples that are meant to display the believer's transformed way of life in concrete instances.[76]

Jewett submits that Romans should be viewed as an "ambassadorial letter" with an eschatological purpose.[77] By his letter, Paul means to persuade the Roman group to support his mission to Spain. The seven gifts of Romans 12:6–8 are evidence of "the charismatically renewed mind of the Christian community."[78] Jewett believes that some of the gifts in Paul's list "have particular relevance for the Spanish mission project," but he does not elaborate upon this thought.[79] Altogether, the χαρίσματα provide a "graceful and definitive description of the body of Christ" whose members coexist in unity and come together to support Paul in his mission to Spain.[80]

Reichert's monograph on Romans introduces a slightly different purpose and motivation for Paul's letter that is tied to the χαρίσματα that appear in Rom 12:6–8.[81] Like Jewett, Reichert also sees a missional intent, albeit a much bigger one. Reichert argues that Paul does indeed have a mission to Spain in mind, yet his letter is "Gratwanderung" [like walking a tightrope or a balancing act], because of his imminent visit to Jerusalem and his financial offering to the Jews there. Reichert proposes that Paul is not completely confident that the offering will be received by the Christ-followers in Jerusalem or that he will survive due to the extreme animosity towards him in those regions (Rom 15:30–32). Reichert believes Paul is thus writing to Rome fully aware that his letter might be his "Erstkommunikation und potentielle Letzkommunikation" [first and potentially last commun-

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mentary on the Epistle to the Romans (*International Critical Commentary*) (Edinburgh: T & T Clarkd, 1908); Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); Leander E. Keck, *Romans* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005); Jewett, *Romans*; Longenecker, *Romans*; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an Die Römer* (Neukirchener: Benziger, 1982).

[75] Moo, *Romans*, 1.

[76] Moo, 26.

[77] Jewett, 42-46.

[78] Jewett, 738.

[79] Jewett, 746. Jewett merely states that prophecy is important to Paul's own mission to Spain and not its potential as missional activity for the Christ-followers in Rome themselves.

[80] Jewett, 737.

[81] Angelika Reichert, *Der Römerbrief Als Gratwanderung: Eine Untersuchung Zur Abfassungsproblematik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001).

ication] to the Christ-followers there. The χαρίσματα are meant to equip the Roman believers to continue his mission.[82]

With the inclusion of Reichert, an "Außenwirkung hin orientierende Funktion" [outwardly-oriented function] is introduced that may affect how we might assertain Paul's purposes for the χαρίσματα.[83] Reichert offers on behalf of Paul a broad-minded perspective which she finds throughout Romans 12–15:13. As such, Paul "will seiner Adressatenschaft deren Weltbezogenheit verdeutlichen" [wants to demonstrate the world-relatedness of the community he is addressing].[84] For Reichert, then, the χαρίσματα comprise "der Modellbeschreibung," [a description of a prototypical community][85] that is equipped to reach outsiders with the gospel. Paul's goal is to create "die Konstitution einer paulinischen Gemeinde in Rom und deren Befähigung zu selbständiger Weiterverbreitung des Evangeliums" [a Pauline congregation in Rome with the ability to independently spread the gospel].[86] Reichert thus broadly and plausibly connects the χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8 with mission. As for the lack of information in the Pauline text, Reichert finds that "die Unschärfe der Bezeichnungen" [the fuzziness (or haziness) of the description] of the χαρίσματα is intentional.[87] For her, Paul's strategy includes an "Entgrenzung" [delimitation] meant to

> gibt den Adressaten die Chance, das Modell des in seinen unterschiedlichen Gliedern wirksamen einen Leibes in Christus in ihrer eigenen Wirklichkeit zu entdecken und dabei sich selbst und alle anderen Adressaten als Charismenträger auszumachen.
>
> give the addressees, as charism-bearers, the chance (or opportunity) to discover and thereby determine the effective modeling [of the gifts] among their varied members in their own situations.[88]

I agree with Reichert that Paul has not provided much detail in what he means by the seven χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. However, I will argue in this thesis that the lack of definition may open

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[82] Reichert, 77. I will return to Reichert's analysis in chapter 1.2.1 where I outline a context for worship for the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. I will offer that Paul self-defines his calling as cult [λατρεύω] in Rom 1:9. When Paul offers the χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8 to his addressees, I argue that Paul may set them forth as examples of concrete expressions of the life of worship, "τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν" to which he invites his audience in Rom 12:1.

[83] Reichert 247.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Reichert, 253.

[86] Reichert, 99.

[87] Reichert, 257.

[88] Ibid.

the way for Paul's audience to bring their own experiences of worship into their understanding of what he might mean as to the χαρίσματα. When viewed in light of living a life of worship, according to Paul's invitation in Rom 12:1, the language Paul uses in Rom 12:6–8 may evoke comparisons with the same terms as they appear in ancient materials that reference divine-human relations in the ancient world. This contextual evidence may then be brought to bear upon the text of Rom 12:6–8.

CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis uses the historical-critical method in its assessment of the χαρίσματα that Paul enumerates in Rom 12:6–8. My analysis considers material and textual data that are relevant to Paul's first-century addressees. I use this evidence to establish cultural realities from which I may then draw inferences about possible meanings that Paul's first-century Roman audience might have applied to his letter. Ancient sources broaden the contextual data with which scholars can evaluate this text. The data that emerges from these sources can be compared with the Pauline text and applied for use in exploring questions of meaning and application as to the various χαρίσματα under consideration.

In this chapter, I will consider the literary and rhetorical context within which the χαρίσματα are situated. In so doing, I will discuss their association with Paul's invitation to a life of worship that he lays out in Rom 12:1. I examine the importance of worship for Paul's own calling and mission, as well as the importance of an outwardly-focused orientation for the χαρίσματα that aligns with Paul's example. I then offer that it may be helpful to bring to bear the conceptions of worship already known to Paul's gentile audience upon his teaching about the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. In so doing, I mean to determine if these pagan cultic experiences may be valuable for helping us understand the reception of the χαρίσματα for Paul's original addressees.

I will thus evaluate the importance of first-century evidence pertaining to divine-human relations in the Greco-Roman world in understanding the situation of Paul's audience and how they might have received his teaching. As I approach this contextual evidence, I will define key terms that are important to my investigation. The significance of divine-human relations for Roman inhabitants such as Paul's gentile audience will be assessed. The breadth of ancient materials that I will cover will be laid out, including a discussion of a plausible cultural awareness for persons such as those in Paul's audience. I also address some of the linguistic challenges that arise from attempts to discuss first-century terms from a 21st century perspective. I conclude this chapter by set-

ting forth the hypothesis that for the Christ-following gentiles living in Rome, the χαρίσματα may be viewed as sanctioned replacements for previous activities that pertained to divine-human relations.

2. CONTEXTS OF WORSHIP

The heart of this thesis is an inquiry into seven specific words that appear in Rom 12:6–8. These are προφητεία, διακονία, ὁ διδάσκων, ὁ παρακαλῶν, ὁ μεταδιδούς, ὁ προϊστάμενος, and ὁ ἐλεῶν. Given that Paul has presented them as χαρίσματα from God to the Christ-followers in Rome, it follows that he would have chosen terms that were at least comprehensible to his audience.[89] A construction of their context within the letter and the Roman world of the gentile audience is foundational to grasping how the χαρίσματα were understood in their original contexts. My interest is in how two worlds of worship intersect. The first is the life of worship into which Paul invites his addressees to participate in Rom 12:1. The second is the world of divine-human relations in which the majority of the members of this Roman group had likely participated before becoming Christ-followers.

2.1. The importance of worship for understanding the χαρίσματα that appear in Rom 12:6–8

Paul's choice of vocabulary signals a theme of worship for Rom 12:6–8

Scholars have noted that the topic of worship is central in forming a cohesive appreciation of Paul's purpose in writing his letter to the Roman Christ-followers.[90] It is not difficult to accept that worship is a main theme that Paul sets forth in Rom 12:1 given the language that he uses:

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[89] I note that the lack of detail in Rom 12:6–8 as to the meaning and application of the χαρίσματα may point to the possibility that Paul's audience already knew something about these terms, perhaps in regards to divine-human relations in pagan religion.

[90] Michael B. Thompson, "Romans 12.1–2 and Paul's Vision for Worship," in *A Vision for the Church: Studies in Early Christian Ecclesiology*, ed. Markus Bockmuehl and Michael B. Thompson (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 1997), 121-32; Nijay K. Gupta, *Worship That Makes Sense to Paul: A New Approach to the Theology and Ethics of Paul's Cultic Metaphors* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "From Toxic Speech to the Redemption of Doxology in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 392-408.

> Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·
>
> I invite you therefore, brothers and sisters,[91] by virtue of the compassion[92] of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice[93]—living,[94] holy,[95] pleasing to God—which is your sensible worship.

The language of cult is evident in this verse. I return to παρακαλέω in chapter five and discuss this word as it is used by ancient authors to connote an invitation to the gods to come near. θυσία, as used in Greco-Roman sources, points to burnt-offering and sacrifice.[96] The Greek-English Lexicon compiled by Liddell, Scott, and Jones, lists the adjective ἅγιος as *devoted to the gods*.[97] The second adjective, εὐάρεστος also has associations with divine-human relations. Dionysius of Halicarnassus combines the related word εὐαρεστήριος with θυσία to connote a propitiatory sacrifice,[98] while Clement of Alexandria references the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes' attribution of εὐάρεστον to Zeus in his *Hymn to Zeus* to the Christian God.[99] The noun λατρεία is understood in terms of ser-

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[91] This use of ἀδελφοί, a typical vocative address, is used figuratively to denote persons who share beliefs (e.g. Christ-followers). See Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), 18.

[92] I translate τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν as "compassion" and not as "mercies" to maintain the distinction between τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν in Rom 12:1 and ὁ ἐλεῶν in Rom 12:8.

[93] I take the accusative noun θυσίαν as a predicate and the complement in an "object-complement construction," (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν) See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament With Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 618.. I have also adopted Wallace's suggestion and added "as" between the two accusatives in this construction ("to present your bodies as a sacrifice") (184).

[94] The participle ζῶσαν could be attributive to σώματα or a predicate for θυσίαν, as I have here. See Wallace's discussion in Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 618-19.

[95] The accusative adjectives ἁγίαν and εὐάρεστον are predicates in an anarthrous noun-adj construction. In determining the relation of adjective to noun in "anarthrous constructions," the general rule is that an anarthrous adjective related to an anarthrous noun in normally predicate (Wallace, 311).

[96] See θῡσί-α in Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 812. I will hereafter refer to this lexicon as LSJ. Both λατρεία and θυσία, along with their cognates, appear in ancient sources outside of our biblical texts. I focus on the seven χαρίσματα and do not examine these words in their fullness. Both words were commonly used as terms to connote worship and service related to deity. It is plausible that Paul's gentile audience were already familiar with this language as it pertained to divine-human relations.

[97] LSJ: ἅγιος [ᾰ], α, ον, 9.

[98] See *Antiquitates Romanae*, where Dionysius of Halicarnassus records ἱκετείαις καὶ θυσίαις ἀρεστηρίοις [supplications and propitiatory sacrifices] in Book I.67 [2].

[99] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 6.19.

vice and divine worship in Greco-Roman contexts.[100] Paul's vocabulary in Rom 12:1 thus signals a theme of worship for his auditors.

Underestimating the force of the theme of worship for the χαρίσματα has produced some unintentional results as to the analysis of Rom 12:6–8. One of these concerns Paul's choice of the word χαρίσματα. As Turner has stated, we do not have "*any* definite pre-Pauline uses" (it. orig.) of the words χάρισμα or χαρίσματα, so "Paul is our first witness to the use of the lexeme."[101] Turner affirms that we should not assume that Paul coined either word, since he "uses it when writing to the Romans (who did not know his teaching) without any explanation of its sense."[102] Turner further states that Paul "appears to assume, in other words, that his readers are acquainted with its use."[103] But, what does Turner mean here? Paul states that the χαρίσματα are given to the Roman Christ-followers through the χάρις of God in Rom 12:6. The word χάρις and also the related verb χαρίζομαι have deep associations with worship in the Greco-Roman world as evidenced by their usage to describe various aspects of divine-human relations. This natural connection suggests that Paul's gentile audience could plausibly imagine that such χαρίσματα, which are set forth in the context of living a life of worship, may themselves be acts of worship made possible by God's favor.

In his 1976 article covering χάρις, χαρίζομαι, χαρίτώ, and ἀχάριστος in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (*TDNT*), Hans Conzelmann states that though χάρις may be used in reference to the favor of the gods in "profane" Greek usage, "χάρις is not a key religious term."[104] I disagree with this assertion based upon the use of the words χάρις and χαρίζομαι in reference to divine-hu-

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[100] This definition accords with the information given by LSJ: λατρ-εία, ἡ, 1032. See also Rom 9:4. There is discussion on what Paul may mean by the descriptive addition of the adjective λογικὴν to λατρείαν. For example, Käsemann chooses "spiritual worship" for his gloss ("Worship," 192). For a critique of the notion of a so-called Christian spiritualization of sacrifice, see Daniel C. Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Jewett has "reasonable worship" for λογικὴν λατρείαν (730-31). Betz states that Paul means a religion that is "aufgeklärte" [enlightened]. Hans Dieter Betz, "Das Problem Der Grundlagen Der Paulinischen Ethik (Röm 12,1–2)," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 85, No. 2 (1988), 212. For a thorough discussion of the scholarship surrounding Paul's meaning for λογικὴν λατρείαν, see Jewett, 730-31. As shown by the title of his monograph that I mentioned in n. 90, Gupta glosses these words as "worship that makes sense." I concur with Gupta.

[101] Turner, "Modern Linguistics," 198-99.

[102] Ibid., 199.

[103] Ibid.

[104] *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (*10 Volume Set*) (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), X:275. Known hereafter as *TDNT*.

man relations in ancient literature. Parker states that "the idea of *charis* is fundamental to civic religion" in that the concern of traditional religion is to "establish with the god a relation of mutual benefit, *charis*, a continuing interchange of gifts and service."[105] It is also quite possible that Paul's gentile audience heard χάρις in relation to the imperial cult, wherein "divine favour flowed through the emperor."[106] The concept of χάρις was also personified as three goddesses, who were known collectively as the Χάριτες.[107] William H. Race has noted the importance of χάρις within the hymnody that attended ancient divine-human practices.[108] Race states that while the notion of χάρις was an integral part of the topoi of ancient hymns and "one of a multitude of words used to see the benevolence of the deity," it was nonetheless the "most versatile, and probably the most important term of its kind in Greek hymnody."[109] H. S. Versnel provides ancient material and literary evidence that convincingly connects χάρις, χαρίζομαι, and their cognates with prayer, praise, and gratitude expressed to the gods.[110] We can therefore surmise that ancient authors often called upon χάρις, χαρίζομαι, and their cognates to refer to reciprocity and gift-giving when referencing divine-human relations.

Whether in the form of a noun, or in other applications such as χάρισμα and χαρίσματα, Paul's teaching as to χάρις may be viewed as a way to stress the importance of divine-human relations for the group of transitioning Christ-followers in Rome. Paul sets a familiar concept of χάρις, which

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[105] Robert Parker, "Gods Cruel and Kind: Tragic and Civic Theology," in *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*, ed. Christopher Pelling (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 147.

[106] Beard et al, 252. Beard stresses the "significance of imperial harmony and the piety of the emperor in ensuring the favor of the gods for the empire" (ibid, 350). One of the striking reforms during the reign of Augustus involved recovering "the special religious status that attached to individual politicians, exceptional political power being inextricably linked with the gods and their favour and protection" (ibid, 86). The name "Augustus" evoked the favour of the gods, and was invented, according to Beard, to "denote the emperor's consecration. . . ." (ibid, 182).

[107] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 73:280-281. See also Cornutus' discussion of the inspiring joy and gift-giving activities of the Χάριτες in *On Greek Theology*, 15–16 [18–21].

[108] William H. Race, "Aspects of Rhetoric and Form in Greek Hymns," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 23 (1982).

[109] Race, 10. See also Pierre Sineux, "Le Péan D'Isyllos : Forme Et Finalités D'Un Chant Religieux Dans Le Culte D'Asklépios À Épidaure," *Kernos* 12 (1999), 153-66. Sineux states: "La relation de χάρις est ainsi une relation qui implique une réciprocité et cette notion est essentielle dans tous les hymnes grecs." Sineux, "Le Péan D'Isyllos," 158.

[110] H.S. Versnel, "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer," in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (*Studies in Greek and Roman Religion*), ed. H. S. Versnel (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 1981), 43-62. In this section, Versnel discusses the substantive form χαριστήριον, which he glosses as "thank-offering" (46-47; cf. LSJ under χἄρ-ιστήριος, ον).

was already fraught with cultic resonances into a new religious environment while maintaining the natural associations of gift, favor, reciprocity, and thanksgiving. Paul's gentile audience, who lived and worshiped in Rome, could therefore have associated the χαρίσματα that he presents in Rom 12:6–8 with an application that pertained to worshiping God.

A cohesive theme of worship in the Roman letter

While many scholars are willing to view Paul's teaching in Rom 12:1 in light of worship,[111] this theme occasionally loses its force when these commentators begin to parse the verses that follow. This may be due in part to a sharp partitioning of the letter into two sections wherein Rom 1–11 is characterized as theology or discourse and Rom 12–16 is shunted into the realm of ethical instruction, the purpose of which is to apply the teaching of the section which has just preceded it. This shifts the focus of discussion so as to center on the individual or the Christ-following group itself. For example, Moo asserts that the introduction of imperative verbs that begin in Rom 12 indicates a shift in emphasis by Paul.[112] For Moo, the change from the indicative verb forms that predominate in chapters 1–11 marks a transition into a more practical mode for the last section of the letter. The division of the letter into theology and ethics, however, influences Moo's viewpoints as to the χαρίσματα in vv. 6–8. His discussion of the gifts is steered toward the Jesus-assemblies themselves. For Moo, the gifts are prescriptive and utilitarian in that they are valuable for how they might be useful for the church both in its first-century form and today. Jewett maintains that the gifts are "descriptive" and "exemplary," as they serve to illustrate Paul's body metaphor.[113] In Jewett's view, the χαρίσματα are no less practical and only tangentially connected to Paul's theme of worship. Jewett imagines that Paul values the χαρίσματα for their unifying properties through which the Roman Christ-followers will decide to support his mission to Spain.[114]

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[111] For an example, in his commentary on Rom 12:3–8, Fitzmyer states that for Paul, worship is to occur in the realm of "[e]veryday life," and "the cult to be rendered" is to be manifested in concrete ways (645). He further specifies that Paul's invitation to live a life of worship should be viewed in light of a reversal of the idolatry that Paul has condemned in Rom 1:25, using the word, ἐλάτρευσαν.

[112] Moo, 744.

[113] Jewett, 744-75. See also Dunn, 725.

[114] Jewett, 724 (cf. 733; 746).

Victor Furnish correctly determines that a division between theology and ethics in Paul's Roman letter is an anachronistic strategy that would have been foreign to Paul.[115] Udo Schnelle also rejects a partitioning of the letter according to an "indicative-imperative schema" as "static" and "artificial. . . ."[116] I note that in Rom 12, Paul is simply returning to a theme that he has set forth in Rom 1. In Rom 1:18–32, Paul has detailed the downward spiral of those who have not believed the truth about God and instead were "in awe of [ἐσεβάσθησαν][117] and served [καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν]" the creature rather than the Creator (v. 25). Paul finds this a dire situation that is to be remedied by the grace of God shown to the undeserving (see Rom 5, especially). Paul's invitation to worship and calling in Rom 12:1 may be viewed as a highpoint of realization for his gentile audience who are being welcomed by God as his worshipers. The summons from Paul to present their bodies to God in worship is now reasonable and possible.

Paul's calling and mission as an act of worship is an exemplar for his addressees own calling and mission

Paul quite clearly sees his own life and mission in terms of worship. This makes it possible for him to be viewed by the recipients of his letter as an example to follow when it comes to their own calling. There are four pertinent components that appear in both Rom 1:5–13 and 15:15–21 where Paul describes something of his calling to the gentiles. In both of these passages: (1) χάρις is a compelling factor; (2) Paul's use of liturgical language signals a theme of worship; (3) Paul underlines the importance of supernatural equipping; and (4) Paul acknowledges that he works within missional boundaries. I will first show these passage alongside of each other. I will then show how these themes that pertain to Paul's own calling may be compared with Paul's teaching in Rom 12:1–8. When viewed together, it becomes clear that Paul's addressees may view Paul as an exemplar for

[115] See the argument set forth in Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968).

[116] Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology,* trans. M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 548.

[117] This is the only instance of the word σεβάζομαι in the NT. LSJ lists this meaning: *to be afraid of*. The related noun σέβασμα appears in Acts 17:23 and 2 Thess 2:4 to denote objects of awe or worship. The adjective σεβαστός, which LSJ glosses as *venerable*, *reverend, august* and probably of deified emperors, appears in Acts 25:21, 25; 27:1 denote imperial power.

their own calling and mission.

In both Rom 1:5–13 and Rom 15:15–21, we may find that

(1) Paul attributes his calling to the gentiles in terms of the grace of God:

ἐλάβομεν χάριν [we have received grace] (Rom 1:5)	τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ [because of the grace given me by God] (Rom 15:15)

(2) Paul uses liturgical language to describe his calling:

γάρ μού ἐστιν ὁ θεός, ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ [for God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son] (Rom 1:9)	εἰς τὸ εἶναί με λειτουργὸν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, ἱερουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα γένηται ἡ προσφορὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ [to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit] (Rom 15:16)

(3) Paul emphasizes the importance of supernatural equipping in his work:

Paul desires to share a χάρισμα πνευματικὸν with the Romans when he arrives (Rom 1:11)	δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων, ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος θεοῦ [the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God] (Rom 15:19)

(4) Paul has accepted a mission that has certain boundaries:

πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο [often I intended to come to you, but thus far have been prevented] (Rom 1:13).	οὐ γὰρ τολμήσω τι λαλεῖν᾽ ὧν οὐ κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι᾽ ἐμοῦ [For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me] (Rom 15:18) οὕτως δὲ φιλοτιμούμενον εὐαγγελίζεσθαι οὐχ ὅπου ὠνομάσθη Χριστός, ἵνα μὴ ἐπ᾽ ἀλλότριον θεμέλιον οἰκοδομῶ [Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do no build on someone else's foundation] (Rom 15:20)

These passages that bookend the letter may be compared with Rom 12:1–8 where similar components as to calling, language aligned with worship, supernatural equipping, and boundaries for mission may be teased out of this text. By comparing themes that Paul associates with his own calling and worship in Rom 1 and 15, we may test whether they apply to Paul's teaching in Rom 12:1–8. With the above statements in mind, we may note that

(1) Grace is the means by which the χαρίσματα are understood:

> διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι [for by the grace given to me] (12:3)
>
> ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα [we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us] (12:6)

(2) Paul uses liturgical language to describe the call for his addressees to worship God:

> παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν (12:1)
>
> I invite you therefore, brothers and sisters, by virtue of the compassion of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, pleasing to God—which is your sensible worship;

(3) Paul notes the supernatural source of the χαρίσματα:

> the χαρίσματα are given by God (12:3; 6–8); and

(4) Paul understands that his addressees will have God-given boundaries as to the exercising of their gifts:

> they are not to venture beyond the particular callings and mission that God has assigned (12:3);[118]
>
> not all the members of the body in Christ have the same function (12:3)

These parallels strengthen the possibility that the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 may also be apprehended in terms of calling, worship and mission, since these same themes appear in Paul's descriptions of his own work to carry the gospel to gentiles.[119] The three concepts are thus intertwined: Paul's calling is of God, and the mission is to spread the gospel; in obeying this call, Paul

[118] As to the possibility that ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως in v. 3 may refer to the notion of stewardship, see John K. Goodrich, "'Standard of Faith' or 'Measure of A Trusteeship'? A Study in Romans 12:3," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (2012), 753-72.

[119] Fitzmyer associates the language in Rom 12:1–2 with Paul's calling, stating that Paul "regarded his own preaching of the gospel as a cultic act . . . that was for him the concrete noetic and rational way he was asked by God to live his Christian life" (640). Paul's audience, now renewed in their thinking, could therefore join him in his mission by employing the seven χαρίσματα with this same cultic purpose in mind.

increases his own practice of worship and provides opportunity for others to worship God. Paul is thus himself an exemplar for his audience in terms of how he keeps his focus on the God who called him, and on Christ Jesus whom he serves; and there is also the Holy Spirit who sanctifies his work (Rom 15:15–16). I thus submit that Paul understands the concepts of calling and gifting as opportunities for himself and others to worship God. It is plausible that with his words in Rom 12:1, Paul has invited his audience to join him in the mission to spread the gospel.

Shifting the discussion of the χαρίσματα away from a congregationally-focused application and aligning it with Paul's outward-focused mission and calling

Scholars do not discuss the χαρίσματα in terms of worship, but in terms of individual and unique talents or offices[120] or as useful tools meant to build up the Christ-following community. The χαρίσματα as they appear in Rom 12:6–8 are treated almost exclusively as means for communal upbuilding by the commentators surveyed. The health and well-being of the Jesus-groups were certainly important to Paul, but the exigencies of spreading the gospel message are crucial. Neither does a predominately insular application accurately reflect the tone of worship that Paul sets in Rom 12:1, and other outwardly focused options go unexplored. For example, Käsemann finds that the χαρίσματα "give leadership to the community and are most striking in terms of its *internal* life. . . ."[121] (emph. mine) Jewett maintains that the χαρίσματα were "*congregationally useful* manifestations" (emph. mine).[122] Only with ὁ ἐλεῶν is there an application for those inside as well as outside their own group.[123] Jewett sees the χαρίσματα as important to Paul because of their relevance to his mission to Spain. Living a life of worship can thus be seen as having a missional purpose.[124] Keck also finds that the seven "begracements" in Rom 12:6–8 are meant for the "well-being of the whole

[120] For example, Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 358-60; Franz J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 310.

[121] Käsemann, "Worship," 195.

[122] Jewett, 744.

[123] Jewett, 753-54.

[124] Jewett, 731. This "missional imperative," however, is not their own, but Paul's venture into Spain. Due to the renewing of the mind that Paul offers in Rom 12:2, Jewett sees the Roman Christ-followers as a group who may now make appropriate decisions (732-33; 733, n. 70) such as supporting his Spanish mission (746).

community. . . ."[125] In his view, the first four χαρίσματα pertain to "specific activities that build up the community assembled," while the last three may be done within and without the group.[126] Fitzmyer states that the χαρίσματα are "to be performed in the community . . . [and] that with them Christians might serve one another."[127] For these scholars, the χαρίσματα are useful for the community itself as they are largely restricted to the Christ-following gatherings and are almost exclusively exercised within this community.

This approach steers the conversation about the χαρίσματα away from possibilities that have to do with worshiping God and focuses discussion on the community and the activities within this group. It follows then, that Paul's words in Rom 12:3 in which he says, μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ᾽ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, ἑκάστῳ ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως, would be viewed in terms of an admonition or a warning against an individual's pride.[128] Käsemann asserts: "It could be said that everything which follows [v. 3] stands under the watchword 'Do not be conceited.'"[129] Many commentators evaluate Paul's instruction in Rom 12:2–5 in light of potential discord and pride within the Christ-following community. For example, in v. 3, Jewett believes that Paul is warning against "supermindedness"[130] and the "dangers of charismatic pride" in general.[131] Keck also thinks Paul is addressing dangerous attitudes of haughtiness.[132] An attitude of haughtiness would, after all, threaten their unity in Christ in 12:4–5.

I offer a different approach that aligns with Paul's outwardly-focused calling, a mission that, as I have argued, he describes in terms of worship. The χαρίσματα, when seen in terms of responses in worship to God, make it possible to view the subject in terms of an outward application, wherein the exercise of the χαρίσματα are offered as acts of worship and mission within boundaries that are set by God. In this scenario, Paul's words in Rom 12:3 may be considered in terms of thinking

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[125] Keck, 302.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Fitzmyer, 647.

[128] For example, the translators of the NRSV have: "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned."

[129] Käsemann, "Worship," 192.

[130] Jewett, 739.

[131] Jewett, 738.

[132] Keck, 296.

rightly about the calling or sphere of service to God which has been entrusted to each Christ-follower. This is the approach that Goodrich takes in his article that covers Rom 12:3.[133] Goodrich argues that μέτρον πίστεως in Rom 12:3 "refers to the believer's charism, [which is] addressed shortly and explicitly thereafter in 12:6."[134] He further observes that πίστις "should be interpreted as a position of responsiblity, or 'trusteeship,' as the term was commonly used in antiquity."[135] In other words, just as Paul also works within the set limitations of his own calling to gentiles who have not yet heard the gospel, he suggests that his auditors should not think of themselves going beyond the limits of what has been entrusted to them by God.[136]

As stated in section 2 of my introduction, my approach aligns with the conclusions of Reichert. The χαρίσματα have an Außenwirkung hin orientierende Funktion [outwardly-oriented function]. I agree that Paul has not provided much detail in what he means by the seven χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. However, as will be seen, this lack of definition and detail may have opened the way for Paul's audience to bring their own experiences of worship to bear upon their understanding of what he might mean as to the χαρίσματα.

While scholars make compelling points as to their theories about the gifts and their function, they have nevertheless overlooked several critical ones. When viewed in light of Greco-Roman uses that refer to divine-human relations, language such as λατρεία, θυσια, χάρις, and χαρίσματα, make it apparent that Paul meant for worship to play a more extensive role in the lives of Christ-followers than what these scholars suggest. When Paul says in Rom 12:1 that he means for Christ-followers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice in worship, the conclusion must be drawn that all of the activities of these followers are subsumed within the larger framework of devotion to God. Paul has clarified that this is how he sees his own calling and mission. Responding to the calling of God means an outward focus toward those who have not yet heard the gospel message. This mission is thus an act of worship in which the χαρίσματα may play a crucial part.

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[133] See Goodrich, "'Standard of Faith' or 'Measure of A Trusteeship'? A Study in Romans 12:3," 753-72.

[134] Goodrich, 753.

[135] Ibid. See also Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 298-99.

[136] Perhaps Paul does not give more details in Rom 12:6–8, beyond suggesting seven avenues of mission, because he does not feel it is his right to establish the calling of any individual in Rome.

The importance of the former pagan practices of Paul's gentile audience in understanding the χαρίσματα

I submit that scholars have failed to connect the cultic past of Paul's audience, which was comprised of a multitude of rituals and practices meant to interact with divinity, with the practical need that this group had to replace these activities with ones appropriate for their new belief system. As a matter of logic, the χαρίσματα are encompassed within Paul's direction that his auditors live a life of worship. Such a life encompasses the use of the gifts that he has set forth. This assertion leads to my hypothesis that the χαρίσματα are cultic replacements for the former religious activities of Paul's gentile addressees.

Fitzmyer remarks that Paul, after initially setting the tone of worship in Rom 12:1–2, descends to the "particulars" of the new religious activities of Paul's Roman gentile Christ-followers.[137] He further states that this is designed to detail how "[t]he cult to be rendered should manifest itself concretely in a life in community or society based on humility and charity."[138] Although tantalizing, this statement remains underdeveloped in Fitzmyer's commentary. This is ultimately a question of the experiences that Paul's gentile auditors might have brought to his text based upon their encounters and practices with regard to deity.

There are a few scholarly works in which the authors have approached Paul's letter through attempting to better understand the Greco-Roman first-century setting in which he wrote his letter to Rome. These approaches examine this period's archaeological evidence, extant societal expectations, and literary conventions.[139] There is nonetheless a significant absence in research regarding the first-century *religious* context, particularly as it concerns the traditional pagan cultic environment within which the addressees of Paul's letter to the Romans lived. Although much has been

[137] Fitzmyer, 645.

[138] Ibid.

[139] For example, see Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii*. Oakes considers evidence from the ruins of Pompeii to "improve our understanding of Greco-Roman urban society in general," particularly as this society existed in the first century" (57). Stanley Stowers puts Paul's letter alongside first-century philosophical and rhetorical strategies to argue that Paul's intended gentile audience shared an existing Greco-Roman ideal, namely that of self-mastery in Stowers, *Romans*. Hans Dieter Betz argues that early epistolary Christian literature such as the letter Paul wrote to Rome must be viewed from within its literary, religious, and cultural environment, the Greco-Roman world. See Betz, "Christianity as Religion: Paul's Attempt At Definition in Romans."

written about the various Jewish religious influences on Paul and the Christ-followers gathered in Rome, more attention should be paid to the gentile portion of the audience, especially as to how the pagan surroundings and background of these gentiles might have affected their reception of the letter. These "cultic connections" are part of this present project wherein I evaluate Paul's liturgical instruction to his gentile audience in Romans in connection with first-century pagan practices and writings.

A key distinction between my approach to the χαρίσματα listed in Rom 12:6–8 and that of previous commentators is the extent to which I believe Greco-Roman acts and conceptions of worship helped shape Paul's audience in terms of what they may have already understood about appropriate and effective divine-human relations. This knowledge, whether by contrast or comparison, would apply to their adherence and application as to his teaching about the χαρίσματα, and would include their application and purpose within the passage in question.

3. TERMINOLOGY

My project involves a consideration of the rituals and practices within the ancient world that may have had implications for Paul's first-century audience. Part of my method is to take the words that Paul uses in Rom 12:6–8[140] and consider them in light of the various usages that I have located from literature and other materials from the Greco-Roman world. Another part of this process involves interacting with scholarship on Roman religion.[141] Both of these exercises necessarily de-

[140] I will focus primarily on the Greek words that Paul designates as the seven χαρίσματα.

[141] On religion pertaining particularly to Rome, see Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome I*; Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 2: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); J. Champeaux, *La Religion Romaine* (*Ldp Ref.inedits*) (*French Edition*) (Livre de Poche, 1998); Duncan MacRae, *Legible Religion: Books, Gods, and Rituals in Roman Culture* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2016); Rüpke, "Roman Religion"; Jörg Rüpke, *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome* (London: Cornell University Press, 2016), ; Jörg Rüpke and Federico Santangelo, "Public Priests and Religious Innovation in Imperial Rome," in *Beyond Priesthood: Religious Entrepreneurs and Innovators in the Roman Empire*, ed. Richard L. Gordon, Georgia Petridou, and Jörg Rüpke (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 15-48; John Scheid, *La Religion Des Romains* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010); Jörg Rüpke, *Pantheon: A New History of Roman Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); John Scheid, *The Gods, the State, and the Individual: Reflections on Civic Religion in Rome* (*Empire and After*) (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); J. A. North and S. R. F. Price, *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (*Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

mand descriptions of activities that pertain to divine-human relations. Inevitably, certain words are necessary to describe these practices. I am aware of the limitations that attend my attempt to deploy these words, as well as the difficulties of trying to write about the past with one foot in the present. There is also a linguistic concern that has to do with the stability of words and their meaning over time. These confinements notwithstanding, I offer the following definitions of key terms that will be used throughout this thesis. Defining words such as religion, ritual, and worship will help me set parameters for how I will use them.

Religion

I have noted my agreement and adoption of Brent Nongbri's definition of religion as "things involving the gods or other superhuman beings and the technologies for interacting with such beings."[142] More specific to this thesis and its focus on the religious mentalité of Paul's gentile addressees is the work of Jorg Rüpke, who explores how individuals in Rome "lived religion."[143] For Rüpke, the notion of "lived religion" is to be preferred over the terms "domestic cult" and "*religion privée*" (it., orig.).[144] In his monograph, Rüpke helpfully views relations between humans and the divine in terms of communication. This makes it possible to observe these relations in action via material evidence through which individuals and groups communicated with other "actors who were not indubitably plausible" (e.g., the dead, "spirits," or "gods").[145] Graffitti is one such phenomenon that Rüpke calls a "great two- or three-dimensional" signifier of religious communication" left "as close as possible to the focus of religious communication, in the vicinity of the cult image, on mural paintings, or in corridors. . . ."[146] Rüpke argues that religious understanding developed out of a "network of practical strategies, experiences, and conceptions, [and] also acts of institutionalization and shared signs," and that these ideas were then applied in "ever-new spaces and situations. . . ."[147] Unpacking this idea will tell us something about the role of religion in the ancient Roman

[142] Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of A Modern Concept*, 157.

[143] Rüpke, *Pantheon*, xiii.

[144] Ibid., 255.

[145] Ibid., 222.

[146] Ibid., 258.

[147] Ibid., 255.

Empire in which Paul's addressees lived. Instead of a religious system wherein human actors merely repeat religious practices, scholars such as Rüpke, as well as Goodman and Kindt advocate for religion that was meaningfully lived out in all areas of Roman society.

Julia Kindt has argued that the notion of "personal religion" should be viewed as a productive category for studying ancient religion.[148] Kindt's work specifically covers ancient Hellenistic religion, but she convincingly argues that there is evidence of "individual engagement with the supernatural" that does not "fit into our conception of *polis* religion."[149] Kindt further observes that scholars have not paid attention to the more personal aspects of ancient Greek religion.[150] She attributes this gap to a "broader scholarly position which defines ancient Greek religion in a way that downplays the dimensions of 'belief' and 'personal piety' in favour of communal articulations of the religious – collective ritual practices in particular."[151] MacRae applies this perspective to Roman religion during the later Republic and early Empire, and argues that reducing this reality to "civil theology," or a "state religion," is an error of "modern assumption. . . ."[152] Rüpke points out that the temples themselves were designed to evoke personal engagement with the gods therein. The temples of Iron Age Italy were "lavish" in their architectural decoration, with "a high podium, roof figures, and grotesque masks at the eave."|[153] This design was strategic for particular experiences that were "mediated by visual stimulation" in which visitors were confronted by an "oversized statue" or found themselves facing" the power of a deity displayed in a space in such a way as to emphasize its dynamism."[154] Doorways and entrances "were positioned to surprise the visitor with novel sightlines or confusing reflections . . ."[155] and images and mural paintings gave the "already

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[148] Julia Kindt, "Personal Religion: A Productive Category for the Study of Ancient Greek Religion?," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 135 (2015), 35-50.

[149] Kindt, 35.

[150] Kindt names, in particular, the work of Walter Burkert (*Greek Religion*, tr. J. Raffan, Oxford (1985), D. Ogden (*A Companion to Greek Religion*, London (2007), and N. Evans (*Civic Rites: Democracy and Religion in Ancient Athens*, Berkeley (2010).

[151] Kindt, 35.

[152] MacRae, *Legible Religion*, 8.

[153] Rüpke, *Pantheon*, 226.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

extraordinary atmosphere added impact. . . ."[156] Additionally, there was an "awareness of the religious experiences of a great many earlier visitors" that was evidenced by the "sheer quantity of deposited objects" that were appropriately positioned so that worshipers could point to "successful acts of religious communication" by others.[157] Perhaps lower in status than the deities located in the temples, but no less important to everyday concerns, were the various gods listed in the *indigitamenta* who were objects of worship individually associated with infancy, conception, the naming of an infant, childbirth, fear, mental states, particular actions, agriculture, marriage, women's marital status, and sexual activities.[158] Rüpke thus evaluates ancient material artifacts and argues that the evidence reflects a "religious competency" held by the persons who may have created, arranged, or altered various objects that pertain to divine-human relations.[159]

Rüpke views religion in Rome as an "embedded religion," meaning that "religious practices formed part of the cultural practices of nearly every realm of daily life."[160] Martin Goodman also asserts that cultic practices were an "integral part of society" and included "the rites and rituals, the buildings, feasts, and competitions within which the benevolence of the gods was celebrated and petitioned."[161] Religion and identity were closely related, according to Goodman, in that "it was often primarily by common participation in, and adherence to a particular series of religious rituals, that a social group defined its identity and excluded those who did not belong. . . ."[162] This point is especially important for the gentile Christ-followers in Rome who existed in somewhat of a liminal state somewhere between Judaism and their pagan past.

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[156] Ibid., 227.

[157] Ibid. For an overview of votive offerings as gifts of gratitude for the gods from Hellenistic examples, see F. T. van Straten, "Gifts for the Gods," in *Faith, Hope, and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, ed. H. S. Versnel (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 65-151.

[158] For a survey of these gods in Roman religion, see Micol Perfigli, *Indigitamenta: Divinità Funzionali E Funzionalità Divina Nella Religione Romana* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2004).

[159] Rüpke, *Pantheon*, 222.

[160] Rüpke, "Roman Religion," 5. See also John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells From the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); John H. Elliott, *Beware the Evil Eye Volume 2: The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World-Greece and Rome* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016).

[161] Goodman, *Mission and Conversion*, 16.

[162] Ibid. For an enlightening discussion of personhood in the first-century that may be applied to personal engagement with religion, see Susan Grove Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2017).

Rüpke strengthens the argument that religion held some sort of meaning, or at least involved personal decisions, for individuals in first-century Rome. For example, archeological evidence of the various groupings of gods on display in the *domus* shows that personal expression was allowed to be exercised by citizens in their own homes.[163] The household gods, or *lares* (a "generic title in a complex ontology, situated somewhere among gods, nymphs, heroes, demons, *manes*, and *penates*"), were most firmly "anchored in the everyday" and "immediate vicinity" of the home.[164] We also have evidence of decisions and choices as to various "dedicatory inscriptions or figurative elements on marble urns," and personal inscriptions of vows and thanksgiving for monuments that were related to "crisis rituals."[165] Original nomenclature was given to groupings of gods, and foreign gods (e.g., Isis) were voluntarily introduced into the home who were not typically associated with the *polis*.[166] Murals have been uncovered depicting divine figures communicating with ancient persons in private bedrooms by way of dreams.[167] Private gardens were a place for altars and statues of gods. These areas could be described as a sort of "sacralized space," and were "directly experiential."[168] Such gardens existed as a "constant invitation to renewed religious communication and experience," and provided an "emotionally charged atmosphere" that sometimes included idyllic paintings, music, eating, and drinking, according to Rüpke.[169] Imperial Age tombs were also "important locations for individual religious communication and innovation"[170] for the elite classes as well as slaves.[171] Written prayers were left in graves and tombs, demanding from "su-

[163] Rüpke, *Pantheon*, 219-21. For more on the *lares* of the home, see John Bodel, "Cicero's Minerva, *Penates*, and the Mother of the *Lares*: An Outline of Roman Domestic Religion," in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, ed. John Bodel and Saul M. Olyan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 248-75; Kaufmann-Heinimann, "Religion in the House"; Harriet I. Flower, *The Dancing Lares and the Serpent in the Garden: Religion At the Roman Street Corner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[164] Rüpke, *Pantheon*, 250.

[165] Ibid., 221.

[166] Ibid., 222. Rüpke points out that decisions such as these need not be viewed as "individualistic" or as a "solitary initiative[s]," since advice may have been given by priests and craftsmen, but these choices do "testify" to "individual religious experiment," (ibid.).

[167] Ibid., 228.

[168] Ibid., 231.

[169] Ibid., 231-34.

[170] Ibid., 247.

[171] Ibid., 242-43.

perhuman actors" justice where society could not intervene.[172] This wealth of material evidence points to the plausibility of some amount of personal engagement with supernatural beings. That divine-human relations were relevant and personally important for Roman inhabitants may be applied to Paul's first-century Roman addressees.

Classicists generally agree that Rome was a city known for its religion and cultic activity.[173] Proper worship of the various Roman gods ensured the success and well-being of the city of Rome.[174] Roman inhabitants directed their worship towards a wide range of gods, some anthropomorphized, some not. The former included gods of the Roman state religion such as Jupiter, Juno, and Mars, while the latter encompassed the divinities of the environment, such as "the spirits of streams, fountains . . . woods. . . ."[175] Virtuous abstractions such as Concord, Fides, and Clementia were also worshiped.[176] Religions of the state, also known as ethnic cults, were "part of the actual or imagined ancestral heritage of a *genos* or *ethnos*. . . ."[177] There were elective cults, including Mithras, Isis, and Bona Dea, which were cults that an individual could choose to join,[178] as well as worship that was offered to mortals such as the emperor.[179] The many temples, shrines, statues, coins, in-

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[172] Ibid., 260-61.

[173] Price observes that Rome was a city that absorbed many religious identities. See Simon Price, "Homogeneity and Diversity in the Religions of Rome," in *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (*Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*), ed. J. A. North and S. R. F. Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 254-75.

[174] Beard et al, xi.

[175] Warrior, *Roman Religion*, 9.

[176] J. Rufus Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology," in *Religion* (*Heidentum: Römischen Götterkulte, Orientalische Kulte in Der Römischen Welt*) *Band II.17.1*, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Hasse (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981), 827-948.

[177] Simon Price, "Religious Mobility in the Roman Empire," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 102 (2012), 2. Judaism is also considered within the context of ethnic cults (Price, 4).

[178] Price, "Religious Mobility," 2. See also A.D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion From Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). Elective cults have also been known as mystery religions and oriental religions. For distinctions within these two categories see Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, "Mysteries and Oriental Cults: A Problem in the History of Religions," in *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (*Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*), ed. J. A. North and S. R. F. Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 276-324.

[179] For an overview of how we might think of the notion of power and Roman imperial cult, see Richard Gordon, "The Roman Imperial Cult and the Question of Power," in *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (*Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*), ed. J. A. North and S. R. F. Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 37-70.

scriptions, and even jewelry[180] that archaeological work has uncovered show that during the imperial period relations between persons and divinity were on display in Rome, and that the importance of religion for Roman inhabitants was an ideological reality. For inhabitants of the metropolis of Rome, such as Paul's addressees, religion was lived in important spaces such as temples and the home.[181] Moreover, recent scholarship has taken up study of religious entrepreneurs, ritual practitioners, "beggar-priests," and various small religious groups that travelled throughout the ancient Mediterranean world.[182] The presence of self-styled specialists only adds to the data that ancient persons who interacted with them had access to religious information and practice outside of the traditional framework of the Greek and Roman pantheon. The result is that Paul's addressees were faced with myriad opportunities for interacting with divinity. The evidence presents an array of divine entities whose activities and characteristics are dramatically displayed and whose presence contributed to a multi-faceted religious environment for Paul's audience.

Ritual

Rituals are the practices that accompanied cult in Roman religion and the means by which participants could engage with superhuman beings. It is plausible because of the ubiquity of these practices in the city of Rome to imagine that Paul's gentile audience had participated in religious activities that may have included processions, sacrifices,[183] offerings, and prayers.[184] Ritual was the

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[180] See Rüpke, *Pantheon* 258-60. Amulets, which rested upon a person's own skin, communicated protection. They could also be "carried into temples and placed there, in order to bind this additional location into the wearer's own scheme of religious communication," (259-60). Pliny the Elder remarked that persons "carry gods on their fingers" as engraved on rings (*Naturalis Historia* 2.21).

[181] Rüpke, *Pantheon*, 216-223.

[182] See the essays in Richard L. Gordon, Georgia Petridou, and Jörg Rüpke, eds. *Beyond Priesthood: Religious Entrepreneurs and Innovators in the Roman Empire* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017). Of interest to Pauline studies, see Heidi Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[183] For an overview of sacrifice in the Mediterranean world, see Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Varhelyi, *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

[184] In *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder criticizes futile obsessions about public prayer and thereby describes something of this activity and shows its importance for the public:

> as a body the public at all times believes in [the effects of words and formulated incantations on the gods] unconsciously. In fact the sacrifice of victims without a prayer is supposed to be of no effect; without it too the gods are not thought to be properly consulted. Moreover, there is one form of words for getting favorable

means by which humans attempted to communicate with their gods. Such activities could be publicly performed, wherein the gods might be called upon, sometimes by name, via "animal or vegetable sacrifice."[185] At other times, the sacredness of various places could be invoked.[186] Some rites were publicly financed. Examples of this are the celebrations that attended popular festivals such as the Saturnalia and the public games. These practices could also be more "decentralized," as in the case of the rituals which celebrated the Parilia.[187] In the Parentalia, dead ancestors were visited at their tombs.[188] So-called "life-cycle" rituals occurred closer to home and included the rites associated with naming, leaving childhood, marrying, and funeral rites.[189]

Hahn observes that prayer, which she defines as "words addressed to divine powers," played a significant part in the "actual practice of religion."[190] In the concluding remarks of her essay, Hahn states that while "scholars of Roman religion have paid considerable attention to festivals and ritual acts, they have for the most part neglected the study of prayer in its own right."[191] Prayers accompanied every sacrifice and the words of these prayers identified "the purpose of the rituals" and made it possible for the divine recipients as well as the human audience to understand "what was

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> omens, another for averting evil, and yet another for a commendation. We see also that our chief magistrates have adopted fixed formulas for their prayers; that to prevent a word's being omitted or out of place a reader dictates beforehand the prayer from a script; that another attendant is appointed as a guard to keep watch, and yet another is put in charge to maintain a strict silence; that a piper plays so that nothing but the prayer is heard. Remarkable instances of both kinds of interference are on record: cases when the noise of actual ill omens has ruined the prayer, or when a mistake has been made in the prayer itself; then suddenly the head of the liver, or the heart, has disappeared from the entrails, or these have been doubled, while the victim was standing" (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Book XXVIII. iii. 10–11).

[185] Rüpke, "Roman Religion," 7.

[186] Ibid. Rüpke states that in this way, "[r]ituals stage-manage the gods' existence and one's own piety at the same time." Scheid notes that ritual sacrifices could include "incense [and wine], liquid libations, vegetal offerings, or animal victims." John Scheid, "Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors," in *A Companion to Roman Religion* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 263.

[187] Rüpke, "Roman Religion," 4. In this festival, "purgatory materials" were handed out by the Vestal Virgins and taken home.

[188] Ibid.

[189] For more on these rituals, see Scheid, "Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors."

[190] Frances Hickson Hahn, "Performing the Sacred Prayers and Hymns," in *A Companion to Roman Religion* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 247. See also H.W. Pleket, "Religious History as the History of Mentality," in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (*Studies in Greek and Roman Religion*), ed. H.S. Versnel (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 1981), 152-92.

[191] Hahn, 247.

happening."[192] Hahn also asserts that "no area of life was devoid of prayers," and that "literary texts and votive inscriptions attest [to] the many aspects of life where individuals sought divine aid: birth, illness, journeys, business."[193] Hahn attributes a palpable importance to prayer for ancient persons as their petitions "demonstrate concerns about the lack of control and predictability of daily life, as well as a fundamental belief or hope in the power of the supernatural to affect that condition."[194]

For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to think about the kinds of rituals, such as prayer, that Paul's gentile audience likely participated in as pagan worshipers and spectators. Prayer is a ritual that occurred both publicly and privately, and its performers were specialists and non-specialists. Prayers could accompany other ritual activity and take on the form of petitions for cures, protection, blessing, and aid.[195] They also could contain vows,[196] thanksgiving,[197] hymns,[198] and involve inquiring into the will of the gods.[199] Prayers were held regularly whether at "meal-time, birth, death, festival, inauguration, [and] battle. . . ."[200] This evidence points not only to the ubiquitous nature of religion and ritual for persons living in a city such as Rome, it also suggests that the rituals were connected to all of life, both in public and in private.

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[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Ibid.

[195] Hahn, 240.

[196] Ibid., 240-42.

[197] Hahn discusses the importance of the idea of reciprocity as "an important aspect of any prayer" (242).

[198] Hahn distinguishes hymns from other forms of prayer because they were performed by a group of people, such as priests or a "citizen chorus," and were done so on behalf of the larger community (244). Hahn also notes that hymns could be performed as rituals of expiation. Her example comes from Livy's account of a chorus of unmarried girls who processed through the city after an androgynous birth (Hahn 244; cf. Livy 27.37.5–15). There were also the boys and girls who sang the *Carmen Saeculare* by Horace for the Secular Games in 17 BCE.

[199] Hahn, 235. Hahn notes that scholars have often interpreted the words of certain rituals as having a "magical quality," wherein the effectiveness of the ritual seems to be dependent on "human technique rather than on divine power" (Hahn, 236). She questions, however, whether magic is a "useful hermeneutic category" in that it "seems hopelessly bound to a positivistic view privileging modern religions over so-called primitive magic" (ibid.). I agree with Hahn and will not use the category of magic in this thesis.

[200] Hahn, 237. Hahn remarks that there are [c]ountless votive tablets that proclaim answered prayers for aid in childbirth or sickness and protection on journeys" (238). Hahn provides an excerpt of prayer from Cato the Elder to "Father Mars" from a farmer who asks for protection and the purification of his farm (Hahn, 239; cf. *Agriculture* 141). People could also offer their own personal prayers in the great temples (Hahn, 238).

Worship

Pleket provides some of the terminology that he has compiled from Hellenistic inscriptional evidence that is associated with venerating the divine.[201] I have already noted some of the language Paul employs in Rom 12:1 to set the tone of worship for his auditors. As I consider the following words which were commonly used in reference to divine-human relations, I will note whether or not these terms appear in Paul's Roman letter. The first of these is the word δύναμις, used to denote power, according to LSJ.[202]

Pleket notes that "in the Roman period the conception of 'divine power' adopted an ever more central place."[203] By remarking upon the importance of divine power and attributing δύναμις to God, as Paul does in Rom 1:4, 14, 20; 9:17, and to the Holy Spirit in Rom 15:13, 19, Paul may be acknowledging the importance of divine power in the eyes of all ancient worshipers. Paul acknowledges powers who would try and separate Christ-followers from the love of God in Rom 8:28–39, but he also makes it clear that the God of his gospel is more powerful. Pleket also states that the δύναμις of the "all-dominating stars is mentioned repeatedly" in the astrological writings of the imperial period.[204] On his part, Paul uses the word δύναμις in Rom 1:20 to state that the God he worships made the stars and the entire world. Ancient inscriptional evidence confirms that gods held authority in the eyes of their worshipers and were expected to issue commands [ἐπιταγή].[205] Paul lets his gentile audience know in Rom 16:26 that they owe their inclusion into the people of God to the command of the eternal God [ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ αἰωνίου θεοῦ]. Divine figures were known to provoke awe due to their heavenly origins and dwelling, according to Pleket.[206] Paul affirms that the God his audience now worships is located in heaven [οὐρανός] in Rom 1:18 and 10:6. Pleket treats other words that refer to worship in the ancient world, terms that are not found in any of Paul's letters.

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[201] Pleket, "Religious History as the History of Mentality," 152-92 Pleket's research and examples pertain to Greek religion; however, because since Paul has written in the Greek language, terminology that helps us define what we mean by the term "worship" is helpful for my purposes.

[202] LSJ, δύνăμις [ŭ], ἡ, 452.

[203] Pleket, 178-79.

[204] Ibid., 180.

[205] Ibid., 153.

[206] See Pleket for examples of the epithet οὐράνιος θεός (e.g., Zeus; *the* heavenly gods collectively) (167).

There is προσκυνέω, which, according to LSJ means, *make obeisance to the gods* or their images, *fall down and worship*,[207] and προσκύνημα, which LSJ has as *act of worship*.[208] Pleket, however, notes the association of both of these terms with the posture of "kneeling,"[209] which is of interest to Paul. In Rom 14:11, Paul uses the language of kneeling to remind his auditors of God's promise that every knee will bow to him. Assuming this position signified an acknowledgement of the superior power [δύναμις] of the divine in the ancient world.[210] Pleket (and Paul) finds the term κύριος to be a "favourite" epithet. In Pleket's research, κύριος occurs frequently in "votive inscriptions in general."[211] For Paul, κύριος is a beloved epithet for Jesus Christ in Rom 1:4, 7; 4:24; 5:1, 11, 21; 6:23; 7:25; 8:39; 10:9; 13:14; 14:14; 15:30; 16:18, 20. Finally, Pleket notes that it was popular to advertise on votive offerings that the gods were worthy of εὐλογία [praise or blessing].[212] Paul states that he will come to Rome in the fullness of the blessing [εὐλογίας] of Christ in Rom 15:29. What we may observe from this brief and limited survey is that Paul may have taken common language that his audience would understand in terms of divine-human relations and apply it to God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit in his letter.

Ancient worshipers typically viewed themselves as servants of a deity, according to Pleket and his research. He takes note of the noun λάτρις, which he determines means a person "who works for a wage."[213] This word and the related word λατρεύω, however, may have been understood as more than slavery or menial labor in religious scenarios.[214] For example, the writer Euripides uses λάτρις to describe a "servant" of Apollo.[215] In Euripides' *Ion*, the title character desires to serve [λατρεύων] at Apollo's temple forever.[216] This same figure is also described as a "priest" and a "noble

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[207] LSJ, προσκῠν-έω, 1518.

[208] LSJ, προσκῠν-ημα, ατος, τό, 1518. Cf. Pleket, 156-57.

[209] Pleket, 156-57.

[210] Ibid., 158-59.

[211] Pleket., 176.

[212] Ibid., 183.

[213] Ibid., 163.

[214] The verb λατρεύω means to serve the gods with prayers and sacrifices, according to LSJ (1032)

[215] Pleket, 163. Throughout this thesis, I will consult the works of ancient dramatists who use the terms under consideration from Rom 12:6–8. I do this with caution, however, noting that such creative usage should be compared with instances from historical accounts and more ordinary usage.

[216] Euripides, *Ion* 151

free youth" who has a very profound relationship with Apollo, qualities that connote more than mere servanthood.[217] Pleket, moreover, finds that the word λατρεύω was also used to indicate the "function of a priestess of Athena" in a "service [that was] not inglorious."[218] As I have already noted, Paul also uses the word λατρεύω to speak of his own service to God in Rom 1:9 as well as the wrongly focused idol worship wherein worshipers served [ἐλάτρευσαν] the creature rather than the Creator in Rom 1:25. Paul additionally finds the related noun λατρεία helpful to denote one of the privileges of Israel, or "the worship," in Rom 9:4 and the worship that he expects his Roman Christ-followers will present to God in Rom 12:1.[219] Other words Pleket finds used for serving the deity include ὑπηρέτης,[220] a word Paul uses to describe himself and his co-workers in 1 Cor 4:1, and δοῦλος,[221] which Paul employs for himself in his opening words of the Roman letter. These words, found in inscriptional evidence and also in Paul's Roman letter, were used to connote a personal dependence upon the divine and a willingness to do the divine bidding.

3.1. The significance of divine-human relations for Roman inhabitants such as Paul's gentile audience

Now that I have discussed the ubiquitous nature of opportunities for ancient persons to engage in divine-human relations in first-century Rome, I now consider how Paul's auditors may have received his invitation in Rom 12:1 to present their bodies to God in a life of worship. I submit that Paul's audience likely did not understand his words within a vacuum. The majority of his addressees were gentiles who were expected to have participated in the various religious opportunities that were open to them in their city. This group was therefore likely familiar with commonly held conceptions of worship, cult, and ritual from their experiences.

We do not know to what extent Paul's gentile addressees had in fact left their former religious practices. In Rom 13–14, Paul seems to assume there are still some practical challenges associated

[217] Ibid., 164.

[218] Ibid.

[219] The word λατρεία is used to connote service to the gods and divine worship is also found in Plutarch's *Apologia* 23c and *Phaedrus* 244e, according to LSJ (1032).

[220] Pleket, 166-168.

[221] Ibid., 168-171.

with participation in cultic activity. He draws a bright line between the "works of darkness" which include reveling, drunkenness, debauchery and licentiousness," and he states in Rom 13:12–14 that he wishes for the Roman Christ-followers to participate in the light-filled and honorable activities of the day. These nocturnal activities that Paul lists may have brought to mind the rites associated with the cult of Dionysus, which was practiced in groves on the outskirts of town.[222] Paul further remarks in Rom 14:5 that some judge all days alike and others judge one day to be better than another. Participation in the various festivals associated with particular gods was highly regulated in accordance with the official Roman calendar. Were a member of Paul's gentile audience in Rome to have continued in their celebrations of such events, it could have presented conflicts for them. Paul also realizes that choices relating to eating and drinking, activities which were also associated with cultic activities in the Greco-Roman world, had the potential of making a brother or sister stumble (Rom 14:13–23). He also takes care to tell his gentile audience in Rom 2:25–29 that they do not need to take on the practice of Jewish circumcision. Paula Fredriksen has summarized the connundrum faced by "Paul's pagans:"

> *Like* converts, his pagans made an exclusive commitment to the god of Israel; *unlike* converts, they did not assume Jewish ancestral practices (food ways, Sabbath, circumcision, and so on). *Like* god-fearers, Paul's people retained their native ethnicities; *unlike* god-fearers, they no longer worshiped their native gods. *Paul's pagans-in-Christ are neither converts nor god-fearers*. So who and what are they (it. orig.)?[223]

Considering the challenges Paul's gentile addressees faced as they continued to live in the religious milieu of first-century Rome and establish their identity and practices as Christ-followers is the issue at stake in this thesis. As I take in the religious experiences to which Paul's gentile addressees were exposed, I argue that the myriad of opportunities for divine-human relations informed the conceptions that this group brought to Paul's teaching about worship. I contend that at

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[222] Livy describes the Bacchic cult, which he relates was "long celebrated all over Italy and now even within the City in many places" (Livy, *History of Rome* 39, 15). There were mysterious rites of worship and music that occurred in a grove near Ostia that was situated between the mouth of the Tiber river and the Aventine Hill in Rome (39, 13-15). This place was known for its nocturnal orgies which could "ring with howls and the song of a choir and the beating of cymbals and drums . . ." (39, 10.6-9).

[223] Paula Fredriksen, "The Question of Worship: God's, Pagans, and the Redemption of Israel," in *Paul Within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, ed. Mark D. Nano and Magnus Zetterholm (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 186-87.

least some of the knowledge and experiences that the Roman Christ-followers had pertaining to pagan religion could, in the hands of Paul, be repurposed and re-oriented for their benefit. In order to evaluate the likelihood of whether or not Paul's addressees faced challenges that pertained to a transition away from their former religious practices, I briefly address the importance of belief as between ancient persons and their gods. I also address why the gentiles in Paul's audience would need practices to replace the cultic activities in which they had participated. Having established what I mean when I use the term "religion," I discuss why we should consider the Roman Jesus-groups as religious or concerned with divine-human relations.[224]

The role of belief

Even though there is a wealth of evidence that points to myriad forms of religious activity in Rome, some scholars have been reluctant to attribute personal significance to the ancients and their religious beliefs.[225] Teresa Morgan finds such a significance in her treatment of the Greek word *pistis* and correlative Latin word *fides*.[226] Morgan looks at the scholarship in regards to how the words *pistis* and *fides* referred to divine-human relations in the era contemporary with Paul's first-century addressees, and notes that "something of a consensus has been reached" for some scholars, that in "some relatively weak and limited senses, most Greeks and Romans did believe in their gods."[227] Morgan points out, however, that historians of Greece and Rome have tended to

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[224] I now use these two terms interchangeably.

[225] See Morgan's discussion on scholarly approaches to the notion of belief (124-28). Versnel acknowledges that even if we accept that Greek religion was "basically a matter of ritual action," this "in no way implies the consequence that Greeks did not believe in (the existence) of their gods." H. S. Versnel, *Coping With the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 552. Versnel responds to what he sees as a contradiction in this thinking: "

> how does one communicate with divine beings through prayer, gift-giving, and attributing them a full scale of anthropomorphic (and allomorphic) features . . . without believing (that is taking as true) that these beings exist (in whatever sense of the word "exist")? The prerequisite of all these actions, especially prayer, is the belief that gods have power and are willing to interfere in human life. How would they do that in the perception of the worshippers without existing? Stating that Greek religion is ritualist and at the same time that 'the Athenians did not believe in their gods' is either nonsense or a kind of sophistry run wild, which should be banished from scholarly discourse (552).

[226] Morgan, *Roman Faith*.

[227] Ibid., 126.

think of the concept of belief as "characteristically propositional," belief that certain things are true. . . ."[228] Such belief is "often presented as non-rational, in the sense that it is not based on anything that would ordinarily be regarded as good evidence or argument. . . ."[229] Beliefs are thought of as a "personal matter," and the "emotional dimension" is emphasized.[230] Morgan notes that scholarly studies that produce such results have not appropriately relied on the language of *pistis* and *fides* within the ancient evidence, and that doing so would lead to different conclusions.[231] She proceeds to investigate the *pistis*/*fides* word cluster[232] through portrayals of the goddess Fides in writings where literary characters request *pistis* or *fides* from the gods,[233] in the philosophical works of Epictetus and Plutarch, who write of *pistis* or *fides* as a gift from the gods, as well as in the writings of Horace, Virgil, Cicero, Ovid, Petronius, and others. From this evidence, she concludes that to think after the ancient Greek and Romans, we must view divine-human *pistis*/*fides* in terms of *trust* and *trustworthiness*. In contrast with abstract notions of *pistis*/*fides* which are comprised of propositional truth or views that ancient personal beliefs are merely emotional and non-rational, Morgan argues for something more tangible, concrete, and "powerfully functional."[234] The gods offer *pistis*/*fides* "to human beings and encourage them to offer it to one another. . . ."[235] Human beings may also "offer [*pistis*/*fides*] to the gods" in that they trust, have confidence in, and place their hope in them.[236] Trust thus carries a practical and relational aspect that I find helpful in this thesis.

I have already noted that Rüpke's conclusion that religion was personal in that it involved cre-

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[228] Ibid., 127.

[229] Ibid.

[230] Ibid.

[231] See also Andrej Petrovic and Ivana Petrovic, *Inner Purity and Pollution in Greek Religion: Volume I: Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship, 2016). The authors focus on the "inner stance" of ancient Greek worshipers in terms of purity and pollution and conclude that the "fundamental propositional belief which underlies the concepts of inner purity and pollution is that the gods are watching and judging humans" (265). Inner purity thus possessed a moral dimension.

[232] Morgan finds that "the terms *pistis* and *fides* come from the same Indo-European root, but that they operate in the Greek world from our earliest evidence, in Homer, onwards, in ways very similar to those in which they operate in the Roman republic." Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 128.

[233] Persius, *Satire* 2 (6-14).

[234] Morgan, 174.

[235] Ibid., 141.

[236] Ibid., 141.

ativity and choices for ancient persons. He also notes the role of belief as an important component for communicating matters that refer to divine-human relations:

> In order for a communication to be successful, attention must be created by the promise of relevant information. This must be given credibly and audibly by the speaker, whose audience must indicate to him or her that they apprehend and believe the promises before the communication can proceed. In the rush and tumble of everyday affairs, only the promise of relevance (whatever form that promise takes) can attract attention to a communication that then changes those addressed (in ways that are never predictable!), and in this sense meets with success. It is not surprising that human beings extend these ground rules of communicative success to their communications with nonhumans.[237]

Would new cultic practices be important for the burgeoning Christ-following community in Rome?

Practices and activities helped foster the identity and health of the community in first-century Rome. Petrovic and Petrovic correctly find that "practices are predicated on beliefs and . . . beliefs influence practices."[238]

E. A. Judge discusses whether we may consider the early Pauline communities in terms of religion.[239] Judge opens up the categories within which we may discover something of the "social identity of the first Christians."[240] He emphasizes aspects of learning and moral training that occurred within the early Christ-following communities and deems these groups scholastic communities. This does not mean that Judge thought the early Jesus-groups did not engage in what he calls "cultic activities."[241] Judge does not find the category of "religion" helpful for a "social description of Christianity."[242] Without "temple, cult, statue or ritual, they [the early Christ-following groups] lacked the time-honoured and reassuring routine of sacrifice that would have been necessary to

[237] Rüpke, *Pantheon*, 15-16.

[238] Petrovic and Petrovic, 3. Andrej and Ivana Petrovic acknowledge that they have been influenced by Henk Versnel, Robert Parker, and Julia Kindt in adopting this stance.

[239] For an introduction to his thought and scholarship, see E.A. Judge, "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community," *Journal of Religious History* 1, No. 1 (1961), 4-15.

[240] E. A. Judge, "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History," *Journal of Religious History* 11, Issue 2 (1980), 217.

[241] Ibid., 8

[242] Ibid.

link them with religion."[243] I acknowledge the value of Judge's sociological conclusions, but disagree, based upon the discussion above, that religion should be so narrowly defined. We have already seen in the examples I have provided in section three of this chapter, that there was more to the religious "routine" and experience of Paul's gentile audience than Judge acknowledges.

Meeks criticizes Judge for neglecting the cultic nature of the early Christ-following communities.[244] While Judge emphasizes the scholastic activities of this group, Meeks considers a more integrative approach for understanding their sociological makeup. He thus considers four models that he finds in the environment of the ancient world of the first Jesus-believers. These models include the household, the voluntary association, the synagogue, and the philosophic or rhetorical school.[245] Meeks draws analogies from all of these groups, stating that "none of the four models . . . captures the whole . . ."[246] For my own part, I note that all four of these models represent locations where divine-human relations were either discussed or practiced. Christ-followers, however, did not yet have a cult of the sort that was practiced in the household, a voluntary association,[247] or that which was spoken of in ancient literary texts. Nevertheless, as Meeks notes, there were the beginnings of cult as evidenced by baptism, "an introductory ritual" as well as a ritual meal that was central to its common life that evidence the rapidly growing traditions of other sorts of ritualized behavior.[248] The behavior that was practiced by humans in relation to the divine was explored by writers in the ancient world. The discussion of divine-human relations in these works provides important evidence for my project.

I argue in this thesis that Paul may recognize that the formerly pagan gentiles who had been invested in myriad religious activities are now pondering appropriate replacements. This conundrum parallels the Corinthian group who, as we know from Paul's correspondence with them, struggled with their ongoing engagement or disengagement with pagan culture. Like the Corinthi-

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[243] Judge, "The Social Identity of the First Christians," 212.

[244] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 84.

[245] Meeks, 75ff.

[246] Ibid., 84.

[247] For a discussion on the rituals involved in such groups, see Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming A Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Miinneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

[248] Meeks, 84.

an group, it is entirely possible that the Roman Christ-followers had not fully extracted themselves from their former religious practices. Paul's strategy may thus include suggestions for replacements as a way to confirm that his addressees should leave these sort of entanglements behind.[249]

4. THE BREADTH OF MATERIALS UNDER CONSIDERATION

I consider the χαρίσματα in the text of Rom 12:6–8 alongside how these words appear in instances of ancient Greco-Roman writings and artifacts. In so doing, synchronic data is given preference that pertains to divine-human relations. This is partially due to the religious context that I contend is present in the surrounding text of Rom 12:6–8, but also because of the significance of religious practices for the beliefs, identity, and mission of the Christ-following groups in Rome. In my examination of the ancient sources, I set up a hierarchy of importance. I will give greater weight to sources from the mid first-century since this is the time of the sending of Paul's letter. I will also include more ancient sources that predated this epistle with a general preference for the dates closest to the mid-first century. My timeframe includes authors such as Homer, Hesiod, and Plato. While it is true that these authors in some cases wrote hundreds of years before the first century, the influence of these authors as to this period is well established.

In her essay, "The Relevance of Greco-Roman Literature and Culture to New Testament Study," Loveday Alexander considers the importance of the diverse cultural world of Greco-Roman literature on the shaping of NT texts.[250] I agree with Alexander, who finds writers such as Plutarch, Epictetus, and Dio Chrysostom are helpful for NT studies because they "all form part of the public world that the first Christians had to address."[251] I consider the Pauline text of Rom 12:6–8 as an "access

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[249] Kathy Ehrensberger writes that Paul is "negotiating meaning in the space-between," or theologizing at the "crossroads." Kathy Ehrensperger, *Paul At the Crossroads of Cultures: Theologizing in the Space-Between* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 222. In this place, meaning is still in the process of being negotiated and there is "more than one feasible way to go. . . ." (ibid).

[250] Loveday C. A. Alexander, "The Relevance of Greco-Roman Literature and Culture to New Testament Study (Second Edition)," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2010), 87.

[251] Ibid., 94. I also include Pausanias, Strabo, Cornutus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Not all of these authors are Roman. I will consider Hellenistic uses of the terms as regards the χαρίσματα. Beard et al admit that not all of the texts they consider "relate specifically to Rome" (*Religions of Rome*, 248, n. 5). In their survey of religions in Rome, they have "drawn on texts (such as much of Apuleius' Metamorphoses) which are focused on other parts of the empire – where

point" to a "whole network of 'Greco-Roman literature and culture.'"[252]

Morgan also considers literary and epigraphic evidence from within the whole of the Roman Empire, since "Roman as well as Greek and Jewish ideas may always be in the background of the thinking of early Christian writers."[253] Morgan believes that Roman usages of *pistis*/*fides*, which she culls from "across the empire" in both Latin and Greek texts, may "throw light on the evolution of Christian pistis."[254] Although I put more weight on Greek texts because of my investigation of the the Greek terms of Paul's letter, I will occasionally look beyond these sources to Latin texts where appropriate. [255]

First-century evidence has immense value. Whether from poets or philosophers, physical and material evidence from historical calendars and archeological findings to inscriptions, when considered with this data helps us understand something of the life of the first-century Roman city-dweller. An examination that is free of judgment and that approaches the first-century evidence on its own terms allows the historian to peer into the realities that surrounded Paul's audience.

Moreover, as Christopher S. Stanley has written, "understanding is shaped by what the audience brings to the text."[256] We would therefore do well to ask what religious constructs Paul's Ro-

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they are relevant" and with the justification that they were "part of Roman literary culture, read at Rome" (ibid). They do concede, however, that they are "constantly aware however of the differences that must have been apparent between the religious life of Rome and (say) Corinth" (ibid).

[252] Alexander, 94-95.

[253] Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 125.

[254] Ibid., 124.

[255] This is the strategy of early 20th-century scholar W.C. van Unnik. Pieter van der Horst praises Unnik for his desire to "listen with first-century ears." Peter van der Horst, "Willem Cornelis Van Unnik (1910-1978)," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. Van Unnik Part Four*, ed. Cilliers Breyenbach and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 2014), XII. Van der Horst identifies the primacy of ancient sources for a broader understanding of the NT text, and finds that Unnik is a worthy exemplar:

> [Unnik] demonstrated that it is often only with a profound knowledge of and familiarity with the primary sources of Greek and Roman culture that one is able to decode the secrets of a NT text or the interpretive problems of an early Christian document (XI).

[256] Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing With Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 70. Stanley also states that "we should be careful about assuming that the Gentile Christians in Rome had been associated with the Jewish synagogue prior to their conversion." Stanley, *Arguing With Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*, 137. Further, Stanley argues that Paul's language in Rom 1:24, 6:19, and 4:7 "could be read as implying a strictly 'pagan' background for the recipients of the letter" (138).

man audience might have brought to the text of his famous letter.

How culturally aware was Paul's audience?

Literary works that elucidate instruction for religious activities, histories and explanations of the gods and their doings, as well as prayers and praise were related by historians, poets, philosophers, and rhetoricians. Such words appeared on inscriptions, epigraphic materials, were read or sung in Greek and Roman plays, during festivals, ceremonies, in times of war, and during private suppers throughout the Roman empire. The works of famous writers such as Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Euripides, and others were depended upon to teach the people about divine-human relations, from ancient times and into the first-century CE.

But, how culturally aware might the original hearers of Paul's letter have been? Was literacy a prerequisite to engaging with the magnificent literary works mentioned above? In his chapter on "Homer and the New Testament," Thomas E. Phillips declares that "[n]o one doubts the presence and influence of the Homeric tradition within the first-century AD Greek-speaking world," even amongst those who could not read.[257] Homer's epics, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are thought to have taken their established form during the eight century BCE, but the larger tradition of Homeric literature includes several hymns to the gods which will be referenced within this thesis. Phillips goes on to state that "exposure to Homer was not the exclusive privilege of the literate classes," but that the "illiterate masses would have known many of the stories and scenes within Homer's epics" through public readings of his works, mosaics and paintings throughout the Roman Empire that incorporated images from his work, theatrical productions based on his writings, and even coins with images from his stories.[258] And so, Philipps determines that "no one in the Greco-Roman world was unaware of the characters, the plots, and many of the key lines from Homer's epics."[259]

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[257] Thomas E. Phillips, "Homer and the New Testament," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 390. Phillips maintains that Homer's influence was not only impressed upon Greco-Roman culture, but also through education, art, and theater. Moreover, he cites both Philo and Josephus' use of Homer in their writings (391).

[258] Phillips, "Homer," 392.

[259] Ibid. See also Karl Olav Sandnes, *Challenge of Homer: School, Pagan Poets and Early Christianity* (London: T & T Clark International, 2009).

As for an awareness of the philosophers, Dodd asserts that Paul's audience probably knew something of "popular" Stoic teaching and would perhaps know of Epictetus' teaching about the importance of the unity of the citizens for the wellbeing of the city.[260] Dodd also asserts that "few Romans would not have heard the famous fable of the Belly and the Members," by which Menenius Agrippa was said to have put an end to a "general strike" of the lower orders in the early days of Rome.[261] Paul's teaching of the body in Christ and its members in Rom 12:4–5, then, may be viewed in parallel with current thought in Rome.

Stowers has been one of the leading scholars to have written about the Greco-Roman influence on Paul and his texts. In his monograph, Stowers argues that Paul's audience would have known of the principle of self-mastery, which he argues was a predominate motivation of the Greco-Roman world of Paul's day.[262] According to Stowers, Paul has already recognized this Roman societal ambition and deems it important enough to address in his letter to Rome. While Stowers obviously thinks that Paul was aware of his Greco-Roman surroundings, he goes on to suggest that Paul intentionally used images and metaphors from Greco-Roman philosophy and quotidian life experiences to find common ground with his Gentile audiences. He offers insight into Paul's athletic metaphor in Rom 9–11 by highlighting the Greco-Roman resonance of Paul's allusion to a footrace with Gentile and Jewish contestants (11:11-12).[263] Stowers contends that Paul's letters "abound with athletic imagery" due to the influence of Greco-Roman culture.[264] Stowers takes aspects of the Pauline text and compares it with relevant passages in the works of Euripides, Hippolytus, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus.[265] Stowers accordingly brings to the forefront pertinent Greco-Roman material to help clarify difficult passages in Paul's letter. Dunn believes that Paul, in Rom 1:11–15, self-consciously uses categories of Hellenistic thought rather than "words most natural to a Jew."[266] The significance of this is that "Paul, in elaborating his sense of call to evangelize the gen-

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[260] C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932), 195. See Epictetus, *Discourses* 11. x. 4–5)

[261] Ibid. (Livy II. 32). Menenius died in 493 BC.

[262] Stowers, *Romans*.

[263] Ibid., 314.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid., 264-69.

[266] James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1988), 35-36.

tiles, deliberately looks at the world through the eyes of a gentile, from the perspective of sophisticated Hellenism."[267]

Although the conclusions of these authors are compelling, one could also argue that ancient Greco-Roman writers provide examples that are merely analagous to the Pauline usage. In other words, we cannot be certain that Paul directly depended upon such texts. This thesis, however, focuses upon the reception of Paul's original addressees. I submit that the Roman Christ-followers could draw analogies between popular and influential texts from their own culture, quite irrespective of whether Paul purposefully meant for them to do so. This approach has motivated me to search for material within the Greco-Roman religious milieu for the purpose of illuminating the passage of Rom 12:6–8. I maintain that doing so will lead us closer to understanding how Paul's addressees may have understood it.

5. LINGUISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

One challenge facing scholars when approaching ancient texts is the slippery journey to understanding ancient meaning. We are limited by the extant evidence,[268] and what we do have is sometimes fragmented and, of course, written in ancient languages. Word searches are an integral part of this thesis. I have relied upon the databases from the TLG, the Perseus Library, and the Loeb Library. I search these databases with the term of each particular χάρισμα under consideration and rely upon the accuracy of these sources. New materials and more up-to-date translations are occasionally added to the foregoing databanks, and this thesis will reflect upon the current data.

I have examined every reference that I could locate of each of the seven words under scrutiny in this thesis between the times of the historian Diodorus Siculus (b. 90 BCE - 30 BCE) and Plutarch (46 CE - 120 CE). My goal has been to gather usage that would arguably have been relevant to Roman first-century inhabitants, and which may have informed their understanding of Paul's usage of the

[267] Ibid.

[268] I have endeavored to consult the latest evidence available at the time of the writing of this thesis. New materials, however, are being discovered. One recent example is the second century *domus* uncovered by subway workers building Rome's new Metro C line. We must therefore hold lightly to conclusions made about the ancient world. It seems there will continue to be new evidence to evaluate.

same terms that appear in Romans. However, I am limited to the information available to me as well as to the translations into English that range from the late 19th century to the present day. Of course, these translations have been evaluated, some of them over many years, and remain the accepted works in English in the field of Classics. These works are invaluable to a scholar in Biblical Studies, especially one such as mine wherein I mean to glean something of the reception of gentile Christ-followers in first-century Rome. Philologists and linguists who serve the field of Classics translate the works of authors such as Homer, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Diodorus Siculus, Dio Chrysostom, Strabo, Pausanias, and Plutarch, and are commendably often unconcerned with Christian views on the works of these authors.

I must also acknowledge limitations that are inherent in language itself. I am a native English speaker who has knowledge of Koine Greek. Paul chose to write his letters in Koine Greek, but it is plausible that his Roman addressees also had knowledge of Latin. That Rome was a bilingual city is well-attested to in its inscriptions and official documents. Of course, we do not know as much about the linguistic facilities of the particular audience of Paul's letter. I therefore stress the terms in Rom 12:6–8 that appear in Koine Greek as Paul has given them in his letter and only refer to Latin counterparts when I feel that it would possibly broaden the first-century understanding of the term.

The influence of James Barr

My goal is not to pin down a singular first-century meaning for the terms in Rom 12:6–8. This would be impossible because words and concepts do not remain static over time and meaning is connected to and defined by particular contexts. As will be seen, many commentators have not heeded the warnings of James Barr given in his book *The Semantics of Biblical Language*.[269] Barr critiques the methodology used in the *TDNT* wherein the authors erroneously integrate linguistic usage with theological thought. This is no less true in the case of words such as διακονία, ὁ παρακαλῶν, ὁ μεταδιδούς, ὁ προϊστάμενος, and ὁ ἐλεῶν. As we will see, these words have gathered meaning over time within Christianity, and senses have been anachronistically attached to the

[269] James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

Pauline text. Barr's issue is that when a word is imbued with theological meaning drawn from a particular context, this context then "comes to be seen as something contributed by the word, and then it is read into the word as its contribution where the context is in fact different."[270] I agree with Barr's assessment that utilizing these methods, biblical words can then become "overloaded" with interpretative suggestion.[271] Many modern commentators on Romans have relied on the very dictionaries that Barr criticizes, and some of the words under consideration in Rom 12:6–8 have indeed been taken as technical terms by these scholars.[272] These will be discussed in the following chapters as necessary.

What is needed is an inquiry that evaluates usage of the words of Rom 12:6–8 that is current for the Pauline audience and which provides a range of meaning that takes into consideration the words in the cultural context of first-century Rome. I will investigate the pertinent words in similar contexts over time, bringing one set of texts into evidence alongside other texts, but only when I can show evidence that both texts were currently in use in the time of Paul's audience and in Rome. The meanings of certain words do change throughout history, but they may also hold consistent meaning, especially within the same kinds of scenarios. Moreover, I am not attempting to create a dictionary, but rather a glossary of English words that reflect the ancient usage of a Greek word in a particular context as to divine-human relations. Barr suggests that for a theological dictionary, it would be more profitable to group words within various semantic fields and then "mark off the semantic oppositions between one word and another as precisely as possible. . . ."[273] Thus, the semantic field will encompass whether or not the words of Rom 12:6–8 may have meaning within divine-human relations in the first century, especially within the pagan religion from which

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[270] Ibid., 233.

[271] Ibid., 234.

[272] Barr states that the "degree to which the individual word can be related directly to the theological thought depends considerably on the degree to which the word becomes a technical term" (233). Max Turner also points out the problem with this method. Even after what he calls the "alarm sounded by James Barr, Turner finds that "NT study remains largely dominated by the prescientific 'linguistics' that encapsulated in the standard (but now dated) grammars, lexicons, and theological 'dictionaries'" that have been "mediated to each new generation of theological students by commentaries and NT Greek primers." Turner, "Modern Linguistics," 190. For an example that is quite pertinent to this study, see Kenneth Berding, "Confusing Word and Concept in 'Spiritual Gifts': Have We Forgotten James Barr's Exhortations?," *JETS* 43 (2000), 37-51.

[273] Barr, *Semantics*, 235.

Paul's audience came.

Teresa Morgan's methodology

I will take some methodological cues from Teresa Morgan, a scholar who bridges the fields of classics and NT studies. Morgan, in her "thematic study" of the words *pistis* and *fides*, states that "[w]ords carry semantic weight in the individual and collective consciousness of users; if that were not the case, communication would be impossible."[274] Thus, in this thesis, I am determined to unpack a potential range of meaning available to the first-century audience who heard Paul's letter. Because I agree with Morgan that "[e]xisting understandings are part of the context of interpretation," I embark upon a synchronic investigation into each of the seven terms that Paul deems χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 in their ancient usage.[275] It is possible thus to illuminate the mentalité and sociocultural practices of the Roman group under consideration in this project by looking at the uses of each term and its relatives in order to create a "map of understandings against which its usage in a particular context and the parameters of its likely reception can be investigated."[276]

Morgan, who embarks upon an inter-disciplinary study of why faith became so important to the early Christians, employs the tools of *l'histoire des mentalité* wherein she engages Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian sources for her historical analysis. In doing so, she explores her theme within the environments from which Christianity emerged. She notes that "[n]ew communities forming themselves within an existing culture do not typically take language in common use in the world around them and immediately assign to it radical new meanings."[277] She surmises that the early Jesus-believers were no different than other ancient persons who continued to hold to commonly-held understandings as to word meaning even as, in their case, their religious focus was shifting. She further observes, in reference to the apostle Paul, that "[o]ne does not communicate effectively with potential converts by using language in a way which they will not understand."[278]

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[274] Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 33.

[275] Morgan, *Roman Faith*, 33.

[276] Ibid. A foray into the Jewish influences attached to Paul's terms in Rom 12:6–8 is beyond what may be accomplished in this thesis.

[277] Ibid., 4.

[278] Ibid.

I agree with Morgan in expecting that Paul himself and the audience who received his words, understood them "within the range of meanings which [were] in play in the world around them" and that "our study of [them] should be equally culturally embedded."[279] In so doing, we may avoid violating what she calls a "basic principle" of cultural historiography, which is that new meanings do evolve, but that they take time.[280] Although some distinctive understandings of *pistis* and *fides* did change within the Christian communities, Morgan advocates looking at their earliest uses within their socio-cultural context of the early Roman Empire. Semantic clarity may be approached by respecting the original cultural context in each instance. For her part, Morgan is careful not to impose later understandings of faith onto the biblical texts she reviews,[281] and I will also follow suit in regards to the seven χαρίσματα. Additionally, developments, including the categories that attend them, after the mid first-century are simply not useful for this project.

An example to follow from Max Turner

Since the particular words of Rom 12:6–8 are at the heart of this thesis, I return to Turner, who offers some helpful guidelines for the lexical and semantical treatment for one of the exemplary words in his essay, χαρίσμα(τα).[282] Self-consciously taking Barr's warning against attempting to "do theology in the form of word studies," which he observes led to "the widespread confusion between words (and their meanings) and 'concepts,'" Turner turns to the word χάρισμα as an example to illustrate what for him are important principles of lexical semantics. He first surveys its etymology, then weighs the meaning of χάρισμα within its semantic domain, and finally considers the semantic effects of its usage.

Turner's mindfulness of the cautions of Barr that pertain to meaning derived from word formation puts him in direct opposition to James Dunn's work on χάρις and χάρισμα. Etymologically, Turner disagrees with Dunn's postulation that χάρισμα is derived from χάρις. Turner believes Dunn has a theological agenda here and that this linguistic assertion leads him to put a "consider-

[279] Ibid.

[280] Ibid.

[281] Morgan tackles the anachronisms of Bultmann and Augustine in regards to *pistis* and *fides*.

[282] Turner, "Modern Linguistics," 196-209.

able amount of theological freight" upon χάρισμα as an "event" of χάρις.[283] Turner, however, views χάρισμα as simply a "resultative noun from the verb χαρίζομαι," which suggests for him the sense of the 'thing (graciously) given,' 'gift . . .'"[284] Etymology or the origins of the words in Rom 12:6–8 will not play a big part in my project. Cultural meaning is not predicated upon a history of the formation of the words under consideration. Moreover, loading theological "freight" is not applicable, since the χαρίσματα are practical and concrete religious activities, not abstract concepts. Thus, they do not need to be theologized as Barr, Turner, and others have cautioned.

Turner next advocates exploring the various synonyms of χάρισμα within its semantic domain of "gift" since "[w]ords have their meanings precisely in contrast to other possibilities. . . ."[285] He delineates a particular meaning for χάρισμα, one of several words (δόμα, δῶρον, δωρεά, and δώρημα) that can mean "gift," and says that a nuance inherent in the meaning of χάρισμα "probably emphasizes that the thing described is 'a gracious and generous gift and a sign of the giver's good will and favor."[286] As such, its meaning can be clarified in contrast with other words that mean "gift." Although I agree with Turner that "[n]ot enough serious study has been devoted" to this work that explores synonyms within a semantic domain, I will not be able to make inroads here on this topic. My project investigates the χαρίσματα within a specific context, that of usage for circumstances of divine-human relations, and since the context is specific, finding and evaluating other possible words to consider is not warranted in this case.

Lastly, Turner moves on to an examination of the usage of χάρισμα. He offers up Schatzmann as a foil for his own semantic methods. After surveying Paul's usage of χάρισμα, Schatzmann finds that "it is impossible to give a simple definition for this 'complex concept."[287] Turner lists Schatzmann's categories of Paul's usage of χάρισμα as a "non-technical general sense," a nontechnical specific sense," a "technical sense," and a "technical and institutional sense" (it. orig).[288] Schatzmann's conclusion has Paul introducing "a whole proliferation of different senses" onto this

[283] Ibid., 201.

[284] Ibid., 202.

[285] Turner, "Modern Linguistics," 203.

[286] Ibid.

[287] Turner, "Modern Linguistics," 204.

[288] Ibid.

word.[289] Thus Schatzmann has ignored Barr and thus has confused words, word-senses, and concepts, according to Turner. He admits that Paul's usage of χάρισμα "could mean that he has developed some new profound but complex overarching theological 'concept,'" but for Turner, the opposite conclusion is much more likely, that for Paul the term has "rather minimal content and therefore general meaning."[290] I find myself sympathetic to Turner and his admonitions. After Barr, and now Turner, traditional theological dictionaries should be consulted responsibly with critical thinking that would recognize and reject such anachronisms and theologizing.

Since Paul's usage of χάρισμα is "our first witness to the use of this lexeme,"[291] I will not spend much time searching for antecedent Greco-Roman usage of it.[292] However, χάρις and χαρίζομαι both play an integral part of understanding divine-human relations in the ancient world, so I will consider instances within the pertinent sources of their use. For the most part, however, my foray into a more accurate first-century meaning for the seven words in Rom 12:6–8 reveals that all of these terms carry cultural currency that extends throughout the centuries. As Turner has advised, "[l]inguistics requires that we do not proliferate supposed new senses where utterances can be explained adequately in terms of known senses."[293] Therefore, I delve into the usage of these words within the Pauline literature and especially in his letter to the Romans, as well as within the cultural milieu of Paul's audience, in order to describe the known senses available to Paul's gentile audience within the first century. As I mentioned above, when it comes to the χαρίσματα, many commentators have not investigated the "known" senses that were already within the ancient literary and inscriptional sources.

As for Turner's assertion that the senses of a word in Classical Greek are "no safe guide" to the senses of the same word in Paul's day, I will proceed with this awareness and with the appropriate caution.[294]

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[289] Ibid.

[290] Ibid.

[291] Turner, "Modern Linguistics," 199.

[292] Turner states that Paul "seems to assume . . . that his readers are acquainted with its [χάρισμα] use." See "Modern Linguistics," 199.

[293] Ibid., 205.

[294] Ibid., 213-15. Turner himself considers the usage of the word κεφαλή by examining authors in what he calls the "public domain of Paul" that ranges from Plato, Herodotus, the fifth-century BCE fragment known as the Orphic Fragment,

6. CONCLUSION

On the whole, the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 have not been as popular as more traditional and established Pauline themes such as justification, sanctification, apocalyptic thought, law and gospel, Jewish roots, and ethics in connection with the letter to the Romans. Others have and do explore the well-trodden paths of Jew and gentile conflict in the letter. Of the scholars who treat the χαρίσματα in depth, the overwhelming majority of attention has been paid to Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians, not in Romans. Due to a dearth of information, then, the scarcity of which may reflect what commentators feel are topics more worthy of consideration. I take a different, and hopefully fresh approach that examines Paul's list in Rom 12:6–8 with a gentile and pagan background in mind. I also address the understandable concerns of Paul's audience for instruction as to Christ-honoring worship practices.

Following this chapter, I consider throughout seven chapters occurrences of each of the χαρίσματα within pagan religious contexts. I then use my findings to help add dimension to Paul's usage of these same words. Paul's original audience could plausibly have understood something of the teaching of Rom 12:6–8 because of their knowledge of the myriad religious resonances that accompanied each χάρισμα. These verses have shown themselves to be opaque to contemporary scholars who must work to uncover the first-century reception that may have been obvious to the first recipients.

I compare the broader Greco-Roman religious usages of the χαρίσματα to appropriate Pauline texts with the same objective. Gathering information that speaks to the context of Rom 12:6–8 from both the Greco-Roman world and the Pauline corpus itself permits an understanding of each individual χαρίσμα contained within the list of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. After discussing the possibility of a cultic milieu for each of the χαρίσματα, I ask whether this usage may illuminate the meaning and application of each gift within the Roman Jesus-group. As I do so, I will also test my hypothesis that the χαρίσματα may represent sanctioned replacements for former cultic activities

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as well as the more contemporary writings of Philo, Josephus, and Plutarch. In his search for the meaning of κεφαλή in Paul, Turner considers whether it may mean "source," but ultimately, after he turns to this evidence that spans quite time-frame for information, rejects the association with "source." Thus, by his own method, he validates these ancient sources.

practiced by gentiles in Paul's audience. After I gather and assess the evidence for each of the gifts, I will evaluate whether the findings may grant greater insight into Paul's meaning and purposes for the χαρίσματα as a whole and how they might have been received by the Greco-Roman first-century audience. I focus on the inclusion of the χαρίσματα in terms of their strategic purpose for Paul's mission to spread the gospel to the gentiles.

For each of the following chapters in which I treat each of the χαρίσματα, I begin with a representative translation from the NRSV of the Bible and conclude with my own gloss of the text under consideration. I have found that is is not necessary to question the translations of προφητεία [prophecy], ὁ διδάσκων [the one who teaches], or ὁ ἐλεῶν [the one who shows mercy]. In the case of διακονία and ὁ προϊστάμενος, however, I take a linguistic approach that leads to an expanded glossary of terms from which to choose a translation. As for ὁ παρακαλῶν, ὁ μεταδιδούς, my research has led to alternative translations that I will set forth in specific chapters that discuss these gifts. The gifts of προφητεία, ὁ διδάσκων, ὁ παρακαλῶν, ὁ μεταδιδούς, and ὁ ἐλεῶν all lend themselves to a more theoretical approach that asks how the ancients perceived these terms as concepts within their own culture. Accordingly, my conclusions are concerned with an understanding of how these gifts might be applied when common conceptions of how they were used in the ancient world are considered in connection with Paul's teaching in Rom 12:6–8.

CHAPTER TWO: ROM 12:6: "PROPHECY, IN PROPORTION TO FAITH" (NRSV)

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I explore how Paul's audience might have received the phrase προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, the first of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. Prophecy was prevalent in Greco-Roman religious life, and given that Paul's gentile auditors had witnessed its practice as citizens of Rome, it is probable that they would have had some familiarity with προφητεία. I thus evaluate how such a general awareness of prophecy might have affected the reception of the gift, προφητεία by the first-century Christ-followers.

My consideration in this chapter has three parts. These include a survey of scholarship on prophecy taken from a select group of contemporary commentators, an examination of Greco-Roman sources in which prophecy is brought to bear upon divine-human relations, and a comparison of the data that I have compiled from these sources with the text of Paul's Roman letter.

My review of selected commentaries that concern the use of προφητεία in Rom 12:6 observes the debates that have swirled around this word. In this regard, I will discuss the extent to which scholars have engaged with first-century Greco-Roman literature as to prophecy, and identify some of the problems presented by their analysis of προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως.

2. THE LEXICAL DEFINITION OF ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΊΑ

The lexical definition of the noun προφητεία is:

1. act of interpreting divine will or purpose, *prophetic activity;*

2. the gift of interpreting divine will or purpose, *gift of prophesying;*

3. the utterance of one who interprets divine will or purpose, *prophecy;*[295]

[295] See προφητεία, ας, ἡ in LSJ, 889-90. Nissinen observes that classical scholars usually prefer the terms "oracle" or "seer" to describe what biblical scholars call "prophecy" and "prophet." Martti Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 23. I do not treat instances of μάντις, a word sometimes used in association with προφητεία, because of space limitations. Regardless, Paul has chosen προφητεία and not

I will also consider the proper nouns προφήτης and the corresponding feminine form προφῆτις.

3. ROM 12:6: "PROPHECY, IN PROPORTION TO FAITH" AS DISCUSSED IN SELECTED COMMENTARIES

3.1. Commentators discuss prophetic behavior

Discussion regarding the word προφητεία in Rom 12:6 largely revolves around its nature and usage. Προφητεία is translated by all the commentators surveyed as "prophecy." A key issue for these writers is whether prophetic speech is predictive of the future,[296] or whether it served some other purpose such as inspired preaching[297] or the revelation of mysteries.[298] Commentators also deal with the purported immediacy of prophetic inspiration.[299] Cranfield, Fitzmyer, and Keck all notice that prophecy sits atop the list of χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. They thus discuss the possible relationship between the position of prophecy in the list and its importance to Paul.[300]

μάντις.

[296] Barrett, *Romans*, 238. Barrett believes that prophecy could entail predicting future events, both in the time of Paul and today. Cranfield argues that prophecy could communicate a particular revelation, predict the future of the community, or announce a direction from God. Cranfield, *Romans*, 620. Käsemann decides the prophets follow the Greek model "as those who declare the will of God for the present. . . ." Käsemann, *Romans*, 340.

[297] Longenecker, *Romans*, 929. See also Leenhardt, *Romans*, 310; Joseph A. Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992). Wilckens states that prophecy is "die Gabe inspirierter Predigt" [the gift of inspired sermon]. Wilckens, *Römer*, 14.

[298] Lagrange states that prophecy, "étant un don surnaturel, atteint des objets cachés aux lumières naturelles" [being a supernatural gift, apprehends objects concealed by natural light]. Lagrange, *Romains*, 298. Relying upon 1 Cor 12 and 14, Fitzmeyer presses this further, stating that prophecy "probes the secrets of the hearts," but that it is not predictive of the future. Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 647. Jewett agrees that the "normal usage" of prophecy involves the revelations and interpretation of divine secrets in Jewett, *Romans*, 746.

[299] Barrett, *Romans*, 238. For example, Barrett refers to "OT prophecy" and finds an immediacy in the performance of it that matches with what he perceives to exist within the Pauline communities. Cranfield is also interested in the urgency and excitement of prophetic activity that he contends distinguishes it from teaching, which is the third χάρισμα in Paul's list. Cranfield, *Romans*, 620. Dunn views the prophecy of the early Christ-followers as spontaneous and unstructured in its immediacy of inspiration, but he also holds that it evidenced a distinctive Pauline emphasis on rationality. Dunn, *Romans*, 727.

[300] Both Cranfield and Fitzmyer contend that by placing prophecy first in the list, Paul is underlining its importance. Cranfield, *Romans*, 619-20; Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 647. Against this opinion, see Jewett (*Romans*, 746). For Cranfield, Paul has set a precedent by recording prophecy second behind apostle in 1 Cor 12:28. Cranfield also notes that prophecy is the focus of Paul's instruction of 1 Cor 14. Keck, after admitting that there is a kind of ranking in the list of 1 Cor 12:28, dissents from this view because no such hierarchy is made explicit in Rom 12:6–8. Cranfield, *Romans*, 619-20;

3.2. Commentators search for practical parallels to define prophecy

In an attempt to define what Paul means by prophecy, commentators search out comparative figures and situations. Mid-twentieth century scholar Franz Leenhardt tries to apply a contemporary model that envisions an assertive (and male) "preacher" who declares the word of God and gives "concrete and exact commands" upon the Pauline text.[301] Leenhardt's method is anachronistic. Cranfield engages in a similar misstep when he states that prophecy fulfilled "a truly pastoral function" within these early communities.[302] Both scholars thus apply a future development in the church that Paul has not attested to in Romans. Most commentators turn to Paul's teaching about prophetic behavior in 1 Cor 12 and 14, and some find practical parallels for prophetic practice within the Greco-Roman world.

Parallels with Paul's teaching in 1 Cor 12 and 14

Prophecy in Rom 12:6 and 1 Cor 12 and 14

In framing a composite view of prophecy, many scholars are understandably drawn to Paul's teaching about prophecy in 1 Cor 12 and 14. These commentators use Paul's references to prophecy in his first Corinthian letter as a basis for parsing the text of Rom 12:6. This is not altogether unreasonable. Jewett logically surmises from Paul's teaching in 1 Cor that prophecy was already a typical part of "early Christian worship" in both locations.[303] Moo finds information from a range of texts that include 1 Cor 12–14, Eph 4, and Acts 11 and 21. From his survey of NT prophecy, Moo decides that prophetic ability is proclamatory, and is to be exercised for "the church's" edification.[304]

Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 647; Keck, *Romans*, 298. Ultimately, we cannot know if Paul has attached significance to the ordering of his list in Rom 12:6–8. Since Paul has grouped together seven χαρίσματα, we might consider a chiastic structure. Thus, the fourth gift, παρακἄλέω, would take the central and perhaps most important position.

[301] Leenhardt, *Romans*, 310. One wonders why Leenhardt confines this χάρισμα to men.

[302] Cranfield, *Romans*, 620.

[303] Jewett, *Romans*, 746.

[304] Moo, *Romans*, 765. Moo does not consider that the communities in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome might know prophecy in differing ways that would reflect its unique expression within their cities. Prophecy was an integral part of cultic life in antiquity, but the possibility of its having various forms related to particular environments has not been explored. For example, the famous Pythian prophetess resided in Delphi near Corinth. This could have led to a strong female expression of prophecy in the Corinthian community.

Based on Paul's discussion of their activities as a part of the Corinthian community, Cranfield assumes that prophets would be important in Rome.[305]

Prophecy in Rom 12:6 and glossolalia in 1 Cor 12 and 14

The commentators briefly considered above have taken a logical approach in referencing sources extrinsic to Rom 12:6. However, a few of these writers may have overplayed their hand as to some of the comparisons they attempt to make between Paul's two letters. For instance, scholars have occasionally set prophecy as it is understood in Rom 12:6 alongside Paul's teaching on glossolalia in 1 Cor 12 and 14. This colors conclusions about Paul's use of προφητεία in his Roman missive. Both Barrett and Cranfield contend that prophecy, both in Rome and Corinth, is a more preferable activity than that of glossolalia. This is because the prophet's mind, unlike that of the glossolalist, is fully engaged and speaking intelligibly.[306] Keck notes the problem inherent in such a comparison, which is that Paul does not mention glossolalia in his letter to Rome. Further, it is not clear whether Paul's teaching about the use or misuse of glossolalia in the Corinthian missive is relevant to the Roman community.[307] Paul does not contrast prophecy with glossolalia in Romans, nor does he explain how it should be practiced.

Parallels between prophecy in Paul's teaching and prophetic behavior in the Greco-Roman world

Dunn briefly considers the use of προφητεία in the Greco-Roman world, but ultimately finds it unhelpful in explaining the text of Rom 12:6.[308] For Dunn, the defining quality of "Judeo-Christian prophecy" is that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.[309] Accordingly, he believes any comparison with pagan religion falls flat due to differences in inspirational sources.[310] However, when focusing on the *practice* of prophecy, both Dunn and Jewitt find that so-called "Christian prophecy" was not so

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[305] Cranfield, *Romans*, 619-20.

[306] Cranfield, *Romans*, 620; Barrett, *Romans*, 237-38.

[307] Keck, *Romans*, 300.

[308] Dunn, *Romans*, 727. Dunn states that there are no instances of προφητεία in non-Jewish literature that might permit comparison with the Pauline text. Dunn, however, passes over an instance of προφητεία in Plutarch's early second-century work, *Pelopidas*. I will return to this below to discuss how Plutarch's piece might contribute to first-century notions of prophecy.

[309] Dunn, *Romans*, 727.

[310] Ibid. There are Greco-Roman sources that associate πνεῦμα with prophecy. Although Paul does not make this association in Rom 12:6–8, πνεῦμα does ground his discussion of the χαρίσματα in 1 Cor 12.

distinct from the more ecstatic forms that were prized in the wider Hellenistic world.[311] Jewett also identifies the question of whether "Christian prophecy," because of its less ecstatic form, was generally different from its pagan analogue.[312] Both Dunn and Jewett narrow their discussions to prophetic *behavior* so that the less ecstatic nature of prophecy, as related by Paul in 1 Cor, may be compared with the prophetic forms that existed in ancient Greece. Dunn and Jewett's brief discussions rely upon the conclusions of Christopher Forbes[313] and David Aune.[314]

Forbes engages a variety of ancient sources on the topic of "inspired-speech phenomena" in the Greco-Roman world.[315] His analysis includes both glossolalia and prophecy as they appear in 1 Cor and Acts. Forbes abandons hope of finding parallels within the Hellenistic world for the experiences of inspired speech that these biblical texts relate. For Forbes, ancient prophecy was an institutional reality that was associated with various temples, and it was therefore not a phenomenon that can be compared with prophetic activity in the early Christ-following groups. This leads Forbes to conclude that Hellenistic prophetic behavior cannot successfuly be mapped upon biblical accounts of this activity.[316] Forbes finds that the term προφήτης appears in both the NT and Hellenistic contexts, but that "it meant substantially different things to the early Christians and their non-Christian neighbors."[317]

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[311] Dunn, *Romans*, 727; Jewett, *Romans*, 747.

[312] Jewett, 747.

[313] Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and Its Hellenistic Environment* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995).

[314] David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

[315] Forbes, *Prophecy*, 4. Forbes unsuccessfully analogizes what he deems "inspiration manticism" with "early Christian prophecy." He speculates as to whether a more meaningful comparison would have been to examine "unstructured, 'underground' forms of manticism" that were on the "margins of the Graeco-Roman world" (312). He concludes that "the closest parallel between early Christian prophecy and prophecy in its environment is still a distant one" (313). See also Aune, *Prophecy*, 36. As I argue below, if we lift the conversation above prophetic *behavior* and instead approach the subject more conceptually, we may be able to find similarities between how the ancient sources depict prophecy and what Paul says about it in his Roman letter.

[316] Forbes selects passages from Acts, Luke's gospel, and 1 Cor 12-14. As for Paul's use of prophecy in Rom 12:6, Forbes only muses upon the notion of "congregational prophecy," an activity that involves individuals in the Jesus-gatherings. Forbes, *Prophecy*, 255.

[317] Ibid., 318. Here, Forbes states that the "background to the early Christian usage is to be found in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, not in the Graeco-Roman world . . ." (ibid.). We will see that in his letter, Paul makes sure to supplement what his gentile audience already knows about prophecy by naming specific prophets and affirming the Jewish scriptures as sacred texts. I will nonetheless argue that these Roman Christ-followers already held concepts

The conclusions of Forbes are inexplicable unless we are willing to imagine that these early Christ-followers had somehow forgotten their shared pagan past. I argue below that some of the basic understandings of prophecy that are gathered from Greco-Roman religion are indeed helpful in understanding how this gift might be thought of in the new Christ-following community. Contrary to Forbes, I contend that there are some aspects of prophecy rooted in the culture of Paul's Roman auditors that may be compared with his teaching about this subject in his letter to the Romans. These features do not depend upon any particular prophetic behavior, but rather on more universal understandings of this gift that may be found in available ancient texts. These understandings could have shaped how a first-century gentile might have appreciated this word and its implications albeit in a new Christ-following orientation.

Although Aune argues that "Greco-Roman revelatory traditions and procedures" were clearly influential for the early Jesus-groups, he cautions scholars who wish to find analogies between prophecy *as practiced* according to Paul, and that which was experienced within paganism.[318] Following Aune, my focus will not be on specific isolated features of prophetic behavior. This has been the approach of the commentators discussed above that I have criticized. I will instead view prophecy within a structural framework that is built upon an evaluation of the data in ancient sources.[319] I agree with the approach of Nissinen, who investigates historical texts that provide "keyholes" through which we can piece together somewhat of an historical landscape as to prophecy.[320] As Nissinen proposes, a discussion of both the similarities and differences turns out to be helpful because of the intriguing questions that it provokes.[321]

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about prophetic activity that were taken from their Greco-Roman world.

[318] Aune, *Prophecy*, 17.

[319] Ibid. Aune's objectives are broad and should be consulted by anyone with an interest in prophecy in the ancient Meditteranean world. He also treats prophecy in early Christianity. Aune, however, does not elaborate upon Paul's reference to prophecy in Rom 12:6. For a thorough and more recent explanation of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint, see Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 27-32.

[320] Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 326. Nissinen addresses the phenomena of ancient Eastern Mediterranean prophecy, a much bigger subject than I am able to cover in this thesis.

[321] Nissinen, 326.

3.3. Commentator's treatment of κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως

Some of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 are accompanied by a descriptive qualifier. In the case of prophecy, the entire phrase of Rom 12:6 is προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. Suffice it to say that commentators are divided over what Paul means by τῆς πίστεως in Rom 12:6. Some think of τῆς πίστεως as "the faith." What they mean by "the faith" is the doctrine and tradition of the Christian beliefs" which is sometimes deemed *fide quae* or *regula fidei*.[322] As an example of this view, Cranfield translates Rom 12:6 as "if *we have the gift of* prophecy, *then let us prophesy* in accordance with the standard of faith" (it., orig.).[323] There are others who think τῆς πίστεως refers to one's own personal beliefs. This idea is sometimes termed *fides qua*.[324] Dunn is a proponent of this view and translates Rom 12:6 as "whether prophecy in accordance to faith."[325] We are ultimately left with two opinions and no consensus as to this question. John Goodrich, however, steers the conversation in a direction that I support and will elaborate upon in my treatment of each of the χαρίσματα.[326] Goodrich argues that πίστις should be translated in terms of "stewardship" both in Rom 12:6 and in 12:3. I thus contend that πίστις, as used in Rom 12:6 by Paul to qualify προφητεία, is a signal that Paul's audience should keep in mind that this gift and all of the χαρίσματα have been *entrusted* to them by God.

3.4. Conclusion

Disagreements have revolved around the nature and practical usage of the phrase προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. In attempting to explain Paul's meaning as to this phrase, some scholars take into account Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians. Although the commentators I have surveyed do reflect upon sources from the Greco-Roman world, their attention has largely been centered on prophetic *behavior*. There is no consensus as to what constituted such behavior in

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[322] Proponents of this view are Cranfield (621), Wilckens (14, n. 67), Moo (765, cf. n. 38), and Fitzmyer (647).

[323] Cranfield, *Romans*, 611.

[324] See Leenhardt (310), Barrett (238), Dunn (728), and Jewett (747). Jewett states that choosing *regula fidei*, or "rule of faith," is "an anachronistic imposition of later ecclesiastical developments . . ." (747).

[325] Dunn, *Romans*, 719.

[326] Goodrich, "'Standard of Faith' or 'Measure of A Trusteeship'? A Study in Romans 12:3," 753-72.

either Rome or Corinth. However, evidence from ancient sources on prophecy does begin to paint a picture regarding the attributes of this gift. Authors such as Plutarch, Strabo, Pausanias, and Diodorus Siculus generally stress the importance of divine-human communication wherein the prophet mediates divine knowledge. There is an emphasis here on the importance of the association of the prophet with a particular god and the role of this prophet as a spokesperson who relates the will of this god. There is also a focus on particular sacred places and the resultant sacred messages. This information helps us to consider the natural expectations of Paul's addressees, who were likely not concerned with procedures known mainly to the professional religious figures who prophesied.

The main failure of the commentators I have surveyed lies in their decision to stress prophetic behavior to the exclusion of recognizing commonly held beliefs about this phenomenon as given in the primary texts of ancient authors. A general assessment of prophecy that takes into account Paul's audience of non-specialists will illustrate this point.

4. PROPHECY AND ITS COGNATES IN LIGHT OF ANCIENT GRECO-ROMAN SOURCES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DIVINE-HUMAN RELATIONS

The ancient sources that refer to prophecy permit us to understand something of how this phenomenon and the figures associated with it might have been appreciated by first-century inhabitants in Rome. Prophets and prophetesses were expected to act as spokespersons on behalf of a deity for the purpose of revealing that deity's divine will to the people. These figures were often based at a particular sacred location and were known to convey sacred information. The primary texts that I shall consider record details such as the name or title of the prophet or prophetess, the divinity with whom he or she was associated, and, in some cases, the particular sacred area at which they were based.

4.1. Prophets and prophetesses designated as named spokespersons serving in particular sacred places

Prophecy has pagan roots in both Roman and Greek culture. It is famously associated with the

Delphi Oracle and the god, Apollo.[327] In the state religion, prophets might understand the will of the gods through augury, divination, or the taking of the haruspices. The Sibylline Books were kept on the Palatine Hill also in the temple of Apollo.[328] These sacred and secret writings, which came to Rome through a sibyl, were consulted by a *collegium* of priests, and not by the prophets themselves.[329]

Because Plutarch held an official position as a priest at Delphi, his relationship and ideas about prophecy were unique. As a prophet, Plutarch saw himself as a leader and interpreter [προφήτης] of the sacred rites of civic life.[330] His activities included sacrificing, marching in processions, dancing in choruses, and attending to the oracle.[331] Plutarch also offers information on the activities of the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo who prophesied at Delphi.[332] In Plutarch's works, the prophet/prophetess could be an oracle-interpreter,[333] a spokesperson of the god who could interpret divine written instructions,[334] a mortal who could declare the will of the deity,[335] or someone who could foretell the future.[336]

That prophecy was a special appointment rather than an activity associated with common citizens is borne out by historical accounts of Greek prophets and prophetesses that are revealed in

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[327] The temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill was built by Augustus. Plutarch remarks that the Sanctuary of Apollo, which was the location of the Delphi oracle in Greece, was "the most ancient in time and the most famous in repute" (*De defectu oraculorum* 8 [7]). It is plausible that Roman inhabitants were aware of the Delphi oracle in Greece.

[328] Nissinen, 302.

[329] See Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome II*. These authors focus on the Sibylline Books and the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* who had charge of them. Mythical figures such as Sibyls and Bakis could have informed what Paul's addressees understood of prophecy through the stories associated with them. The Roman collection of Sibylline materials "may have been the most famous and authoritative" texts according to Beard et al, but "there were many other famous Sibyls in antiquity" who inspired more material, and it is clear that not just Roman pagans, but Greeks, Jews and Christians all used them to provide legitimacy for their prophetic texts" (Beard et al, 181). For a consideration of prophetic activity subsequent to the time of Paul, see Aune's treatment of Ignatius of Antioch, the Odes of Solomon, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Didach, and the Montanist Oracles in Aune, *Prophecy*, 291-316.

[330] Plutarch, *An seni respublica geranda sit* 1.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 9 and 51; *De Pythiae oraculis* 7.

[333] Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae* 9.

[334] Plutarch, *De genio Socratis* 7.

[335] Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 26.

[336] Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 51.

the works of Plutarch,[337] Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Pausanias.[338] Outside of Jewish literature, the earliest instance of the abstract noun προφητεία, the word that Paul uses in Rom 12:6, appears in Plutarch's *Pelopidas.*[339] Plutarch describes an historical figure named Echecrates who has the gift of prophecy [τὴν προφητείαν Ἐχεκράτους ἔχοντος].[340] Echecrates served at the temple of Apollo Tegyraeus in ancient Greece, which was thought to be the birthplace of this god.[341] Plutarch also relates a negative experience for the Pythia, priestess of Apollo, wherein she approached the oracle unwillingly and halfheartedly. This mistep resulted in her being filled with a "mighty and baleful spirit [πνεῦμα]" from which the προφήτης, Nicander felt the need to flee.[342] Strabo describes the work of one Tenerus, a son of Apollo and "prophet of the oracle" [προφήτης τοῦ μαντείου] who served on the Ptoüs mountain above the Teneric plain.[343] Strabo reports that temple slaves [ἱερόδουλοι] in Iberia were subject to the goddess Selene (known as Luna in Rome) and were

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[337] My previous discussion of Plutarch in section 4.1 did not take up the references in his work that I consider here regarding prophets and prophetesses who acted as named spokespersons serving in particular sacred places. Nissinen notes the importance of temples for prophecy both in the Hebrew Bible and also in the Greco-Roman world. See Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 242-50.

[338] For purposes of this thesis, historians and travel writers such as Strabo and Pausanias, provide a wealth of information on religious practices in the ancient world. Not only do they intricately describe the various statues, temples, and the rites and practices associated with them, they also show that in the ancient world, place and religion were not separate, but rather were intimately connected. The works of these writers convey ancient conceptions about human relations with divinity. They write of gods who were thought to have founded cities such as Rome, and who participated in the various power struggles therein, and who were present during times of celebration for the populace. This is no less important for Paul's addressees, who lived in the most prominent city in the Greco-Roman world.

[339] Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 16 [3]. In addition to the example of *Pelopidas*, προφητεία occurs in Lucian of Samosata's, *Alexander* (40, 60) and *De astrologica* (23), as well as in the works of Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Eusebius, and Barnabas. There are thirty-four instances of προφητεία and its cognates in Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae*, as well as multiple occurrences in the LXX (2 Chr 15:8, 32:32; Ezra 5:1, 6:14; Neh 6:12; Tob 2:6, Sir 1:20, 24:33, 36:14, 29:1, 44:3, 46:1, 20; Jer 23:31; Dan 11:14; Bel 1). It is plausible that by using προφητεία in Rom 12:6, its sole use in this letter (προφητεία appears in 1 Cor 12:10; 13:2, 8; 14:6, 22, as well as in 1 Thess 5:20), Paul may be signalling to his audience that they should take note of prophecy's Jewish background. Regardless, although Paul uses the abstract noun προφητεία in Rom 12:6, as do other Jewish writers, this does not mean that his audience would be confused as to his basic meaning. That Roman inhabitants knew about the concept of prophecy is clear in the texts that I consider.

[340] Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 16 [3]. Note the similar language that exists between Plutarch's account of a person "having" προφητεία and Paul's reference in Rom 12:6: ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα, after which προφητεία is first in the list.

[341] Plutarch mentions Echecrates as the prophet of Delphi in *De defectu oraculorum* 5 as well.

[342] Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 51.

[343] Strabo, *Geography* 9.2 [34].

known to utter prophecies [προφητεύουσιν] on her behalf.[344]

Prophecy in the ancient literature was often connected to a particular god and a particular geographical place. At the well-known temple of Zeus in Dodona, prophetesses and their descendents offered oracular responses from this god.[345] Diodorus Siculus explains that at Delphi, virgins, and later "an elderly woman of fifty,"[346] sat upon the tripod and issued Apollo's oracular responses.[347] There was also Olen, a supposed son of Apollo, who, according to Pausanias, served at the temple of Delphi and was known as the first to have chanted the oracle in hexametric verse.[348] Pausanias also notes two prophetesses, the first of which was Erato who uttered verses in the temple of Pan in Arcadia.[349] The second was a virgin in Corinth who was associated with the temple there that was dedicated to Apollo Deiradaiotes.[350] There was also a well-known temple of Apollo in Didyma and one for Zeus in Dodona. Both were associated with prophecy. Nissinen identifies first-century inscriptional evidence at Didyma for a προφῆτις of Apollo at the temple there, known by the name Tryphosa. According to the inscription, Tryphosa appears to have carried on the tradition of her grandmother, a προφῆτις who was also called Tryphosa.[351]

Accordingly, prophets and prophetesses, some of which were known by name, tended to serve a particular god. This is evidenced in the examples of Apollo at the various temples that existed in Tenerus, Delphi, and Corinth. I have also noted the relationship between prophets of both genders

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[344] *Geography* 11.4 [7].

[345] *Geography* 9.2. [4]. See also 7.7 [12]. See also Nissinen, 228. The prophetesses at Dodona were the predecessors of those who were there in Strabo's own own day. The oracle of Dodona in northwestern Greece is considered the oldest Hellenic oracle, second only to the oracle of Delphi in terms of prestige.

[346] According to Diodorus, this decision was necessary. Although virgins who were thought to "have their natural innocence intact" were considered suitable for guarding oracular secrets, a certain virgin prophetess was so attractive that she was carried away by an admirer. This predicament was supposedly solved by installing a more mature women who was "dressed in the costume of a virgin" (*Library* 16.26 [1-6]).

[347] *Library* 16.26 [3]. See also Nissinen, 229. For a depiction of a prophetess with her tripod, see Appendix 1.

[348] Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece* 10.5 [5-8]. Strabo relates that the temple and its oracle at Delphi held the greatest share of honor and had the reputation of being the most truthful (*Geography* 9.3 [6]).

[349] *Descriptions of Greece* 8.37 [11-12].

[350] Ibid., 2.24 [1].

[351] Nissinen, Ancient Prophecy, 231. Nissinen remarks that there was a relationship between Rome and Didyma during the imperial period, wherein "the functions of prestigious oracle sites such as Claros and Didyma were even used to integrate local elites into the imperial political context" (Nissinen, 236). This name Tryphosa also appears in Rom 16:12, as the name of a woman Paul greets in the Roman Christ-following group.

in other cities as to different gods: Zeus/Dodona, Pan/Arcadia, Selene/near Iberia, and Ammon/Egypt. This tendency becomes important later on, when Paul tells the Christ-followers in Rome that they too can prophesy on behalf of one God. This God is the God of his gospel.

4.2. A summary of προφητεία and its cognates in light of ancient Greco-Roman sources

The literature from the historians and philosophers surveyed exhibits many instances of προφητεία and its cognates in cultic contexts. Ancient authors connect προφητεία with particular gods such as Apollo, Ammon, Zeus, Selene and Pan.[352] Additionally, the Pythia, a prophetess of great renown durably served in many incarnations at the temple of Apollo at Delphi.

Several conclusions about the notion of prophecy and some of its usages known to first-century persons may be drawn from the discussion in this chapter. In the eyes of the ancient writers I have surveyed, the prophet or prophetess was thought to act on behalf of the gods. He or she might have been called a prophet, prophetess, spokesperson, interpreter, proclaimer, expounder, or seer who foretells future events. Prophetesses prophesied much like their male counterparts, and in the literary examples that I have discussed, often did so with a more colorful and dynamic presence. The προφῆτις, who was known to sit upon the tripod in Delphi and receive inspiration from the πνεῦμα is one such example of this.

The oracles that prophets and prophetesses received were considered to be divinely inspired and were sometimes concerned with visions about the future. The authors I have considered occasionally note a frenzied state as to both male and female prophets, and both could deliver their messages in verse as well as song. We have also seen that questions could be brought to the gods with the expectation of receiving a response that was then interpreted by the prophetic figure. Finally, the divine messages communicated through these religious figures were taken by their hearers as the truthful and normative will of the god.

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[352] A search of the Perseus catalogue reveals that there are forty references to προφητεία and its cognates within the works of authors writing in the mid first-century BCE and early to mid-second century CE. Thirty-four of the instances make an association between the person prophesying and a particular god. Eight mention the god Apollo, and an additional seven mention the Pythia, the prophetess of Apollo at Delphi, by name. Delphi, the location of Apollo's temple in Athens, is also referenced nine times. This emphasis on the god Apollo leads me to agree with Nissinen, who states that "Delphi was the oracular site par excellence for the Greeks . . ." (Nissinen, 191).

5. A HYPOTHETICAL RECEPTION OF PROPHECY IN ROM 12:6 BY THE ROMAN CHRIST-FOLLOWERS

What follows is a hypothetical first-century reception of προφητεία as it pertains to Paul's reference to it in Rom 12:6[353] based upon the information from ancient sources that I have discussed. I seek possible perspectives that Paul's audience may have brought to this subject and then evaluate how these views might relate to what he teaches in his letter.

If we consider first-century expectations regarding prophecy as illustrated by the sources discussed in this chapter and compare them with Paul's references to prophecy in Romans, it becomes evident that Paul has not addressed some key issues.[354] For example, while Paul's Roman audience might have assumed that both men and women could prophesy, Paul leaves this question open by choosing the abstract noun προφητεία rather than a gendered form. Additionally, we have seen that in the Greco-Roman literature, πνεῦμα was viewed as a source of inspiration in some accounts of prophecy. In the context of Romans 12:6–8, however, πνεῦμα is not mentioned and is therefore not a focus for any of the χαρίσματα listed therein.[355] Paul leaves other questions unanswered in Romans. These include whether προφητεία meant foretelling the future or communicating visions. Nor can we take from the text of Romans whether Paul considered προφητεία to be a position or office within a particular community, or whether he intended that the Christ-followers might approach a prophet in their midst and expect to receive a message from God.

Unresolved questions notwithstanding, the literature that I have reviewed broadly suggests that in the Greco-Roman world, divine-human communication is at the heart of prophecy.[356] Fur-

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[353] Paul's only reference to προφητεία in Romans is found in Rom 12:6. The masculine noun-form προφήτης appears in Rom 1:2, 3:21, and 11:3. Paul does not use the feminine form of προφῆτις in the letters available to us, but we know from 1 Cor 11:4-5 that both women and men prophesied (προφητεύω) in Corinth. Other instances of προφήτης by Paul are in 1 Cor 12:28, 29; 14:32, 37; and 1 Thess 2:15 while προφητεία occurs elsewhere in 1 Cor 12:10; 13:2, 8; 14:6, 22; and 1 Thess 5:20. Paul does not use the verb προφητεύω in Romans; however, he does do so in 1 Cor 11:4-5; 13:9; 14:1, 3-5, 24, 31, 39. The adjective προφητικός appears in Rom 16:26 to denote prophetic writings.

[354] Some of these issues are debated by commentators mentioned in section 3 of this chapter above.

[355] This contrasts with the emphasis of πνεῦμα that appears in 1 Cor 12–14.

[356] Nissinen applies the notion of divine-human communication to prophets who serve as mediators of divine knowledge. Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 10. Divine-human communication is also a theme within Paul's letter. God variously speaks to humanity through the sacred writings of Israel (Rom 1:1-3), through Paul himself (1:5; 11:13; 15:14–33), in prayers (1:9), through the Spirit (5:5; 8:9–11; 8:14–17, 31–39; 15:13), and through acts of worship (12:1–8; 15:6).

ther, as inhabitants of Rome, Paul's audience had likely experienced the phenomenon of prophecy at the temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill. The practice of such προφητεία was notably relegated to male and female religious specialists, and was present at various temples. Perhaps the greatest hurdle Paul's audience faced in hearing his teaching on prophecy was to imagine *themselve*s as more than mere spectators in their engagement with it. This is one of the challenges that Paul's addressees faced as they gradually ceased their previous pagan activities and transitioned towards Christ-following ones.

To understand how the Roman Christ-followers might pursue prophecy within their own community, we must go beyond descriptions of prophetic *behavior* that the ancient sources depict, and look to more universal beliefs about it that existed within their world. It is unclear what Paul's audience would have understood about particular practices associated with prophecy apart from their experiences of seeing and hearing it in the public places where prophets offered up their messages. Yet as seen from the data above, inhabitants of Paul's audience would likely have some basic knowledge of prophecy. It is probable that they would have associated a prophet with a particular god. The prophet would have acted as a spokesperson and interpreter of the will of such a deity. There is, too, the territorial aspect of prophecy that I have recounted. Prophets and prophetesses were active and specific to particular sacred places. Lastly, the authority of sacred writings such as the Sibylline oracles, which were only tangentially associated with the act of prophesying in Rome, becomes an important feature in Paul's teaching about prophecy in his letter to Rome. I now look at these four features—attachment between prophet and god, prophet as spokesperson for a god, physical location where prophecy as to a particular god happened, and the use of sacred writings in the act of prophecy. I will consider each of these features in light of the text of Romans to determine how they intersect with Paul's teaching.

5.1. A prophet/prophetess who belongs to God and Christ

In Rom 12:6, Paul tells his addressees that προφητεία will continue in their new belief system and that at least some of them are to prophesy κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. As I have argued, it is likely that few, if any, of this audience had been prophets in pagan religion. Therefore, an important transitional step for them would have been to recognize that a Christ-following prophet

belongs exclusively to God. This follows from two factors. The first is the attachment of a particular prophet to one deity that I have previously discussed.[357] The second is based on Paul's own background as a monotheistic Jew.

Paul's audience may have recognized that throughout his letter the god of Israel is depicted as having had his own prophets. Paul signals this by using the genitive form τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ that appears at the outset of his missive in Rom 1:2. Here he states that the gospel of God has been heralded through "his prophets." In 11:3 Paul uses the possessive pronoun to denote "your prophets" [τοὺς προφήτας σου] when relating the story of Elijah. In this verse, Elijah bemoans his lonely situation by stating "Lord, they have killed your prophets. . . ." Only in the Roman epistle does Paul mention the names of particular prophets such as Hosea (9:25), Elijah (11:2), and Isaiah (9:27, 29; 10:16, 20; 15:12). Paul, then, creates an expectation on the part of his audience that prophets would henceforth continue to show allegiance to one God. Paul also draws upon the strong Judaic tradition of those who were known to have acted in this role.

5.2. A prophet/prophetess who is to be a spokesperson of God's will (Rom 12:2)

As previously discussed, a prophet or prophetess was often called to speak on behalf of a god to reveal the divine will to the people. Paul does not call himself a prophet, but he does act as a spokesman of God to the Roman Christ-followers.[358] When Paul states that he "will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished" through him (Rom 15:18), he has invited a comparison between his own role as a spokesperson for Christ, and that of other individuals who have acted as agents for deity in the pagan world. According to Rom 15:16, Paul views his duty to share the gospel as a "minister" [λειτουργός] of Christ Jesus who is employed in a "priestly service" [ἱερουργέω]. In Rom 12:1, Paul exhorts his auditors to see their lives entirely as an act of worship [λατρεία]. This may include being spokespersons on behalf of God, an act which describes one as-

[357] Within the ancient literature I have surveyed, I have found no instances of a prophet/prophetess speaking on behalf of more than one god. The common assumption that associates the prophetic figure with one god helps makes reasonable the new prophetic experiences of the Roman Christ-followers.

[358] Aune notes that Paul may be categorized as a prophet in that he "experienced many revelatory phenomena, some of which he communicated to others" (e.g., 2 Cor 12:9; 1 Cor 15:51–52; Rom 11:25–26; 1 Thess 4:15–17). See Aune, *Prophecy*, 247-62.

pect of prophetic conduct.

Paul also stresses the importance of understanding the will of God in both Rom 1:10 and 15:32. He does this by sharing his own custom of knowing the divine will in advance of his expected travels. Paul assures his audience in Rom 8:27 that when they are uncertain of God's plans for them, the Spirit will intercede on their behalf "according to the will of God." Moreover, such prophetic discernment is no longer an activity restricted to those with privileged access to the gods, it is now open to all Christ-followers:

> Do not model yourselves after this age, but let yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom 12:2).

Paul thus clarifies that his audience is equipped to act as prophets or prophetesses who may speak on behalf of God for the purpose of sharing his will to others.

5.3. A prophet/prophetess who is associated with a sacred place

As I have shown, Paul's audience may have associated prophecy with a particular sacred location. In Romans, however, Paul does not specify a physical place where the Christ-followers might expect to give or receive προφητεία. He instead speaks of the human body in terms of being a holy place in Rom 6:6 and 8:13. Moreover, Paul broadens his audience's perspective on the concept of the body when he teaches that each member of the Christ-following community now resides "in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1-2, 39) and comprise "one body in Christ" (Rom 12:5).[359] This metaphor could have communicated two important points to Paul's auditors, both of which would have marked a change in the way they saw themselves. The first is that their former position as outsiders to prophecy has now been reversed. The second is that the entire community is now a part of a bigger entity: "one body in Christ" (Rom 12:5). At the same time, they are individually "members of one another" (12:5). Thus reoriented, they will now inhabit and live the whole of their lives in a sacred sphere because they are indubitably linked with Christ. It is here that each member is to present themselves to God as a living and holy sacrifice. Prophecy is but one expression of

[359] Paul underlines this new sphere "in Christ" in Rom 9:1 and 15:17 as he speaks of his own work. Paul also extends this concept to various co-workers in Rom 16:3, 7, and 9.

worship, and it has been untethered from a particular temple. Paul has thus arguably mobilized prophecy. It is now connected with one God, and it may henceforth be given and received by the new Roman Christ-followers.

5.4. A prophet/prophetess now has sacred writings to consult

Even though Paul's addressees may not have expected prophets to produce normative writings, Paul's Roman epistle strongly connects prophecy to sacred text. This is apparent from the many citations from the Jewish Scriptures that appear in Paul's Roman letter. These citations exceed those that he has made in any of his other epistles.[360] Paul's emphasis on this sacred text suggests that the Christ-following gentiles are now free to consult the Jewish Scriptures. We may compare these texts, which have now been inherited by the gentiles, to the Sibylline Books in the sense that both were designed to provide authoritative guidance for their adherents as to their relationship with the deity and appropriate behavior. In Paul's hands, however, Jewish sacred texts may be personally consulted. Paul teaches that these texts may guide and instruct his addressees in their relationship and interactions with God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and each other.[361]

In three passages within his Roman letter, Paul explicitly associates prophecy with the sacred writings of Israel. In Rom 1:2, Paul relates that the gospel of God has been "promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures." In Rom 3:21, he writes that the "righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested [in writing] by the law and the prophets." In Rom 16:26, we find the adjectival form προφητικός, which indicates that the "prophetic writings" have been "made known to the gentiles."[362] For Paul's audience, however, these sacred texts are more than esoteric

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[360] Stanley counts forty-five citations in Romans and twenty-eight in 1 & 2 Corinthians and Galatians altogether. For his analysis, see Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 83-184. Moreover, Stanley argues that "nearly 90 percent of the passages normally regarded as citations [from Jewish Scripture] are marked in such a way that their presence (if not their signifance) is clear to any attentive reader" (Stanley, 66). This does not imply that Paul's audience possessed a particular degree of biblical literacy or were already acquainted with Jewish writings. It merely suggests that the gentile Christ-followers may well have recognized Paul was referring to these sacred writings as authoritative. For more on the reception of Paul's instruction by his first-century audience see Stanley, *Arguing With Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*.

[361] Within such Jewish sacred texts, they may learn that other writings are no longer normative for them.

[362] There are also five occurrences of γραφή [scripture] in 4:3. 9:17, 10:11, 11:2, and 15:4. Two additional instances of γραφή

writings that only a few can read and understand because they contain the "revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed" (15:25–26). As the Roman group begins to imagine their own engagement in prophetic activities, they may perceive that their previous expectations about this gift are affirmed in their new Christ-following religion. The result is that the Jewish Scriptures that Paul has noted may now be consulted as normative for understanding God's will. And there is more: these scriptures, as they are presented by Paul, carry authority for those who proclaim them.

In Rom 12:6, Paul joins προφητεία with πίστις via the word ἀναλογία, a *hapax legomenon* in the NT.[363] As witnessed by the ancient sources, ἀναλογία was important for conveying proportion and symmetry, even as between chaotic primordial elements.[364] Humans are also capable of thinking and creating with ἀναλογία in imitation of the gods.[365] Paul thus qualifies prophecy by emphazing proportion and accordance between prophetic words and πίστις.

There are three occasions in Romans that collocate προφήτης or προφητικός with πίστις or πιστεύω. In Rom 1:1–6, Paul announces that the gospel of God that had been promised through the prophets in the holy scriptures will bring about the obedience of πίστις among all the gentiles. In Rom 3:21, the "righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets." Those who receive the righteousness of God do so διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:22). The closing words of the letter in Rom 16:25 repeat this idea insofar as the "prophetic writings" that have been made known to "all the gentiles" are meant to bring about the obedience of πίστις. We can see here that the gospel, proclaimed in sacred texts by the prophets of old, still speaks through Paul, and will continue to do so through other Christ-followers to bring about πίστις in those who hear and respond. Paul not only associates πίστις with prophecy, these concepts are also brought to bear upon the efficacy of salvation in his letter. The legitimate practicing of prophecy as a Christ-following religious activity thus becomes an endeavor that furthers the spreading of the

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frame the letter. Paul bookends his epistle with references to the scriptures in his opening remarks (Rom 1:1-2) and conclusion (16:25). The scriptures are thus an important means by which Christ-followers may learn about the gospel.

[363] The adverbial form ἀναλόγως appears in Wisdom 13:5: "For from the greatness and beauty of created things is their Creator *correspondingly* discerned" (tr. NET; emph., mine).

[364] Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 37; cf. *De animae procreatione in Timaeo* 7 and 9.

[365] Plutarch, *De genio Socratis* 7.

gospel.

Teresa Morgan's argument that πίστις would have been perceived by its Greco-Roman first-century audience not as "belief" *strictu sensu,*[366] but as "trust" and "trustworthiness," may help us understand Paul's juxtaposition of προφητεία and πίστις in Romans. As previously discussed, one of the few agreements among the commentators surveyed is that πίστις, as it appears in Rom 12:6, means "belief." The commentators have disagreed on whether Paul is referring here to credal beliefs of the early church or to the personal beliefs of the individual prophesying in the gathering. Morgan's work, however, provides a relational aspect as to this issue which is both vertical and horizontal. As to the former, the one prophesying ought to do so in proportion to their own trust in God.[367] As to the latter, if we think of πίστις in terms of trustworthiness, then it is the relationship as between the one prophesying and the others in the community that becomes important. Or perhaps the trustworthiness is to be affirmed between all the parties. This notion dovetails with the work of John Goodrich on Rom 12:6.[368] Goodrich argues that πίστις, both in Rom 12:6 and 12:3, should be translated in terms of the stewarding of a calling from God. Thus, I maintain that the gift of prophecy may be stewarded in accordance with the content that has been entrusted.

6. A PROPOSED TRANSLATION OF ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΊΑΝ ΚΑΤΆ ΤΉΝ ἈΝΑΛΟΓΊΑΝ ΤΗ̂Σ ΠΊΣΤΕΩΣ IN ROM 12:6

The teaching of Paul about prophecy in Romans suggests that his audience may now view this gift within the parameters of allegiance to one God and his son, Jesus Christ. Those called as prophets and prophetesses may plausibly identify themselves as spokespersons of God who mean

[366] Teresa Morgan, "Roman Faith and Christian Faith," *New Testament Studies* 64, no. 02 (2018), 257. In her response to the critiques of Seifrid and Watson, Morgan eschews conflating "aspects of commitment" such as "trust," "confidence," and the "'pledge' ranges of the πίστις spectrum" into the category of "belief" (257). In so doing, Morgan does not downplay belief, for "belief is always implicated in trust, so trust is always implicated in belief" (257), Separating these concepts makes it possible for her to highlight aspects of πίστις that relate to acts of trust, hope, and risk (258).

[367] Pertinent to Morgan's assertion, there is also a pairing of προφήτης and πίστις in the Jewish text Sirach 46:15, wherein the prophet Samuel, by his trustworthiness [πίστις] was made "accurate as a prophet, and the trustworthiness of his vision was known in his words" (NETS tr.). One may also ask whether prophecy could be given in proportion to the prophet's own experiences of the trustworthiness of God.

[368] Goodrich, "'Standard of Faith' or 'Measure of A Trusteeship'? A Study in Romans 12:3," 753-72.

to declare his will. The means by which this will may be discerned include prayer, reliance on the Holy Spirit, and a noetic renewal of their minds. Prophecy, moreover, has arguably been freed from the temple grounds and made available to each Christ-follower who has been made holy by the indwelling Spirit and who also now resides in Christ. Finally, the Christ-following prophet may receive guidance and authority from the Jewish sacred texts as to prophetic messages and how they should be conveyed.

This investigation of προφητεία κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως has lent itself to a more theoretical approach that asks how the ancients perceived prophecy within their own culture. My conclusions reflect this expanded understanding of προφητεία and how it may be applied. We may now address a few grammatical issues as to προφητεία κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. In Rom 12:6, the nouns προφητεία and ἀναλογία are both in the accusative case. This particular case implies concern about "the extent and the scope of the verb's action."[369] The verb in question is ἔχοντες wherein "we have" χαρίσματα, one of which is the gift of prophecy. Paul then adds another accusative phrase, κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν. I translate κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν as meaning "in accordance with." I could also choose, "in proportion to." Both of these translations convey the extent and scope within which prophecy should be practiced. On the one hand, the notion of proportion is present in the way Paul explains the extent and scope of his own calling to the gentiles in Rom 15:15–21 by his use of the phrase διὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι. Paul has been called to a prescribed sphere of activity and he appears to be cautious about stepping out of it. In Rom 12:3, Paul communicates a similar idea in the phrase διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι [by the grace given to me]. Perhaps this sensitivity about not stepping out in places that are beyond the sphere of his calling is behind Paul's concern that no one in his Roman audience would "think of yourself more highly than you ought to think" in 12:3. In this passage, Paul seems to advocate to his auditors that like him, they can know their calling by God's grace, and that they should act appropriately within this calling. In Rom 15:15–21, while Paul speaks of the limits of his own work, he also seems to suggest that no one can set limits as to God's activity within its prescribed sphere. The addition of the notion of proportion with κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν emphasizes Paul's concern that his Roman audience grasp their own calling and work within its appropriate sphere. They are not to think more highly of themselves than they

[369] Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 76.

ought to because they are merely acting as trusted stewards of the gift that God has given them. Alternatively, to prophesy "in accordance with" what has been entrusted means that the words and will of God that have been entrusted to the one who prophesies are to be in accordance with what the prophet or prophetess actually communicates. In other words, the one prophesying should not add their own words or opinions to the message that God has entrusted to them.

In light of these considerations, I find that both of the preceding options as to κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως apply not only to prophecy, but to all of χαρίσματα. I find the notion of exercising the gifts in terms of calling and prescribed sphere appointed by God a force that may be extended through the list. This is especially compelling when we consider Paul's own calling and its accepted limitations. I assume this to be true for each gift as it is true for Paul. As for my translation in the present chapter and continuing with each chapter that follows, I will apply the second option for the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. In the case of προφητεία κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, my translation reads, "prophecy, in accordance with what has been entrusted."

7. CONCLUSION

The commentators that have discussed προφητεία κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως have felt it necessary to involve the texts from Paul's Corinthian missive to understand his admittedly terse teaching in Rom 12:6–8. This endeavor, however, leaves many important questions about the passage unanswered. The most important of these questions is the *manner* in which prophecy was practiced in the early Christ-following communities. I have declined the tact of exhaustively searching ancient texts looking for prophetic *behavior* that may or may not parallel the biblical account in 1 Corinthians or Romans. I have instead looked at universal notions of prophecy via various primary sources from the era in which Paul and his addressees lived. In so doing, I have considered common conceptions of prophecy in order to create a hypothesis that describes how Paul's audience might have viewed this gift.

I have argued in an earlier chapter that Paul's intended audience in Rome likely questioned which activities were now appropriate for them as Christ-followers. Prophecy is merely the first in a list of what I argue are practical acts of worship set forth in the Pauline text of Rom 12:6–8. Such

practices may serve to train the Roman group to be "unabhängiges" [independent].[370] Reichert contends that the χαρίσματα are examples of activities that will equip the Romans to carry on the mission to share the gospel without Paul.[371] Because Paul refers to his role of announcing the gospel in terms of worship [λατρεύω; cf. Rom 1:9], it is possible that the gentiles who have received the message of the gospel and have responded with πίστις are now being exhorted to continue in this same trajectory and mission by being prophets or spokespersons on behalf of God. As they follow Paul's urging to live a life of worship [λατρεία] in Rom 12:1, προφητεία κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως may also serve as an example of a new activity that replaces the previous pagan worship [λατρεύω] that Paul condemns in Rom 1:25.

How this group might have understood prophecy based upon their pagan past has now been reoriented while certain familiar elements have been retained. Paul's audience sees that prophets exist in both the Greco-Roman world as well as in the burgeoning Christ-following community. Paul has affirmed that those who would prophesy in this community may continue to view prophetic activity in terms of an allegiance to one God. For them, however, this is the God of his gospel message. The privilege of prophesying in a sacred space is also retained, but with a shift in perspective. When Christ-followers gather together to give and receive prophecy, they will henceforth represent the sacred body of Christ. Even their own individual bodies, which are now indwelt by the Holy Spirit, are to be considered holy spaces. As previously observed in the Greco-Roman world, Christ-following prophets may also discern the will of God and act as his spokespersons. The importance of Paul's audience serving as spokespersons for God to communicate and interpret his words has moved to the foreground. This produces a new understanding of mission, which is to share the gospel so that others may come to πίστις in God. Part of the discussion will include the communicative acts pertaining to διακονία.

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[370] Reichert, *Der Römerbrief*, 247. Moreover, Wendt asserts that with the χάρισμα of prophecy, Paul's Roman addressees were on their way to becoming "first-century specialists" like him. See Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire*, 184.

[371] Reichert, *Der Römerbrief*, 247.

1. INTRODUCTION

J. B. Skemp, a mid-twentieth century Classical Greek philologist, had this to say about the frustrations that NT scholars face in dealing with the word διακονία:

> Though the word διακονία is Greek, there is little help to be gained from a study of its usage and that of its cognates in the classical period when our task is to elucidate its meaning in the Christian Church.[372]

Skemp's observation notwithstanding, I will consider usages of διακονία and the related word διάκονος. These words and their cognates will be referred to as the *diak*- word group, and their usages will be assessed in works and artifacts from the Greco-Roman world with special attention to references that concern divine-human relations. The writings of Epictetus, Pausanias, Plutarch, Homer, and Cornutus are included in my analysis.

Traditionally, commentators have tended to interpret the word διακονία in terms of "service,"[373] "ministry,"[374] or as an early form of a diaconal "office."[375] These efforts have often shown themselves to be both anachronistic and incomplete. They are anachronistic because they have tended to judge this gift with little regard to the usages regarding the *diak*- word group that existed in the ancient world. This perspective displays a preference for contexts that occurred after Paul wrote his Roman epistle. Downplaying first-century evidence as to διακονία and its related cognates also pre-

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[372] J. B. Skemp, "Service to the Needy in the Graeco-Roman World," in *Service in Christ: Essays Presented to Karl Barth on His 80th Birthday*, ed. James I. McCord and T. H. L. Parker (London: Epworth Press, 1966), 17-26. In an example that epitomizes anachronism and circularity, Skemp's "Christian" definition of διακονία as "service to the needy" forms the basis of his inquiry into the ancient texts. He then searches through these ancient sources looking for instances of "service to the needy" therein.

[373] For example, see Cranfield, *Romans*, 621. who specifies διακονία as "practical service." See also Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 441; Leenhardt, *Romans*, 307, 311; Dodd, *Romans*, 193; Jewett, *Romans*, 736.

[374] For example, see Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 52; Barrett, *Romans*, 238. Barrett, however, does admit that he finds it "impossible to find a precise rendering" for διακονία in Rom 12:7.

[375] See Barrett, *Romans*, 238; Cranfield, *Romans*, 621-22; Jewett, *Romans*, 766.

cludes us from seeing διακονία in its proper historical perspective, and it is here that the work of commentators has been incomplete.

Paul does not define διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ in Rom 12:7, nor does he discuss how it should be practiced. The lack of textual detail as to the χαρίσματα is a recurrent issue for those who would seek a deeper understanding of them and how they might apply to the early Christ-following group in Rome. There is, however, evidence which suggests that Paul's gentile addressees may have already been familiar with some of the concepts that were associated with the *diak-* word group. This familiarity is rooted in the presence of these words and their cognates in Greco-Roman culture.

Greco-Roman uses of διακονία, διάκονος, and their cognates point to descriptors such as *messenger*, *envoy*, *herald*, *guide*, and *go-between*. I argue that these terms, which are taken from evidence that pertains to divine-human relations, better reflect first-century Greco-Roman thought and application as to the *diak-* word group than do conventional assessments of "service." Following my reassessment of the *diak-* word group, I will analyze how the data I have gathered may aid us in better understanding the gift διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ in Rom 12:7.

2. THE LEXICAL MEANING OF ΔΙΑΚΟΝΊΑ

LSJ lists the meanings of διακονία as follows:

(1) *service*;

(2) *body of servants or attendants*;

(3) *instruments of service.*[376]

In LSJ, the noun διάκονος denotes:

(1) *servant*, *messenger*; *attendant* or *official* in a temple or religious guild;[377]

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[376] LSJ, διακον-ία, ἡ, 398. BDAG lists these meanings for διακονία, ας, ἡ: (1) service rendered in an intermediary capacity, *mediation*, *assignment;* (2) performance of a service; (3) functioning in the interest of a larger public, *service*, *office*; (4) rendering of specific assistance, *aid*, *support*; and (5) an administrative function, *service* as attendant, aide, or assistant, 230.

[377] LSJ supports these cultic references with *Inscr.Magn.* 109, 217, 9(1).486 (Acarnania, ii/i B.C.), 4.774.12 (Troezen, iii B.C.): fem., *CIG* 3037 (Metropolis in Lydia), 398. BDAG lists two meanings for διάκονος: (1) one who serves as an intermediary in a transation, *agent, intermediary*, *courier*; (2) one who gets something done, at the behest of a superior, *as-*

(2) as an adjective, *servile, menial.*

3. ROM 12:7: "MINISTRY, IN MINISTERING" (NRSV), AS DISCUSSED IN SELECTED COMMENTARIES

Commentators find it difficult to describe διακονία as it appears in Rom 12:7. One strategy is to define this gift in general terms. Fitzmyer thus concludes that Paul's reference to διακονία in Rom 12:7 is "generic," and that it refers generally to "all activity meant to build up the community. . . ."[378] Reichert tersely declares that διακονία means "Dienste für die Gemeinde im weitesten Sinne" [services for the church in the widest sense], and that it therefore cannot be limited to a specific area or even a particular activity, whether "Wort oder Tat."[379]

Other commentators define διακονία in Rom 12:7 in terms of what it is not. For Keck, διακονία is not: (1) "'the ministry' as a distinctive vocation in the modern sense;" (2) merely "waiting tables;" (3) the "gift of administration;" (4) "the (unspecifiable) activities of a 'deacon'. . . ."[380] Keck, however, ultimately fails to tell us what διακονία *is*. He concludes that "Paul's point is that the one who received the begracement of serving should serve."[381] Dunn concurs.[382] Fitzmyer states that it is "not easy to say just what Paul means by this term."[383] He thus turns to the book of Acts and concludes that διακονία in Rom 12:7 may refer to "specific service, such as table service (Acts 6:2)," or the "administration of material aid to members of the community. . . ."[384] The problem here is that we are ultimately left with no meaningful description or understanding about διακονία. These indeterminate conclusions might be warranted were it not for the other primary sources from the ancient world that we can draw upon to assess this gift.

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sistant, 230-31. BDAG also notes that the context determines whether διάκονος, with or without the article ὁ, οἱ may refer to women or men.

[378] Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 648. See also Longenecker (*Romans,* 929).

[379] Reichert, *Römerbrief,* 256.

[380] Keck, *Romans,* 300.

[381] Ibid.

[382] Dunn reacts to various commentators and bible translations, stating that διακονία is "not necessarily 'administration' . . . [nor] in the technical sense [a] 'diaconal office' . . . or a 'concrete office'" (*Romans,* 728).

[383] Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 648.

[384] Ibid.

A different complication attends the exegesis of διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ that appears in the commentaries of Barrett, Cranfield, and Moo. Here we confront the problem of anachronism. Barrett states that διακονία is "already on the way to becoming a technical term" at the time Paul wrote Romans.[385] Cranfield writes that διακονία denotes "a range of activities similiar to that which came to be the province of the deacon."[386] Käsemann remarks that, with διακονία, "something like a definite 'office' has emerged. . . ."[387] Moo finds it probable that Paul is thinking of "a specific gift of service that qualifies a person to fill the office of 'deacon.'"[388] Moo contends that διακονία is "a ministry" that "apparently" involved "organizing and providing for the material needs of the church."[389] He explains that "[w]ords from the root *diak-* were originally used to denote 'waiting on table[s]'" and that they held "nuances of subservience and lack of status" in both the Greek and Jewish worlds.[390] Additionally, Moo translates διακονία as "ministry" for the purpose of emphasizing its "religious connotation."[391]

The approach of these scholars shows the futility of seeking a first-century meaning of διακονία that is sourced from its future iterations. Moreover, English words such as "ministry," "service," and "deacon"—which are loaded with post-Pauline connotations—ought not to be the first stop in our consideration of Paul's text.[392] Another problem with the assessments of Barrett, Cranfield, and Moo concerns simple logic. All three permit the premise of their arguments to assume the conclusions that they reach as to διακονία. This begs the question as to whether the terms "service" and

[385] Barrett, *Romans*, 238.

[386] Cranfield, *Romans*, 621-22.

[387] Käsemann, *Romans*, 342.

[388] Moo, *Romans*, 766.

[389] Ibid.

[390] Ibid. That διακονία has an inherent religious connotation that does not require this gloss is a point that I take up in section 3 of this chapter.

[391] Ibid.

[392] Attitudes of humility and self-sacrifice are often associated with διακονία in contemporary scholarship. This perspective leads some commentators to find a note of caution in Paul's short phrase διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ. Morris assumes that διακονία represents "humdrum" activities, and "lowly service of any kind. . . ." Morris, *Romans*, 441. Cranfield suggests that persons active in this gift should guard against the implicit "temptation" to undertake other "services for which one is not divinely equipped. . . ." Cranfield, *Romans*, 623. Sanday and Headlam are more direct. They assert that "the minister," which is their translation of the abstract noun διακονία in Rom 12:7, should stick to the tasks at hand and "not ambitiously attempt to prophesy or exhort." Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 354, 357.

"ministry" are appropriate glosses for this word in Rom 12:7. While such terms may indeed carry weight as part of a strong tradition that would later appear in Christianity, they may not be appropriate in describing διακονία as it is used in Paul's first-century letter to the Romans. I revisit this issue when I propose my translation of Rom 12:7 in section 4 of this chapter.

John N. Collins offers the activities of the "go-between" as his preferred gloss for διακονία.[393] In his monograph, Collins traces usage and the accompanying definitions of διακονία beginning with its Hellenistic origins. He determines that the notion of a "go-between" is the best reflection of the ancient usage for διακονία.[394] Collins also details the formation of the "office" of the diaconate in the early church.[395] He then describes how a doctrine of ministry emerged that continues to exist in both modern theology and the church.[396] Unfortunately, Collins spends little time applying his work to διακονία in Rom 12:7. He does offer that the surrounding gifts of prophecy, teaching, and exhorting should determine the meaning of διακονία since they all involve "delivering the word."[397]

Although there is a current trend in biblical studies to consider first-century cultural background when analyzing Pauline texts,[398] the efforts of commentators to apply this method to διακονία as it appears in Rom 12:7 have met with mixed results. Stowers does not extensively discuss the χαρίσματα, nor does he explore the possibility of their Greco-Roman origins. For him, all of Rom 12–13 provides a "sketch" of "an ethic of community based on faithfulness and adaptability to others."[399] The χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8 are simply "examples of varied gifts that constitute abilities to contribute to the good of others and of the social whole."[400]

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[393] John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 77-95.

[394] Collins, 77-95.

[395] Ibid., 6-8.

[396] Ibid., 26-45.

[397] Ibid., 233. I return to the communicative aspect of διακονία below in section 3.5 of this chapter. I also discuss this idea in subsequent chapters when I consider the role of all of the χαρίσματα in Paul's mission to spread the gospel.

[398] For an example, see Stowers, *Romans*. The latest commentary concurrent with the writing of this thesis comes from Richard N. Longnecker. Longenecker, *Romans*. In his commentary, this scholar details Hellenistic Jewish and Greco-Roman touch points in other areas such as ancient letter-writing, philosophical thought and rhetoric. However, Longenecker does not investigate the Greco-Roman roots of διακονία in Rom 12:7. Longenecker does clarify that "none of the gifts referred to are cited in order to authorize or support the institution of particular offices or officers in the early Christian congregations" (929-30).

[399] Stowers, *Romans*, 318.

[400] Stowers, 319.

Jewett is one commentator that does investigate the Greco-Roman world in his commentary. In his section on διακονία, Jewett cites Collins' study no less than four times and adopts the "in-between" nature reflected in the notion of διακονία that Collins finds in Greco-Roman sources.[401] Although Jewett engages with commentators and scholars who have written about διακονία, he does not reference any primary Greco-Romans sources in his explication of this gift. Jewett notes that *διακ-* words are sometimes used to denote "attendants in religious ceremonies," yet he downplays this as merely one use among many others.[402] After considering various hypotheses, Jewett argues that we should accept what he believes is the "basic meaning" of the word διακονία.[403] This leads to his claim that διακονία refers to intermediate activity in the Christ-following community, "especially serving meals."[404] Jewett thus departs from the position of Collins without making it clear that he is doing so. After evaluating ancient sources in the section of his monograph to which Jewett refers, Collins concludes that "the sense 'to serve at table' cannot be called the 'basic meaning'" of διακονία.[405] Collins proceeds to state that the sense of serving at table should be perceived only as a "particular application" of διακονία, a word that is capable of signifying more than this. Collins gives the examples of conveying "messages" and being an "agent" on behalf of someone.[406] Collins thus opines that "the more comprehensive idea of 'serving' is vague and inadequate."[407]

In summary, the shortcomings of the commentators who have dealt with the meaning and application of διακονία in Rom 12:7 include overgeneralization, application of anachronistic detail, and even avoidance of definition. Facing the "puzzle"[408] of defining διακονία, these scholars must confront scant textual evidence within Rom 12:7 that might elaborate upon the meaning of διακονία. Stowers and Jewett do consider first-century evidence in their work, but they have shied away from using their methods on Paul's use of διακονία in Rom 12:7. In Jewett's case, διακονία has

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[401] Jewett, *Romans*, 747-49.

[402] Jewett, 747. Jewett, relying upon Collins' research, presents a list of ways in which the *διακ-* words are used. These include "household servants, waiters, priests, statesmen, tradesmen, retailers, attendants in religious ceremonies, messengers, and even ambassadors" (ibid.).

[403] Jewett, 748.

[404] Ibid.

[405] Collins, *Diakonia*, 194.

[406] Ibid.

[407] Ibid.

[408] Jewett, 748.

been relegated to a very narrow use, that of serving at the daily "love feasts" that occurred in the Christ-following community.[409]

The foregoing examples show that there is room for a reconsideration of διακονία in light of the ancient Greco-Roman sources. This is the objective of my next section. One of the last statements Collins makes in his monograph motivates me to expand into new areas that go beyond his research. At the conclusion of his book, Collins provides meanings of Greek words and how they relate to the term "ministry." He specifies that the notion of διακονία "probably originated in cult."[410] I will further develop this direction and present my discussion of the gift, διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ within the context of this milieu.

4. A CONSIDERATION OF THE *DIAK-* GROUP IN LIGHT OF ANCIENT GRECO-ROMAN SOURCES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DIVINE-HUMAN RELATIONS

4.1. Epictetus

Both διακονία and διάκονος are found in sources that pre-date and span the first century CE and beyond. These words and their cognates are used for both cultic and ritual purposes. The Cynic philosopher Epictetus, who spent his youth in Rome as a secretary to Nero, states that devotees of Cynic philosophy should be ὅλον πρὸς τῇ διακονία τοῦ θεοῦ [entirely attentive to the service of God].[411] Epictetus then describes διακονία in terms of being a messenger, a scout, and a herald of the gods. For Epictetus, the ideal διάκονος was dedicated to god. Appropriate activities that accompanied διακονία were an expression of devotion.[412]

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[409] Ibid. This is not to say that attending to the details of the eucharistic meals was not important or should have been avoided by members of the Christ-following community. Yet this application is but one of several possibilities for the word διακονία in common usage.

[410] Collins, *Diakonia*, 337.

[411] Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.22 [69].

[412] Epictetus' use of διακονία also informs treatment of διάκονος in 2 Corinthians. See the discussion in Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 231-32, n. 293. There has been progress from commentators who consider the meaning of διάκονος and διακονία in both Greco-Roman and Pauline usages, especially in commentaries on 2 Corinthians. For example, Barnett consults Collins' work from 1990, remarking that Collins "corrects the widespread belief that the *diakonia* words meant 'humble activity.' Rather, the root idea was 'go between.'" Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: Eerdmans,

4.2. Pausanias

Second-century traveler and geographer Pausanias took note of two statues he observed near the temple of Athena in Athens. The bases of these monuments contained epigrams to the priestess Lysimache and her elderly διάκονος, Syeris.[413] Lysimache had already come under discussion by first-century Roman author Pliny the Elder, wherein he noted the existence of her statue and her role as priestess to Athena.[414] Catherine Keesling declares the importance of the fourth century BCE honorary statue to Syeris, which remained standing in the second century CE.[415] Joan Breton Connelly describes Syeris as a "subpriestess."[416] An inscription has Syeris describing her own status as a διάκονος who is functioning within an undeniably cultic context:

Συη̂[ρις . .]γου
Σ[- - -]
Λυσ[ιμάχ]ης
διά[κο]νος.
ή ἐω τ[ῶι ἱε]ρῶι
εἰκών με [ἥδε] σαφὴς δηλοῖ
τ΄υπου· ἔ[ργα] δὲ καὶ νοῦς
[νῦν ζ]ώει? παρὰ πᾶσι σαφῆ·
[σε]μνὴ δέ με μοῖρα
[ἥ]γαγεν εἰς ναὸν περικαλλέ[α]
Παλλάδος ἁγνῆς,
[οὗ] πόνον οὐκ ἀκλεᾶ τόνδε
ἐλάτρευσα θεᾶι.
vac. 0.07

1997), 174, n. 20. In his 2014 commentary on 2 Corinthians, Seifrid has applied the work of Collins on Paul's use of διακονία to good effect by translating διακονία as "mission" in order to "express the idea of agency, task, or errand carried out at the behest of another." Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2014), 323, cf. 363-64, 369. Seifrid, also per Collins, chooses the term "emissary" for διάκονός in 2 Cor 3:6. "Emissary" speaks "more directly the communicative role of the apostle signified by the term" over "the usual translation 'minister'" (120, n. 75).

[413] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.27 [4].

[414] Pliny, *On Natural History* 34-76. Connelly notes that the Athenian priestess Lysimache may have been the inspiration for the leading character of Aristophanes' play, *Lysistrata*. Joan Breton Connelly, *Portrait of A Priestess* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 62-64.

[415] Catherine M. Keesling, "Syeris, Diakonos of the Priestess Lysimache on the Athenian Acropolis (IG II² 3464)," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 81, No. 3 (2012), 497.

[416] Connelly, *Portrait of A Priestess*, 131.

14 Νικόμαχος ἐπόησεν.

[Sye[ris] [. .] gou
S[- - -], diakonos of Lysimache.
This image of my form, the one in the sanctuary, shows me clearly;
my deeds and spirit now live on, clear to all. A reverend fate led me
into the most beautiful temple of holy Pallas, where I performed
this labor not without glory for the goddess.
[Nikomachos made it.][417]

This inscription does not depict the activities of a διάκονος such as Syeris. Pausanias does, however, give us an account of a sacred ceremony at the temple of Athena that is instructive here. This ceremony involved the acting priestess of Athena and her διάκονος.[418] Two young Athenian girls would come and live with the goddess, and, during the appointed festival, the priestess of Athena and her διάκονος would place an offering upon the heads of these girls which they would carry through an underground passage leading to the garden of Aphrodite. Having left their items underground where they received replacements for them, the girls would then reemerge into the city. It is plausible to view the διάκονος as having acted as a guide for these young girls as she took them down into what might be considered to symbolize the underworld and later back to their normal lives. We might speculate that the διάκονος Syeris could have participated in such a ritual. As I will discuss, the notion of a guide is also associated with the role of the διάκονος via the god Hermes whose statue stood adjacent to those of Lysimache and Syeris.[419]

4.3. Plutarch

I next consider διακονία as it appears in the context of a cultic ceremony that Plutarch describes in *Aristides*. In this work, Plutarch, who wrote for both Greek and Roman audiences, de-

[417] Keesling, "Syeris, Diakonos," 469. See also Pausanias 1.27.4. See Appendix 2.1 and 2.2 for two photographic images of this artifact.
[418] Pausanias, 1.27.3.
[419] Pausanias, 1.27.1.

picts a Greek assembly in the ancient city of Plataea that commemorated the dead from a Peloponnesian War battle. This ritual involved free-born youths who carried libations of wine, milk, oil, and myrrh that would be poured out as an offering to the deity. No slave [δούλῳ] was to put hand to any part of the τὴν διακονίαν because the men they honored died for freedom.[420] Plutarch notes that the group would process to the graves of the deceased warriors through the midst of the city, where water would be taken from the sacred spring.[421] The gravestones were washed off and anointed with myrrh, and a bull would then be slaughtered at the funeral pyre. The ceremony concluded with prayers that were offered to Zeus and Hermes.[422]

These rites, which Plutarch states were still being observed in his own day, are another indication of the appearance and discussion of διακονία in pagan activities. The roles of the δούλος and the διάκονος are not co-equal in Plutarch's account. The ritual that Plutarch discusses is conducted by a διάκονος, which Plutarch describes as a freed person. By contrast, a δούλος is not a freed person, and cannot take this role. Both Pausanias and Plutarch associate διακονία and the activities of the διάκονος with the goings on of the underworld.

In both examples that I have given from Pausanias and Plutarch, there is a hint of an association between the human roles and activities of the διάκονος and those of the god, Hermes. Plutarch strengthens this connection in his work *Numa*, where he relates a ritual associated with the god Jupiter in which the efforts of a boy who attended a priest resemble the role of Hermes as a διάκονος for Zeus.[423] Hermes is also called διάκονος by Aeschylus in Prometheus Bound, his renowned Greek tragedy. Prometheus identifies Hermes as the διάκονος and ἄγγελος of his father, Zeus.[424] In light of the link these writers have made between Hermes and his role as a διάκονος, I now consider possible parallels between διάκονος and the related noun, διάκτορος, which is a common epithet for Hermes. Because of this association, a consideration of διάκονος and διακονία should include a discussion of the cultic roles and activities of Hermes, who was the διάκτορος in

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[420] Plutarch, *Aristides* 21 [3]. The full text is δούλῳ γὰρ οὐδενὸς ἔξεστι τῶν περὶ τὴν διακονίαν ἐκείνην προσάψασθαι διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀποθανεῖν ὑπὲρ ἐλευθερίας with τὴν διακονίαν glossed as "ministration."

[421] Ibid.

[422] Ibid.

[423] Plutarch, *Numa* 7.5.

[424] Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 942.

ancient literature.

4.4. Homer and Hermes

Homer introduces the god Hermes, who was also known as Mercury in Roman mythology, as διάκτορος Αργεϊφόντης,[425] Ἑρμείαο διακτόρου,[426] and διάκτορος.[427] The presence and ubiquity of the Homeric tradition within the ancient world was profound. Thomas E. Phillips, in his essay, "Homer and the New Testament," declares that the pervasiveness of this influence within the first century Greek-speaking world extended even to those who could not read.[428] In both the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, Homer presents Hermes as a messenger, envoy, and scout who does the bidding of his father, Zeus. Hermes is also the god who ushers the dead who have been killed by Odysseus down into the underworld.[429]

We have seen that both διάκτορος and διάκονος are epithets for Hermes, and that his qualities as a διάκονος/διάκτορος include messenger, envoy, scout, and guide. That this range of meaning was plausibly available for Paul's Roman audience is apparent from the work of Cornutus, a philosopher and teacher whose writing I next briefly review. Cornutus lived and worked in Rome near to the time Paul was writing his epistle to the Christ-followers there.

4.5. Cornutus

Lucius Annaeus Cornutus was a popular Roman Stoic philosopher during the reign of the Emperor Nero. He was also a grammarian who wrote a manual on Greek mythology in the Greek

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[425] *Iliad*, 2.103; *Odyssey*, 5.43, 70, 145.

[426] *Odyssey*, 12.390.

[427] *Odyssey*, 8.335. Here, διάκτορος is translated as "guide." Apollo describes Hermes as Zeus' son. Throughout the story, Hermes is Odysseus' guide. See also *Odyssey*, 15.319.

[428] Phillips, "The World of the New Testament," 390. Phillips maintains that Homer's influence was impressed upon Greco-Roman culture through education, art, and theater. Moreover, he cites the use of Homer in the writings of Jewish authors Philo and Josephus (391), who were near contemporaries of Paul.

[429] *Odyssey*, 24.99. Faivre summarizes two of Hermes' traits: "first, his guiding function, linked to his extreme mobility; second, his mastery of speech and interpretation, [which both] warrant a certain type of knowledge." Antoine Faivre, *The Eternal Hermes: From Greek God to Alchemical Magus,* trans. Joscelyn Godwin (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1995), 13.

language called *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*.[430] Cornutus was a noted tutor, and his pupils included the satiric poet Persius as well as Lucan, who was the nephew of Seneca.

The exact dates of Cornutus' birth and death are unknown, but it is thought that he lived in Rome at least from 50 to 65 CE. Biblical scholar Van der Horst has compared Cornutus' work with the apostle Paul and his teaching and has found parallels.[431] Cornutus is important for my purposes because his description of Hermes gives us insight into perceptions about the role of this god that are pertinent to our understanding of διάκονος in the first century. At the very least, Cornutus affirms that the traditional association of Hermes with διακονία was maintained in first-century Roman culture.

Cornutus recounts Hermes as the leader of the Graces [Χἀριτες], who were daughters of Zeus.[432] Hermes is prized for his "reason [λόγος], [which was] the pre-eminent possession of the gods. . . ."[433] Cornutus also describes the activities of Hermes, some of which are cultic in nature:

> He [Hermes] is named from *contriving to speak* i.e. to talk; or from being our *bulwark* and stronghold, so to speak. In addition, he is called, first of all, 'Diaktoros,' either from being *piercing* and distinct, or from *conducting* our thoughts into the souls of those nearby – which is why they dedicate tongues to him. . . . The tradition makes him the herald of the gods, and he was said to announce their doings to men. He is a herald, because a herald uses a loud voice to present rational meaning to an audience; and he is a messenger, because we know the will of the gods from the concepts rationally instilled in us. That he wears winged sandals and is carried through the air is consistent with the idea of 'winged words,' as they have been called. . . And mythology represents Hermes as the Conductor of Souls, associating with him its proper task of guiding souls. (it. orig.)[434]

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[430] For this thesis, I will consult George Boys-Stones, *L. Annaeus Cornutus: Greek Theology, Fragments, and Testimonia* (*Writings From the Greco-Roman World 42*) (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), forthcoming. Cornutus penned other works in both Greek and Latin, but only a few fragments and short abstracts have survived. The English translation, *Greek Theology* used in this thesis is provided by George Boys-Stones (Durham University, UK), and accessed with the author's permission. References to Boys-Stones' translation are in brackets. Hereafter referred to simply under the name, Cornutus.

[431] Peter van der Horst, "Cornutus and the New Testament: A Contribution to the Corpus Hellenisticum," *Novum Testamentum* XXIII, 2 (1981).

[432] Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 15 [18].

[433] Cornutus, 16 [20].

[434] Cornutus, 16 [20-22]. Hays states that Cornutus, a "grammaticus" would be "expected to explain odd words including why particular epithets were applied by Homer to certain gods." Robert Hays, "Lucius Annaeus Cornutus' 'Epidrome' (Introduction to the Traditions of Greek Theology): Introduction, Translation, and Notes," diss., ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, 1983), 23.

From Cornutus we learn that Hermes communicates messages, heralds the activities of the gods, and guides human souls. Cornutus notes that in his own day Hermes was a well-known god with roadside statues to which people made offerings in the hope that Hermes would help steer their way. Moreover, while Cornutus affirms the description of a διάκτορος as a herald, messenger, and guide, he also gives us a broader understanding as to the *diak-* words by adding an emphasis on the persuasiveness and power of *speech*.[435]

We see from ancient literature that Hermes has been associated with διακονία from the time of Homer to that of Cornutus' first-century classroom. These references were then absorbed by first-century society and continued to appear in the works of second-century historians Pausanias and Plutarch that I have discussed. My objective here is not to irrefutably prove that Paul was aware of Cornutus and his teachings. What I am suggesting is that in using a familiar word like διακονία, Paul's Roman addressees could have drawn upon ideas and associations already familiar to them. Considering the way *diak-* language was used in ancient sources also broadens our understanding of how Paul's audience might have appreciated the word διακονία. They also suggest possible meanings for this word beyond translations such as "service," "ministry" or serving meals.

4.6. Glossary of terms

I now list a glossary of terms that I have gathered from the ancient sources reviewed in this chapter. As discussed, the words διακονία, διάκονος, and the related epithet for Hermes, διάκτορος, convey meanings taken from references to divine-human relations. This usage suggests more about how Paul's first-century Roman audience might have perceived the practical outworking of the abstract noun, διακονία when they considered it a gift of God as Paul teaches in Rom 12:6–8. For example, my investigation into instances of the *diak-* word group within the ancient sources has revealed the possibility of several roles that might have been suitable for a διάκονος. These are messenger, envoy, herald, guide, mediator, or go-between.[436] As seen in the examples that I have set

[435] According to Cornutus, Hermes was "the first to be called god 'of the Agora:' for he is overseer of public speakers." Cornutus, 16 [25]. See also 24 [45]. See Appendix 2.3 for an image of the god Hermes.

[436] The terms I have gathered coincide with the data compiled for διακονία and διάκονος in *Diccionario Griego-Español*. The *DGE* is currently in development and has been published in seven volumes: α - ἔξαυος as of August, 2018. Francisco R. Adrados et al., *Diccionario Griego-Español* (Madrid: Institutio De Filologia Consejo Superior De Investigaciones

forth, the roles and activities of the διάκονος share a common feature: they were to be done on behalf of and under the authority of a religious figure or a god. In other words, the activities are designed to carry out a *mission*. This mission, having been received from a divine or human authority figure, determines the exact role and accompanying activities for the διάκονος who carries out the mission. I now apply the glossary of terms that I have assembled to διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ as it appears in Rom 12:7.

5. A PROPOSED TRANSLATION OF ΔΙΑΚΟΝΊΑΝ ’EN TΗ̂I ΔΙΑΚΟΝΊΑΙ IN ROM 12:7

I began this chapter by surveying commentators who have written about διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ in Rom 12:7. Most scholars choose either “ministry” or “service” as their gloss for Rom 12:7. We have seen that this decision is problematic. Translating διακονία with the English words “ministry” or “service” without defining what is meant by these terms does not do justice to the range of meaning that likely accompanied διακονία in the Greco-Roman world of the first century.[437] Moreover, when commentators do describe what they mean by these words, they attach notions of humility and self-abasement. These attitudes reflect common Christian notions of serving and ministry that are incongruous with the usages of διακονία and διάκονος that I have discussed.[438]

We have seen that some scholars present διακονία/ministry as a “catch-all” term for whatever practical activities might be needed in the Christ-following community. This may be due to the lack of textual detail as to διακονία in Rom 12:7. Other commentators criticize the conclusions of previous scholars and elaborate upon what they believe διακονία is *not*. Neither approach provides much precision about the nature of διακονία or its practice. A few scholars employ anachronistic terms such as “deacon” or a “diaconal office” to the Pauline text. Jewett offers “waiting on tables” as an application for this gift. I have chosen to delve further into what ancient sources might have to

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Científicas (CSIC), 2008). I have accessed *DGE online* at http://dge.cchs.csic.es/ The *DGE* online is an open access resource shared under a Creative Commons license.

[437] The English words ministry and service are not in themselves faulty, but they are incomplete. What commentators have not done, arguably because of the limitation of scope that they have put on their inquiries, is to define what they mean by these terms. The result is that we have words that are relatively devoid of meaning.

[438] Humility is certainly a biblically Christian attribute, but in the case of διακονία, humility has not come to the forefront in instances surveyed in this thesis.

tell us about διακονία.

I, too, must acknowledge that Paul gives us little detail to go on in the text of Rom 12:7. Even in the other instances of *diak-* language in the letter, Paul does not amplify what he means by διακονία, nor does he give many specifics about the activities of a διάκονος.[439] For example, Paul states in Rom 11:13 that as he is an apostle to the gentiles, he glorifies his διακονία.[440] The phrase is τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω. Paul's διακονία is his mission to the gentiles.[441] In carrying out the assignment that he has received from God, Paul preaches the gospel message. He also glorifies it, perhaps by making it widely available to the gentiles to make his own people jealous, and "thus save some of them" (11:14). This is not a statement of pride. For Paul, the gospel message deserves to be heard by as many people as possible. Paul explains the parameters of his mission to proclaim the gospel in Rom 15:17–21 and he characterizes his work in terms of worship.

I have thus proposed that we explore *diak*-language in the Greco-Roman first-century world in which Paul's addressees lived. The evidence that this approach produces is more concerned with the time in which the letter to the Romans was written, and the terms that it may reveal are indeed helpful for providing structure for our definition of διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ.

My own use of this approach also provides a glossary of potential terms that help us to describe the role and activities of a διάκονος. It also suggests the possibility that both διακονία and

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[439] But for constraints of space, I would explore applying what we have learned about the roles and activities of the διάκονος to Christ as he is depicted in Rom 15:8ff. Here, in light of the data in this section, I propose we consider Paul's teaching in terms of a mission and message that Christ brings on behalf of the Jews to the gentiles. The subsequent catena of citations from the Psalms, perhaps christologically exegeted, may contain the message that seems important to Paul. I also note that Agosti has found a "Christian exegetic tradition, establishing a parallelism between Hermes and Christ" in Justin Martyr's *Apologia* in the second century CE. Gianfranco Agosti, "Praising the God(s)," in *The Reception of the Homeric Hymns*, ed. Andrew Faulkner, Athanassios Vergados, and Andreas Schwab (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Press, 2016), 230.

[440] Marquis recognizes Paul's self-description as a διάκονός in 2 Cor 3:3b-6 may be viewed as "an accessible entry point" familiar to his audience wherein Paul chooses "the image of a divine courier" (διάκονός) as a "fitting introduction and frame for his own complex allusions to prophetic texts." Timothy Luckritz Marquis, *Transient Apostle: Paul, Travel, and the Rhetoric of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 97. By thus raising the common practice of letter delivery, and then figuring himself as carrier of a divine and internally carried letter, the apostle evokes an entire constellation of metaphorical 'heavenly messengers,' grouping these images under the blanket term **diakonos**." (ibid., emph. orig.)

[441] The English word "mission" is the chosen gloss for διακονία for Barnabas and Saul's mission in Acts 12:25 (NRSV; see also Judg 18:5; 1 Sam 15:18, 20; 2 Macc 3:27; 4:11). The author of Acts also states that the people of Lystra wanted to worship Paul as Hermes because he was the "chief speaker" in Acts 14:12.

διάκονος may be viewed in terms of mission. I propose that we translate the phrase εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ thus: "a mission, in accordance with what that mission requires."

6. CONCLUSION

In Paul's hands, a transformation has taken place that could have changed his audience's conception of διακονία in Rom 12:7. By recalibrating the concept of διακονία by referencing understandings that might have been familiar to his audience, Paul has enabled them to view διακονία in light of what it means to be a διάκονος to whom God has entrusted a διακονία or mission. This mission is the gift, and the role and activity of the διάκονος who fulfills it is determined by what the mission requires. How the mission is accomplished will require imagination, strength, and ingenuity in order for the Christ-followers to act as obedient representatives, heralds, messengers, envoys, guides, mediators, and go-betweens who accomplish the assignments they receive from God. Paul views his own work of spreading the gospel in terms of διακονία, and the outworking of it is his worship. His Roman audience may also take on διακονία and share the good news as their own active worship of God. This endeavor will also require the transmission of knowledge and instruction in the form of διδασκαλία.

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses διδάσκω and two related words, διδάσκαλος and διδασκαλία. While these words were commonly used to describe many kinds of instruction in antiquity, I will consider them from the perspective of their use to convey knowledge as to divine-human relations. Of particular interest to me is the religious background of Paul's gentile audience and how this background might have informed their reception as to this gift. Toward this end, I gather instances where διδάσκω, διδάσκαλος, and διδασκαλία are used in the context of giving instruction about divinity. I refer to this assemblage of terms as a *didask* word group, or as *didask-* language. I conclude this chapter with a consideration of my findings in light of Paul's own use of this word group in his letter to the Romans.

Broadly speaking, I discuss four ways that knowledge concerning the relationship between humankind and deity was understood and transmitted in antiquity. These are religious texts, the natural world, familiar myths and stories, and music. These means of instruction carry the common features of teaching about the nature of the gods, what their activities were, and how humans should interact with them.

2. THE LEXICAL MEANING OF ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΊΑ

The lexical definition of the verb διδάσκω is:

1. *instruct* a person, or *teach* a thing

II. *explain*

III. "of dithyrambic and dramatic Poets" (cf. διδάσκαλος).[442]

I will also discuss two related words, διδάσκαλος:

1. *teacher*, *master*

[442] LSJ, δῐδάσκω, 422.

II. *trainer* of a dithyrambic or dramatic chorus, producer of a play.[443]

and διδασκαλία:

1. *teaching, instruction*;

2. *elucidation*;

3. *official instructions.*[444]

II. *training, rehearsing of a chorus.*[445]

3. ROM 12:7: "THE ONE WHO TEACHES, IN THE TEACHING" IN ROM 12:7 AS DISCUSSED IN SELECTED COMMENTARIES

Like many people who choose to communicate through the medium of letter-writing, Paul likely would have selected his words carefully and strategically in the hope that his addressees would understand exactly what he wished to convey. This motivation would have arguably been even greater as regards his letter to the Christ-following community in Rome, an obviously important city that he had not yet visited.

The commentators that have written about the gift of teaching have tended to focus variously on grammar, the distinctions between teaching and the other gifts listed in Rom 12:6–8, and the tradition of Jewish instruction. As with the other χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8, there is a lack of textual detail regarding ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ. This leads some scholars to consider matters that may or may not have been relevant to Paul's gentile audience. Since their reception is central to my work regarding Rom 12:6–8, I will evaluate the commentator's analysis of ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ in light of this group. Discussion amongst commentators regarding this gift tends to revolve around three questions: (1) is there any significance for Paul's grammatical shift from noun to participle in Rom 12:7; (2) should we worry about distinguishing the gift of teaching from the other six gifts; and, (3) how does the importance of teaching in Judaism and Greco-Roman philosophy weigh upon gentile perceptions of ὁ διδάσκων?

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[443] LSJ, δῐδάσκᾰλ-ος, ὁ, 421.

[444] LSJ, δῐδασκᾰλ-ία, ἡ, 421.

[445] Under II, LSJ also has: διδασκαλίαι, αἱ, *Catalogues of the Dramas*, 421.

3.1. Paul's shift from noun to participle

Commentators note that Paul makes a grammatical adjustment at this point in his list of gifts. In Rom 12:6–7a, Paul has thus far presented both προφητεία and διακονία as abstract nouns. With the third χάρισμα, Paul segues into a participial form: ὁ διδάσκων.[446] Taken in isolation, recognition of this transition may first appear to have little relevance to scholars beyond matters of style.[447] For some commentators, however, this alteration is substantive. For example, Fitzmyer believes Paul's participial shift signals a decision to emphasize "gifted persons."[448] Building on this idea, Dunn contends that the injection of a participle here shows that Paul may have envisioned gifted individuals who would have a "regular ministry" of teaching within the community.[449] Alternatively, Jewett thinks that Paul chooses the participle ὁ διδάσκων to avoid using the noun διδάσκαλος. He opines that Paul would have known that the noun διδάσκαλος was a common name for Christ in the gospels. In preferring the participle, Paul thus avoids "exacerbating the conflicts over leadership that are evident elsewhere in the letter."[450] Jewett contends that there may have been individuals who, if they viewed themselves gifted in terms of a διδάσκαλος, would be tempted to conflate their importance with that of Christ.[451] Regardless, these conclusions as to Paul's grammatical choice as to this gift are ultimately indeterminate and only tenously linked to the text of Rom 12:6–8.[452]

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[446] This participial form continues to be used for the rest of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:7–8.

[447] Dunn wonders if Paul simply means to avoid repetition. Dunn, Romans, 729.

[448] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 648.

[449] Dunn, Romans, 729.

[450] Ibid.

[451] Jewett, *Romans*, 750. For an overview of this discussion, see Jewett, 749-50.

[452] There are other possibilities for such a grammatical shift. As a result of my findings in the previous two chapters, I offer alternative solutions. By using the abstract noun "prophecy" as opposed to the proper noun "prophet," Paul forecloses the chance that his audience might identify his reference with a particular prophet with whom they might be familiar. In addition, προφητεία has the benefit of being gender neutral. Thus it is clear that anyone in the group, male or female, may potentially prophesy. As for διακονία, I have noted the strong association of this word with a famous διάκονος, the god Hermes. Paul's choice also explicitly takes gender out of the equation.

3.2. Distinguishing ὁ διδάσκων from the other χαρίσματα

Some commentators are keen to maintain bright-line distinctions between ὁ διδάσκων and the other χαρίσματα in Paul's list.[453] Fitzmyer wants to assure that the activities of ὁ διδάσκων are separated from the first two χαρίσματα, which he defines respectively as "preaching" and "service."[454] Fitzmyer explains that ὁ διδάσκων should be uniquely expected to instruct in "catechesis," the "interpretation of Scripture," and the "teaching of Christian doctrine."[455] Cranfield sees a further nuance between the "prophet of the early Church," who was "immediately inspired . . . [to speak] . . . a particular and direct revelation," and the teacher who "based his teaching upon the OT scriptures, the tradition of Jesus and the catechetical material current in the Christian community."[456] Dunn defines prophecy as "new insight into God's will" and teaching as "new insight into old revelation."[457] Dunn, however, tells us little as to how he has arrived at these definitions and distinctions, nor does he explain his assertion that Paul "prizes prophecy more highly" than teaching.[458] Barrett glances forward to ὁ παρακαλῶν, the gift that follows ὁ διδάσκων, and asserts that together, these two gifts may define the "work of the preacher."[459] So considered, the "truth of the Gospel" should therefore first be *explained* by ὁ διδάσκων and then *applied* by ὁ παρακαλῶν.[460]

The impulse to distinguish teaching from the other gifts has arguably led the commentators discussed above to load additional meaning upon the phrase that appears in Paul's text. It also reveals an assumption that for us to understand what is meant by the seven χαρίσματα, each gift must be seen as fundamentally distinct from the other. This presupposition diverts attention away from the internal cohesion of the text and also overlooks potential theme(s) that may hold the

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[453] Dunn finds the line between teaching and prophecy "very thin . . ." Dunn, *Romans*, 729.

[454] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 648.

[455] Ibid.

[456] Cranfield, *Romans*, 623. See also Moo, who distinguishes "prophecy" with its "revelatory basis" in which the prophet "speaks the words that God 'puts into his mouth'" from teaching, which involves the "passing on of the truth of the gospel as it has been preserved in the church." Moo, *Romans*, 767.

[457] Dunn, *Romans*, 729.

[458] Ibid. Keck merely remarks that the one who teaches "should teach" and that "[g]uessing what is taught to whom . . . detracts from hearing what Paul is saying." Keck, *Romans*, 300-01.

[459] Barrett, *Romans*, 238.

[460] Ibid.

χαρίσματα together. I develop these points further in the closing remarks of this chapter.

3.3. Influences of Judaic teaching and Greco-Roman philosophy on gentile perceptions of ὁ διδάσκων

In his explication of ὁ διδάσκων, Leenhardt contrasts teaching within Judaism with the type of teaching that Paul may have meant for the Roman Jesus-group. Leenhardt states that with the advent of the "ever living Spirit," ὁ διδάσκων may now enjoy "liberty in the interpretation of Scripture."[461] In his view, such a development distinguishes Paul's teaching from rabbinic tradition. In the same vein, Jewett concludes that the teaching gift of Rom 12:7 should now be understood in terms of an "interaction between spirit and tradition."[462] Jewett then places "Christian teachers" in opposition with Jewish "scribal leaders who concentrated on the memorizing of tradition."[463] Leenhardt and Jewett imagine that Paul's mention of ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ would have evoked a negative comparison between the tradition of teaching within Judaism and teaching that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. These assertions notwithstanding, the Spirit is not mentioned in Rom 12:6–8 nor in the verses that surround it, and it is not at all clear that Paul means to contrast ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ with traditional rabbinic teaching.

The objectives of the commentators who seek to understand the χαρίσματα in light of Paul's Jewish background are different from my own. I seek the vantage point of Paul's target audience, which I argue is largely composed of gentiles. Gentile perspectives on Paul's teaching, which are not easily mapped onto the tenets of Judaism, are underrepresented in the scholarship on the χαρίσματα. The same cannot be said of inquiries into Paul's relationship with his Jewish past and how it might manifest itself in his writings.

Jewett does touch on an aspect of teaching that is of possible relevance to Paul's gentile audience. This appears in an adverse comparison Jewett makes between "Greco-Roman teachers who passed on a specific subject matter and engaged in philosophical speculation" and the kind of teaching Paul imagines will occur in the Roman gatherings.[464] That Paul's audience may have been

[461] Leenhardt, *Romans*, 311.

[462] Jewett, *Romans*, 750.

[463] Ibid.

[464] Ibid.

familiar with such philosophers ties in with the claim that the early Jesus-groups could have been more like philosophical schools than religious communities. Claire S. Smith, a proponent of this theory, considers the vocabulary of teaching within portions of the Pauline literature and determines that these groups should be characterized as "scholastic communities."[465] Smith goes so far as to assert that the *didask-* word group "is not found in Graeco-Roman religious contexts until the 1st century BCE and [even] then infrequently."[466] Accordingly, she maintains that the "religious use [of διδάσκω] is less significant than its philosophical use."[467] As suggested by the survey of pertinent primary sources that follows, Smith's conclusion is incorrect.[468] There are multiple examples of *didask-* language throughout ancient literature from the works of Hesiod, Cornutus, Dio Chrysostom, Euripides, and Sophocles. These instances chronicle instruction as to divine-human relations. I address this topic in the section that follows.

What the foregoing scholars have not considered is the variety of means by which the ancients learned about and grew in their knowledge of the gods. There is, for example, Cornutus' first-century compendium on Greek theology that may serve as an initial instance of a manual for teaching students about their religion in Rome. Religious teaching was also disseminated in other ways for those who did not attend school. The gods themselves were sometimes depicted as teachers, and worshipers received instruction from other cognitive sources such as the natural world, mythology, and music.[469] When this information is considered in light of Paul's own teaching in Romans, we

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[465] Following the views of Judge that I covered above in chapter 1, 3.1., Smith argues that the "practice of teaching" and the "contribution of teaching activities" helped make up the identity of these groups. Claire S. Smith, *Pauline Communities as 'Scholastic Communities': A Study of the Vocabulary of 'Teaching' in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 52. Smith does not consider Romans as part of her target literature.

[466] Smith, *Pauline Communities*, 54. In order to draw this unsupportable conclusion, Smith relies upon Karl Heinrich Rengstorf's 1935 *TDNT* entry on 'διδάσκω' (II: 135-165). In his article, Rengstorff offers only two examples from *Isis Hymn of Andros* (39ff) and *Isis Hymn of Kyme* (23).

[467] Ibid.

[468] Smith acknowledges that the methodology employed for her study was "designed for this particular endeavour" (an inquiry into the social makeup of the early Christ-following communities), and that even though she deems her work as "an historical study," she nonetheless "did not attempt to find antecedents, influences or parallels from antiquity." Smith, *Pauline Communities*, 386.

[469] Rüpke, in his monograph on Roman religion, discusses how ancient persons were educated as to the gods. In his section entitled, "Learning Religion," Rüpke states that the "vital spark" of religion was kindled in children at an early age by mothers and nurses who told or sang tales that referred to divine-human relations (*Pantheon*, 224). These same tales were then "acted out in performances" or "worked into the formulas of prayers" (224).

will see that Paul has used some of these same sources of knowledge as heuristic tools. Paul affirms in his letter that God may be known through nature, the stories of Israel's past, and the Psalms. The manner in which pagan worshipers learned about their religion may thus tell us more about how Paul's audience could have understood the gift of teaching that he introduces in Rom 12:7.

4. A CONSIDERATION OF *DIDASK*- LANGUAGE IN LIGHT OF ANCIENT GRECO-ROMAN SOURCES

First-century Rome displayed a variety of cultic activity. The traditional civic cults of Jupiter and Magna Mater were conjoined with festivals such as the Lupercalia, Saturnalia, and Parilia. Held in accordance with the Roman calendar, these events included various types of *ludi* [games] that were associated with circus races, theatrical performances, and gladiator shows. Beard notes that these *ludi* were "regularly given as part of the festivals to the gods or deified emperors," and that they contributed to the "strong associations between the games and the gods throughout the principate."[470] The abundance of such spectacles meant that opportunities for participation were widely available to those living in Rome. Public events would have occurred alongside more private religious activities, whether in the home or in various sacred spaces.

I now look more specifically at how individuals within Roman society learned about divine beings, what was required of them as worshipers, and who and what served as their religious διδάσκαλοι.

4.1. The gods as διδάσκαλοι

Divine figures played a didactic role in regard to human religious pursuits. Plato, in his funerial oratory *Menexenus,* states that it is the gods themselves who are the governors and tutors [διδασκάλους] for humanity in that they "set in order our mode of life" [οἳ τὸν βίον ἡμῶν κατεσκεύασαν].[471] Isocrates also believed that the gods and their offspring were to be considered

[470] Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome II*, 262. The authors also note that Christians were urged to "avoid all games, not only because of their intrinsic immorality, but also because of their context in the worship of the traditional gods" (262).

[471] *Menexenus* 238b [6].

worthy guides and teachers [διδασκάλους] of honorable conduct.[472] Even divinity could be the beneficiary of διδασκαλία, as shown by the author of the *Hymn to Hermes*, who declares that Hermes himself received religious instruction from divine διδάσκαλοι.[473] In the *Eumenides*, the final play of Aeschylus' trilogy *Oresteia*, Orestes asserts that he has been given a "wise teacher" [σοφοῦ διδασκάλου] in the god Phoebus [Apollo in Rome], who helped him assuage his guilt by way of a purifying sacrifice.[474] Persons in Roman society could therefore have seen their gods as διδάσκαλοι, especially as they struggled to live a life that was accountable and pleasing to them.

4.2. A textual example of religious teaching from Cornutus

Cornutus, the first-century Roman writer who updated his history of the Greek gods in terms of first-century Stoicism, believed it imperative to teach [διδάσκω] his Roman pupils about their religion and its Greek origins:

> In the same way, my child, you can apply these basic models to everything else that comes down through mythology concerning those considered to be gods, in the conviction that the ancients were far from mediocre, but were capable of understanding the nature of the cosmos and ready to express their philosophical account of it in symbols and enigmas. It has all been said at greater length and in more detail by earlier philosophers, but I wanted now to pass it on to you in abbreviated form: facility with the subject is useful even to this extent. When the young are being taught to sacrifice and pray, and worship and swear oaths in the right way and in the appropriate circumstances (according to the sense of proportion you adopt for yourself) – you will come to grasp both your ancestral traditions about these things (the gods and their cults and everything that exists for their honour), and also an unblemished account of them, so that they will lead you only to piety, and not to superstition.
>
> [Οὕτω δ' ἂν ἤδη καὶ τἆλλα τῶν μυθικῶς παρα δεδόσθαι περὶ θεῶν δοκούντων ἀναγαγεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ παραδεδειγμένα στοιχεῖα, ὦ παῖ, δύναιο, πεισθεὶς ὅτι οὐχ οἱ τυχόντες ἐγένοντο οἱ παλαιοί, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνιέναι τὴν τοῦ κόσμου φύσιν ἱκανοὶ καὶ πρὸς τὸ διὰ συμβόλων καὶ αἰνιγμάτων φιλοσοφῆσαι περὶ αὐτῆς εὐεπίφοροι. διὰ πλειόνων δὲ καὶ ἐξεργαστικώτερον εἴρηται τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις φιλοσόφοις, ἐμοῦ νῦν ἐπιτετμημένως αὐτὰ παραδοῦναί σοι βουληθέντος· χρησίμη γὰρ αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον προχειρότης ἐστί. περὶ δὲ ἐκείνων καὶ περὶ τῆς θεραπείας τῶν θεῶν καὶ τῶν οἰκείως εἰς τιμὴν αὐτῶν γινομένων καὶ τὰ πάτρια καὶ τὸν ἐντελῆ λήψῃ λόγον οὕτω μόνον ὡς εἰς τὸ εὐσεβεῖν ἀλλὰ μὴ εἰς τὸ δεισιδαιμονεῖν

[472] Isocrates, *Busiris* 11.41.

[473] *Hymn 4 to Hermes* 550–555.

[474] Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 276–283.

εἰσαγομένων τῶν νέων καὶ θύειν τε καὶ εὔχεσθαι καὶ προσκυνεῖν καὶ ὀμνύειν κατὰ τρόπον καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐμβάλλουσι καιροῖς καθ' ἣν ἁρμόττει συμμετρίαν διδασκομένων.][475]

The work of Cornutus may be viewed as didactic material that was intended for instruction in philosophy[476] and religion. Cornutus took it upon himself to teach his young pupils about the gods and their activities.[477] His example of a written treatise appears to be a rare one.[478]

Beard and her co-authors note that sacred books pertaining to traditional cults such as the Sibylline Oracles did exist in Rome; however, these materials were only available to "men of learning or philosophers, who might, or might not, also be priests.[479] The authors go on to say that there were, however, "no written works . . . [that established the] tenets and doctrine [of these cults], or provided explanation (religious *exegesis*) of their rituals or moral prescription for their adherents."[480] Thus, despite the breadth of cultic activity in the Roman world, written materials covering practical instruction as to these topics were limited, largely unavailable to the average citizen, or non-existent. This, however, should not be taken as proof that divine-human relations were unimportant to the inhabitants of first-century Rome.

4.3. Other available means of διδασκαλία as to divine-human relations

The scarcity of writings that offered guidance as to divine-human relations in first-century Rome challenges us in understanding how the *didask-* word group applies to *religious* instruction and learning. Even if such materials were available, there is still debate amongst scholars as to

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[475] Cornutus, 35 [75–76].

[476] José B. Torres Guerra, "Roman Elements in Annaeus Cornutus's ΕΠΙΔΡΟΜΗ," in *VTROQVE SERMONE NOSTRO. Bilingüismo Social Y Literario En El Imperio Roma / Social and Literary Bilingualism in the Roman Empire*, ed. José B. Torres Guerra (Pamploma: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra (EUNSA), 2011), 45.

[477] H. Greg Snyder examines Cornutus as an example among others of the relationship between first-century teachers, texts and their students. Gregory H. Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (London: Routledge, 2000). Lucan, the nephew of Seneca, and Perseus, the writer of *Satires*, were two of Cornutus' famous pupils.

[478] In Judaism, this was clearly not the case. Paul thus cites essential Jewish texts and exegetes them throughout his Roman missive. This, however, would not preclude other means of religious instruction even though Paul's gentile audience were surely encouraged by his references to the Jewish Scriptures to investigate such Jewish texts.

[479] Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome II*, 284.

[480] Ibid.

first-century levels of literacy.[481] Hanges has cautioned that we should not prioritize "written, codified propositions" in a search for "normativity" in the ancient world.[482] Yet we can inquire about other sources of knowledge from which cultic participants might expect to learn about divine-human relations.

In the next section, I consider some of these alternative sources by examining the *didask-* word group in contexts that concern divine-human relations. I have thus gathered instances where διδάσκαλος, διδασκαλία, and διδάσκω are used in the context of giving instruction about divinity and am now able to identify three areas for discussion: religious διδασκαλία, which was gleaned from observations from nature; religious διδασκαλία, which could be taken from accounts of and public performances concerning the gods and their activities; and religious διδασκαλία that was communicated through the music that accompanied cultic rituals and activity.

Nature

For both Greek and Latin writers, the cosmos revealed information about the gods.[483] Strabo reasoned that persons should consider the entire universe, both the terrestrial and celestial, as useful "for purposes of instruction [διδασκαλίαν]."[484] In 97 CE, Dio Chrysostom gave his Olympic Discourse in front of the famous statue of Zeus. Inspired by the presence of this god, Dio relates that the conception of deity is implanted into the minds of every person and that these impressions are only strengthened by experiences and observations of the world around them. Such knowledge arises "without the aid of a human teacher [διδασκάλου]" and is "free from the deceit of any expounding priest."[485] Dio asserts that from the earliest times, the gods chose to stimulate and in-

[481] For a thorough discussion see Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[482] James Constantine Hanges, "'A World of Shrines and Groves:' N.T. Wright and Paul Among the Gods," in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of N.T. Wright*, ed. Christoph Heilig, J. Thomas Hewitt, and Michael F. Bird (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 259. Hanges also argues that "unwritten cultic norms" are "deeply embedded in behavior" for a community, so much so that "the community members rarely question them . . ." (259).

[483] Even though my examples are predominately taken from literary evidence, I find them representative of the kinds of "socialized cultic norms" that were "reinforced by multiple written sources" (see Hanges 259). The sources that writers often draw from, after all, are at least partially taken from the groundwater of common cultural experience.

[484] Strabo, *Geography* 1.1 [16].

[485] Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 12.27.

struct humankind by way of "the divine and magnificent glories of heaven and the stars of sun and moon" [ἅτε δὴ περιλαμπόμενοι πάντοθεν θείοις καὶ μεγάλοις φάσμασιν οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ ἄστρων, ἔτι δὲ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης]; this instruction is also heard in the "manifold voices of winds and forest and rivers and sea, [and] of animals. . . ." [φωνὰς ἀκούοντες παντοδαπὰς ἀνέμων τε καὶ ὕλης καὶ ποταμῶν καὶ θαλάττης, ἔτι δὲ ζῴων].[486] Because of this evidence that springs from the natural world, the ancients "could not help admiring and loving the divinity" [ἐπινοοῦντες οὐκ ἐδύναντο μὴ θαυμάζειν καὶ ἀγαπᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον].[487]

The Latin didactic poem, *Astronomica*, which was written during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, also holds that what nature teaches about the gods is equal to what one could learn about them through more formal means:

> Is it then a meaner thing to derive reason from the sacred stars than to heed sacrifice of beast and cry of bird? God grudges not the earth the sight of heaven but reveals his face and form by ceaseless revolution, offering, nay impressing himself upon us to the end that he can be truly known, can teach [*docere*] his nature to those who have eyes to see, and can compel them to make his laws.[488]

Such sources suggest a first-century Greco-Roman perception that individuals from all walks of life could gain knowledge about divinity through observation of the physical world and the workings of the cosmos. This world suggested the existence of the gods and taught something about their divine nature and expectations for human comportment.

Roman inhabitants were likely aware of professional figures who sought the will of the gods by way of augury, an interpretative practice that involved observing the activities of birds, and haruspicy, which entailed inspecting the entrails of sacrificial animals. But, even non-specialists could have looked for signs from the gods via various weather events, the processions of the starry constellations, and the natural world of plants and animals. All of these resources could have served as examples of religious διδασκαλία. Accordingly, the world itself provided worshipers with a way to learn about the gods and their relationship with humankind.

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[486] Ibid.

[487] *Orationes* 12.33-34,

[488] *Astronomica*, 4.915. Beard notes that there also was a first-century fascination with the alchemy of nature and magic in a "heady combination of medicine, religion and astrology" that met "human desires for health, control of the gods, and knowledge of the future." Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome II*, 219.

Folk tales about the moral struggle of choosing between good and evil were also means of instruction as to divine-human relations. Cautionary stories such as the myth within Hesiod's *Works and Days*[489] were created to teach worshipers about the ways of the gods and how wise interaction with them should occur.[490] These myths usually describe a golden age followed by a period of moral decline, and they often detail a relationship between humans and deity that is destroyed by deceit and cunning. Decline narratives effectively taught moral lessons because they conveyed vividly and with dramatic arc the consequences of falling out with deity. Hesiod's story ends in considerable suffering—toil without progress or rest, discord between fathers and children, and the dishonoring of parents—all because humans do not know the "fear of the gods" [οὐδὲ θεῶν ὄπιν εἰδότες].[491] Zeus thus warns that he will destroy humankind, that the gods will exit the earth, and that "there will be no help against evil" [κακοῦ δ' οὐκ ἔσσεται ἀλκή].[492]

Euripides' *Medea* presents a chilling moral dilemma in which the main character acknowledges that it is her humanity that makes her weak. Unlike the gods whose actions can conform to their notion of moral propriety, Medea knows what is right, but she instead avenges her enemies by infanticide:

> I know well what pain I am about to undergo, but my wrath overbears my calculations, wrath that brings mortal men their gravest hurt.
>
> [μανθάνω μὲν οἷα τολμήσω κακά, θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων, ὅσπερ μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς][493]

In Euripides' *Hippolytus,* Phaedra also understands mortal limitation as compared with that of divinity. She bemoans a weakness in humanity: "what we know and understand to be noble we fail

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[489] *Works and Days* 106–201. The examples from this section were taken from Stowers, *Romans*, 260-64. I will return to this analysis in my assessment of the rhetorical choices that Paul makes in Rom 1 and 7 in section 4.1.

[490] Parker has stated that the "practices of Greek religion implied the existence of a realm about which mortals knew, in the strong sense of the word, almost nothing. A prime function of myth was to present credible representations of of that realm, and the prime vehicle of myth in Athens was tragedy." See Parker, "Gods Cruel and Kind: Tragic and Civic Theology," 159.

[491] *Works and Days* 187.

[492] *Works* 180.

[493] *Medea* 1078–80.

to carry out" [ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γιγνώσκομεν οὐκ ἐκπονοῦμεν].[494] Such narratives, written with literary flair and emotional depth, were available to teach the people throughout the Greco-Roman world about the differences between humankind and deity.[495]

I will argue that Paul uses heuristic tools in his Roman missive that resemble methods often present in the myths and literature of the ancient world. As to the latter, we have now considered three examples in the writings of Dio, Hesiod, and Euripides. These pedagogical devices become significant in my discussion of some of the material Paul uses in his Roman letter. It is possible that his audience could find passages such as those found in Rom 1 and 7 analogous to well-known myths and stories.

Music

Music was an acknowledged gift from the gods in the ancient world, where it served as an integral part in rites of worship.[496] Music facilitated a reciprocal and positive relationship with deity, and it was therefore imperative that it be handled artfully and with care by composers and musicians. One way that music was communicated was through hymns. Hymns created a musical means for making requests and expressing gratitude to the deity in ritual offerings.[497] Singing a hymn "could be regarded as a sacrifice to the gods," according to H. S. Versnel.[498] These composi-

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[494] *Hippolytus* 380–381.

[495] The internal struggle to master one's will was an intriguing topic for poets and philosophers throughout ancient history as they explored the disparity between the expectations of the gods and the failure of humanity to comply with them. Stowers notes that Stoics such as Chrysippus, Epictetus, and Seneca, as well as Platonists such as Plutarch and Galen, all recall Medea's plight and muse upon the impossibilities of self-mastery. See Stowers, *Romans*, 260-64.

[496] Quasten states that "[t]he legends and myths of nearly all pagan peoples have sought to explain the elaborate use of music in their worship by indicating that the art of music was a gift of the gods to men." Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (*NPM Studies in Liturgy & Music*) (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Pr, 1983), 1.

[497] This helped maintain a mutually beneficial relationship by pleasing the gods and keeping humanity in their good offices. See J. M. Bremer, "Greek Hymns," in *Faith, Hope, and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, ed. H. S. Versnel (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 194. For a discussion of how the well-known Greco-Roman principle of *do ut des* could be applied to music, see Claude Calame, "The *Homeric Hymns* as Poetic Offerings: Musical and Ritual Relationships With the Gods," in *The Homeric Hymns: Interpretative Essays*, ed. Andrew Faulkner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 345.

[498] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 52. Additionally, Günther Wille describes the importance of music in such rites:

> [i]n der Regel wurden Rauchopfer und Gußspenden nie ohne Musik durchgeführt. Besonders die im öf-

tions taught worshipers something of the character and traits of particular gods, and they often offered guidance for proper comportment with them.[499]

Didactic hymns

Hymns about the relationship between divinity and humankind were created and performed throughout antiquity. From the time of Hesiod,[500] Horace,[501] and the period during which the Homeric Hymns were composed,[502] didactic hymns gave direction as to divine-human interaction and worship.[503] The production and performance of these various odes and hymns can thus be seen as serving a didactic purpose.[504]

Vocalists and musicians publicly performed musical creations in antiquity at theatrical productions and various cultic ceremonies. Both instances portrayed situations involving deity. Hence the need for persons trained in music to instruct those who would communicate their work in various settings. Since music was viewed as a gift from the gods to humanity, all of the details involved in acts of worship were designed to come together as a fitting offering for the deity.[505]

> fentlichen und privaten Kultleben der Antike häufigen Trank- und Spendenopfer, die Libationen, sind regelmäßig mit Opfermusikern zusammen dargestellt.
>
> [As a rule, incense and libations were never carried out without music. The potion and free-will offerings, the libations, which are frequent in the public and private religious life of antiquity, are regularly presented together with sacrificial musicians].

Günther Wille, *Musica Romana* (Amsterdam: Schippers, 1967), 37.

[499] Rüpke notes that children learned about rituals by taking part as choristers (*Pantheon*, 221).

[500] Throughout his *Works and Days* and *Theogony*, Hesiod attributes the gift of music and the inspiration of his work to the gods (cf. *Theogony* 30–34).

[501] Horace, *Carmen Saeculare* (see Appendix 3.1 for the text of this hymn).

[502] The Homeric Hymns are devoted to specific gods, most of which were worshiped in first-century Rome (e.g., Dionysus, Demeter, Apollo, Hermes).

[503] Women also contributed songs of praise as evidenced by Melinno's Hymn to Rome. See David Sider, *Hellenistic Poetry: A Selection* (University of Michigan Press, 2016), 400-04.

[504] For an excellent reconstruction of one such hymn, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hOK7bU0S1Y&t=608s (for a short excerpt, see 11:40–12:30). The instrument in the video, played in the clip by Barnaby Brown, is the *aulos*, an ancient Greek wind instrument that Paul mentions in 1 Cor 14:7. The musical director and conductor, Tosca Lynch, may plausibly be viewed as a modern-day διδάσκαλος. For an overview of didactic hymnody, see Matthew E. Gordley, *Teaching Through Song in Antiquity: Didactic Hymnody Among Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

[505] Quaston asserts that in antiquity, the view "most widely held" was that the cultic significance of music lay in the pleasure that the gods took in hearing it (cf. Tibullus 2.1 [51 ff]; Horace, *Carmina* 1. 36 [1ff]; Censorinus, *De die natali*

Liturgical διδάσκαλοι

What do we know about these ancient musical instructors? For at least six hundred years of history, they played a significant role in transmitting ideas about divine-human relations. Inscriptional evidence from both the Dionysian contests of the 5th century BCE in Athens[506] and similarly themed first-century fragments that appear in imperial Rome[507] show that a person known as the διδάσκαλος was responsible for preparing musicians and members of the chorus for their roles in theatrical productions.[508] Many of these plays centered around the gods, their activities, and how humans might interact with deity. Instruction from the musical διδάσκαλος enabled these events to run smoothly, an important goal for ancient participants who were fearful of angering the gods by incompetency and mistakes.[509]

Διδάσκαλοι also played a critical role in cultic events that were publicly staged. Choir-masters

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12.2). See Quasten, *Music and Worship*, 1. Rüpke agrees that music played an important part in how the ancients learned about the gods and how to appropriately interact with them (*Pantheon*, 224-26). He states, however, that the poet Prudentius in the 4th-century CE, for example, as well as other writers, laid "great stress on rhythmic and melodic speech and song," but "typically" overvalued "content" and undervalued "the physical and emotional experience of song accompanied by movement" for the ancients (225). Rüpke also criticizes contemporary theologians and scholars who emphasize the "text and its cognitive content" and "unduly" stress the "function of hymn to create confessional identities, and the role of hymns in stressing the boundaries of religious tradition" (225). Rüpke also asserts that it was "mainly persons and not dogmas that featured in such texts" and that these persons and names could then be meaningfully "reencountered in image form" (e.g., sculpture, ceramics, coins, glass past, wall paintings) and thus the relationship between the human and divine could be strengthened (225).

[506] See Carl D. Buck, "Discoveries in the Attic Deme of Ikaria 1888. III. The Choregia in Athens and At Ikaria. Inscriptions From Ikaria Nos. 5–7," *The American Journal of Archaeology and of the History of the Fine Arts* Vol. 5, No. 1 (1889), 18-33.

[507] See Edward Capps, "The Roman Fragments of Athenian Comic Didascaliae," *Classical Philology* 1, no. 3 (1906), 201-20. See also The Roman Fragments (*IGUR 216, 215, 218*) in Benjamin W. Millis and S. Douglas Olson, eds. *Inscriptional Records for the Dramatic Festivals in Athens: IG II 2318-2325 and Related Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[508] Sophocles was considered to be one such διδάσκαλος. See C. W. Marshall, "Sophocles *Didaskalos*," in *A Companion to Sophocles*, ed. Kirk Ormand (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 187. That the διδάσκαλος was known as a musical instructor from the era of Plato and extending past Paul's lifetime is seen in the definition of διδάσκαλος from the second century CE Alexandrian rhetorician and lexicographer Harpokration (see "ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑλΟΣ" in *Lexicon in decem oratores Atticos,* Valerius Harpocration, Wilhelm Dindorf, ed).

[509] Plato, through the mouth of Socrates, points out that specific musical modes and scales are more appropriate for certain activities. For example, certain melodies were thought to be more fiting for war and less so for "addressing a prayer to a god" (*Republic*, 339a-c). In *Laws*, Plato writes that the choices of music teachers could influence others towards virtuous living (*Laws* 812b-c).

[χοροδιδάσκαλοι[510]] held musical responsibilities for various ceremonies that were scheduled in accordance with the public calendar. The music performed by the χορός, which was made up of both male and female vocalists and dancers, was an integral and highly regulated part of the sacrifices that accompanied feasts.[511] In the imperial period, the historian Diodorus Siculus calls the teacher of the music associated with the god Dionysus the διδάσκαλος.[512] Diodorus writes that music played a prominent role in the cult of Dionysus as well as in the rituals of Bacchus, his popular counterpart in Rome.[513] In both Greece and Rome, the worship of this god was accompanied by the use of the dithyramb or "circular chorus," a musical form of poetry that originally celebrated his birth.[514] The prominence of these musical events in Hellenistic culture led Plato to write in the *Laws* that music played a role in the overall health of the polity and its relationship with the gods.[515] Because divine-human relations and the necessity of pleasing the gods in the public performances that were offered to them were no less important in first-century Roman culture, it is arguable that Plato's observation would have applied here as well.

4.4. Summary of *didask-* language in light of ancient Greco-Roman sources

A typical first-century Roman inhabitant was expected to regularly participate in rites and ceremonial activities within their community. This required a level of knowledge about the gods and what the role of these individuals as participants would be in such events. Civic leaders bore the responsibility of ensuring that citizens understood and fulfilled these expectations and duties. Ab-

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[510] See Plato, *Laws* 2.655a; 7.812e. See also Aristophane's reference to the poet Callimachus as a χοροδιδάσκαλος in *Ecclesiazusae* 809.

[511] According to Plato, those who propose hymns or dances other than the ones prescribed risked expulsion from the festivities (*Laws*, 7.799b).

[512] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.66 [2-3]. So-called "artists of Dionysus" were members of powerful guilds in various cities (4.5 [5]). According to Diodorus, the position of these members was so important that they were relieved of paying taxes.

[513] *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.65 [6]. The historian Livy describes something of the music associated with the Bacchic cult in Rome. An initiate would be led "to a place which would ring with howls and the song of a choir and the beating of cymbals and drums" (*History* 39.10 [6–9]). According to Livy, such apparent cacophony was considered as a "form of worship of the gods . . ." (*History* 39.15).

[514] Apparently, the emperor Nero was a champion of dithyrambic contests. Plutarch notes the presence of the instructors [διδάσκαλοι] who prepared the participants for such competitions (*Questiones Convivales* 7.7 [16]).

[515] See Plato, *Laws* 7.813a.

staining from participation or acting in a way that might bring about the ire of the gods was intolerable because the well-being of the city and its inhabitants depended upon the avoidance of divine displeasure.

We have seen that the apparent scarcity of sacred texts in the first-century Greco-Roman world did not preclude alternative modes of instruction that were meant to indoctrinate individuals into cultic life. I have noted that Cornutus' compendium on Greek theology may serve as an example of a written religious manual. However, the *didask-* language found in the ancient inscriptional and literary data that I have surveyed supports the contention that other non-written sources of instruction would more likely have informed first-century gentiles about divine-human relations. Observations about the natural world, shared accounts of the lives of historical and legendary figures, and music containing religious content constituted some of these alternative means. From this data we may learn something about the expectations of first-century Roman inhabitants regarding how and by whom instruction concerning the divine could be disseminated and apprehended.

These expectations bear directly upon the examination of the *didask*-language in Paul's Roman missive that I next address. The gentile audience that Paul speaks to in his letter lived in the city of Rome, had a background that was rooted in polytheism, and were plausibly familiar with the techniques I have discussed. In my consideration of how Paul has chosen to convey religious instruction in his letter, I will compare his heuristic methods for communicating knowledge about divinity with those that were present in the Greco-Roman world. A key consideration here is how Paul's first-century audience might have first come to see him, and later themselves, as religious instructors in light of ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ in Rom 12:7.

5. PAUL AND ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΊΑ IN ROMANS

We have seen that the want of texts that gave instruction about divine-human relations did not deter the transmission of such knowledge. In the first-century polytheistic world, διδασκαλία could be drawn from religious texts, nature, literary examples, and through music. A διδάσκαλος could be an instructor and composer of materials meant for worship. We should now ask whether Paul might have found these same heuristic methods helpful for his own teaching in Romans. A second

question is how his possible use of these devices might have figured in his plans to spread the gospel as a part of his missional objective.

Religious texts as a method of instruction from Judaism

Paul's use of *didask*-language pertaining to Judaism in Rom 2 cannot be ignored. His first deployment of the noun διδάσκαλος appears in Rom 2:21. Being a "teacher of children" [διδάσκαλον νηπίων] is one in a list of ideal Jewish qualities that Paul sets forth in Rom 2:17–20. In Rom 2:21, however, Paul condemns hypocritical teachers: "you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself?" [ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις]. In Rom 15:4, Paul offers the Jewish corpus of religious writings as material that his Roman addressees could consult in discovering a variety of accounts about God and his encounters with humankind. He writes that "whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" [ὅσα γὰρ προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη, ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν]. Paul thus turns his audience's attention to the wealth of resource material in the divine-human experiences recounted in the Jewish scriptures. The availability of Jewish texts for Paul's audience, however, while arguably a valuable resource for prospective learning, would not have been a part of the cultic past that they shared.

5.1. Paul's use of heuristic tools in Romans and their Greco-Roman antecedents

Paul's portrayal of nature as a method of instruction in Romans

Paul's use of nature as a platform for sacred instruction appears early on in his epistle to the Romans. In Rom 1:19–20, Paul states that God's "eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are," can be understood and seen via his creation, i.e., "the things he has made."[516] God's revelation of himself in the natural world has in fact been displayed so effectively, according to Rom

[516] Fitzmyer asserts that when Paul acknowledges that God "has manifested himself to some degree in what he has created" in Rom 1:19, he has not only echoed a Hellenistic Jewish tradition, he has "in effect acknowledge[d] what Greek and Roman philosophers before him had admitted about God." Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 279.

1:20, that all humanity is "without excuse" for refusing to worship him. Paul thus strongly condemns those who have not learned to worship God by recognizing him in the world that he has created. The planted assumption here is that gentiles, through their observation of God's creation, would glean knowledge that was sufficient to worship him alone.

Further on, in Rom 8:18–25, Paul uses the realm of nature as a tool to teach his audience about God and how suffering fits into his plan of redemption. Paul explains to his audience how nature itself models the perseverance they will need to endure suffering. Paul thus personifies creation in Rom 8:19, stating that it "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God." In Rom 8:22, Paul relates that God will one day set the natural world free from its "bondage to decay;" it "has been groaning in labor pains until now. . . ." Turning his attention toward humanity, Paul tells his auditors in 8:23 that quite apart from creation, "we ourselves . . . groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies." Suffering humans can therefore discover a quality of perseverance that is embedded into the workings of the natural world and from this they may imagine a hope for the future restoration of all created things.

Decline narratives as a method of instruction in Rom 1:18–32

I have noted that ancient writers used stories that warned of divine retribution. If one displeased the gods, reprisals could be swift and sharp. These stories served both as a platform for teaching moral lessons as well as a tool that revealed divine expectations. In Rom 1:18–32, Paul details the downward spiral of gentiles who do not worship God. This kind of description can be seen as a literary device or cautionary tale that helps teach his audience about the repercussions of wrongly-focused worship. Stowers suggests that Rom 1:18–32 should be viewed in light of a decline of civilization narrative such as the one that appears in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.[517] Such an important account of decline would have provided the kind of background information that "Paul and the addressees implied in Rom 1:18–32 shared."[518] Significantly, Stowers states that "[a]lmost every vice in Paul's list can be paralleled in Hesiod and in reinterpretations of Hesiod's legend that

[517] Stowers, *Romans*, 85. For the entire argument see 85-100.

[518] Ibid., 89.

had gained great cultural and political importance in Paul's day."[519]

Medea and the universal struggle with sin in Rom 7:14–24

In recounting the human struggle with sin in Rom 7:21, Paul states that "when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand." Stowers opines that Paul's words throughout the entirety of Rom 7:7–25 contain "allusions to words made famous by Euripides' Medea."[520] These ideas "had gained such cultural importance that Paul's readers can only with difficulty be imagined to have missed the echo of the Medean saying."[521] For Stowers, both Euripides and Paul mean to address human frustrations that are associated with *akrasia*, a lack of self-mastery. Drawing upon the Roman poet Ovid's Medea in the *Metamorphoses,* Stowers offers a trenchant and powerful expression of the universal dilemma that tracks Paul's own sentiments about this problem:

> Oh wretched one, drive out these flames that you feel from your maiden breast if you can. If I could, I would be more reasonable. But some strange power draws me on against my will. Desire persuades me one way, reason another. I see the better and approve it, but I follow the worse.[522]

Music as a form of religious instruction in Romans

Paul does not mention music in connection with *didask*-language in his letter. However, his teaching is full of resonances and direct citations from the Psalms.[523] In Rom 15:8–12, material is

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[519] Ibid., 122.

[520] Ibid., 9

[521] Ibid.

[522] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII, 19-20. Stowers characterizes these words of Medea in Ovid's work as a "famous parallel to Paul's words" (Stowers, 9). Again, Stowers is generally referring to Rom 7:7–25, but a salient example that conveys his point about possible parallels with Ovid appears in Rom 7:19: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." See also Jewett's discussion of various Greek parallels with Rom 7. Jewett, *Romans*, 462-64, 468. I am being careful here not to attribute to Paul knowledge or employment of these works. I do, however, think that the resonances in Paul's teaching that pertained to common cultural knowledge could have been very effective for his audience, whether Paul intended it or not.

[523] Paul does not use the word ψαλμός in his Roman missive, but it does appear in 1 Cor 14:26 to denote one activity that was included in the early Christian gatherings: "When you come together, each one has a hymn [ψαλμὸν], a lesson [διδαχὴν], a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation." For a discussion of quotations from the Psalms in Romans, see Stanley, *Arguing With Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*; Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*.

taken from Psalms 17:50 LXX, 116:1 LXX,[524] and the Song of Moses in Deut 32:43.[525] Paul's exegesis of these Jewish didactic hymns in 15:9b–11 arguably places the lyrics of these songs in the mouth of Christ.[526] In Paul's hands, then, it may be Christ who is confessing God among the gentiles and singing [ψαλῶ] praises to his name through the gospel. Thus, Christ sings out a call to worship for gentiles who are meant to respond by joining with Israel in praising God. The result is a "cosmic chorus of praise."[527] What Paul's usage of Jewish songs in Rom 15 reveals is that these hymns have become a didactic tool and that singing has a place in the Christ-following group in Rome.[528]

We have seen that Paul's teaching uses various heuristic tools that could have been familiar to his intended Roman audience. These Christ-followers may consult the Jewish scriptures to learn more about God; they may also simply observe the world that he has created. Then there are the universal human dilemmas about the collective and personal effects of sin as they have been portrayed in shared myths and stories. Knowledge of God may also be taught and expressed to others through music. Thus equipped, Paul's gentile addressees could now see themselves as teachers who may instruct others about who God is and what he has done by using essentially the same heuristic tools that Paul has employed. Moreover, they have been prepared to share the gospel in a way that would not require wholesale incorporation of new concepts.

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[524] Wagner notes that Psalm 116 LXX is a part of the *Hallel*, an "important liturgical cycle of Psalms" (111–117 LXX, 113–118 MT) that "would have been well known" and sung at major feasts not only in Israel, "but also throughout the Diaspora" J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 313-14.

[525] All three of these citations relate to songs that were traditionally sung, according to Wagner. In LXX Deut 31:30–32:43, the so-called Song of Moses is called ᾠδή [song] in 32:44.

[526] In favor of this christological interpretation, see Cranfield, *Romans*, 746; Moo, *Romans*, 878-79; Wagner, *Heralds*, 311-17; Wilckens, *Römer*, 108. Against this notion, see Jewett, *Romans*, 893-94.

[527] Jewett, *Romans*, 895.

[528] Worship and teaching through music did in fact continue and become an integral part of the early Christ-following gatherings. Larry Hurtado remarks that "singing formed a familiar part of the worship of Christian groups . . . [and] may have included Old Testament psalms . . . [as well as] fresh compositions" that celebrated Christ's work. Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark (Cornerstones); 3rd Revised edition, 2015), 105. New hymns that addressed the attributes and works of Christ were needed in the growing communities of first-century Christ-followers. Whether attributed to tradition or to other Jesus-groups, "didactic hymnody played a prominent role in the early churches, especially in promoting belief in Jesus as God's unique agent in creation and redemption." Gordley, *Teaching Through Song*, 269. For a comparison of the early Christ-following gatherings and the popular symposiums in Greco-Roman culture, see Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 213.

6. A PROPOSED TRANSLATION OF Ὁ ΔΙΔΆΣΚΩΝ ἘΝ ΤΗ͂Ι ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΊΑΙ iN ROM 12:7

In the examination of the gift of teaching in this chapter, I have taken a similar approach to that of the chapter on the gift of prophecy. As for these two gifts, and as also will be seen in the gift of mercy, I have not been concerned with the translation of the word under consideration, but am more interested in first-century perspectives on the notion of teaching, in this case, that I have argued were held by Paul's gentile audience in Rome. I also continue to extend Paul's accompanying phrase κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως into my treatment of the gift of teaching. This, in effect, carries the theme forward that the gift of teaching is being entrusted to the Christ-followers with the intent that it will be faithfully managed in accordance with whatever the teaching may involve. In other words, depending upon the opportunities that present themselves, whether it be teaching as a calling or teaching for specific occasions, a Christ-follower would view themselves as a trustee not only of the opportunity, but also of the information that needs to be conveyed. In so doing, then, the recipient of this gift is acting in obedience and respect to the Benefactor of the gift and their faithful response is one of worship. My proposed translation for ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ in Rom 12:7 is "the one who teaches, in accordance with what the teaching requires."

7. CONCLUSION

Since Paul lists ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ as one of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:7, it follows that he expects the Christ-following group in Rome will include teachers and teaching. As shown in this chapter, Paul's gentile recipients had previously received instruction and knowledge as to divine-human relations from nature, literature, performances, and music. Moreover, in the Greco-Roman world, liturgical διδάσκαλοι played an important role in providing education about the gods and how to worship them. I have considered evidence of instruction regarding divinity within paganism along with the guidance that Paul offers in Romans. This comparison shows that the Roman recipient's pagan antecedents may have permitted them to receive Paul's instruction in a manner that would aid in their transition to a new belief system. An appeal to the common experiences of this gentile group—one that paralleled the manner in which their religious beliefs were inculcated—would have made this transition seem less jarring.

While an investigation of ancient literature regarding the *didask* word group might tell us something about how Paul's audience learned about divinity and how they may have expected to teach others about this subject, it does not resolve questions commentators have had about bright line distinctions between ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ and the other χαρίσματα, nor does it shed light on Paul's segue from abstract nouns to a participial grammatical form.

Unsurprisingly, Paul commends διδασκαλία via the Jewish scriptures, yet he also refers to other modes of learning that would have been familiar to his gentile audience. It remains to ask how Paul's addressees might have used this mixture of resources so that they themselves could communicate to others what Paul has sought to teach: the gospel. As to this endeavor, it is reasonable to imagine that, in addition to the resource of Jewish scriptures, Paul's gentile addressees could envision instructing others about God through his creation, through the examples of historical figures, and through artistic means such as musical composition and the teaching of hymns. Following the gift of teaching, Paul will take up παρακἄλέω as between humans and deity as well as amongst the Christ-followers.

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the fourth χάρισμα of Rom 12:6–8, which is ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει. The verb παρακἄλέω conveys activity that may occur not only between persons, but also between humans and deity. In cultic usage, παρακἄλέω can denote petitioning and calling upon the gods as well as inviting and invoking their presence. Παρακἄλέω between persons may include entreating, cheering on, inviting, summoning, and exhorting others to virtuous behavior. The commentators surveyed in this section focus solely upon παρακἄλέω as experienced between persons. Yet this horizontal aspect is only one feature of this gift. There is also referenced in ancient literature what might be called a vertical characteristic of παρακἄλέω that applied to relations between humans and the divine.

The evidence that I will consider preponderates toward an interpretation of παρακἄλέω that suggests interaction between humans and their gods. I nevertheless consider the possibility that παράκλησις and a sometimes related word, παραμύθιον might be linked to so-called "consolation literature."[529] Following my examination of instances of παρακἄλέω and παράκλησις that refer to divine-human relations and then human-to-human relations, I will turn to the Pauline text and gift in Rom 12:8.

2. THE LEXICAL MEANING OF Ὁ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΩΝ

The verb παρακἄλέω that appears in Rom 12:8 is in the participial form. Its lexical definition is:

(1) *call to* one;

(2) *call in, send for, summon*;

(3) *exhort, encourage;*

[529] In his section on ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει, Jewett focuses on the "care of souls" and "consolation literature." I will discuss this in section 2 below.

(4) *demand, require;*

(5) *beseech, entreat.*[530]

I will also deal with the related noun παράκλησις, which means:

(1) *calling to one's aid, summons;*

(2) *exhortation, address;*

(3) *consolation*.[531]

3. ROM 12:8: "THE EXHORTER, IN EXHORTATION" (NRSV), AS DISCUSSED IN SELECTED COMMENTARIES

Commentators typically define ὁ παρακαλῶν in terms of exhortation[532] and encouragement.[533] Stuhlmacher translates ὁ παρακαλῶν as "the preacher."[534] Dodd states that ὁ παρακαλῶν is the "speaker" who gives words of counsel,[535] whereas Fitzmyer suggests "spiritual father."[536] The activities of ὁ παρακαλῶν include "the cure of souls,"[537] "consolation,"[538] "helpful counsel,"[539] edification,[540] instruction in "ethical conduct,"[541] and "admonition" or "comfort."[542] In these contexts, ὁ παρακαλῶν may "urge," "request," "entreat," "cheer up," or "conciliate."[543]

To clarify the meaning and purposes for the gift ὁ παρακαλῶν, some of the scholars surveyed

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[530] LSJ, παρακᾰλέω, 1311. LSJ also gives a sixth sense for παρακᾰλέω as regards the passive voice: *relent*. This usage is restricted to instances in the LXX.

[531] LSJ, παρά-κλησις, εως, ἡ, 1313.The third sense given for παράκλησις, which is *consolation*, is substantiated only by its usage in Is 30:7 (LXX), Heb 6:18, and a letter from the Phalaris Epistolographus.

[532] Leenhardt, *Romans*, 308; Cranfield, *Romans*, 611; Jewett, *Romans*, 711; Barrett, *Romans*, 234; Moo, *Romans*, 676.

[533] Longenecker, *Romans*, 929; Dunn, *Romans*, 730.

[534] Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary,* trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 190.

[535] Dodd, *Romans*, 193.

[536] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 648.

[537] Käsemann, *Romans*, 342.

[538] Leenhardt, *Romans*, 311.

[539] Longenecker, *Romans*, 929.

[540] Cranfield, *Romans*, 623.

[541] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 648.

[542] Jewett, *Romans*, 750; Moo, *Romans*, 767.

[543] Dunn, *Romans*, 730.

compare ὁ παρακαλῶν with ὁ διδάσκων. For example, Cranfield determines that both participles have overlapping characteristics. Both gifts also work to edify the congregation.[544] They differ, however, in their "immediate purposes," which produces a divergence in emphasis and method when the gift is put into action.[545] Cranfield sees the immediate purpose of ὁ διδάσκων as being "to instruct, to impart information, [and] to explain," while ὁ παρακαλῶν "help[s] Christians to live out their obedience to the gospel."[546] Cranfield ultimately envisions that ὁ παρακαλῶν will provide "the pastoral application of the gospel to a particular congregation" in concrete situations.[547] Moo also considers ὁ διδάσκων in his explanation of the activities of ὁ παρακαλῶν before deciding that ὁ παρακαλῶν could be translated as "comforter," or "encourager."[548] He reasons that since this gift "comes after 'teacher,'" ὁ παρακαλῶν "probably denotes the activity of urging Christians to live out the truth of the gospel."[549] Barrett thinks "exhortation, especially when placed beside teaching, suggests the work of the preacher. . . ."[550] Wilckens seems to concur, stating that παράκλησις [Mahnung] contributes to the content of the prophet's "inspirierter Predigt" [inspired sermon].[551] Leenhardt finds that "exhortation" or "consolation" [παράκλησις] "rouses the spirit" and is "addressed more to the heart than to the mind. . . ."[552] Jewett observes that this χάρισμα might be undervalued in light of the others, namely prophecy.[553]

The observations of these commentators are not particularly helpful in allowing us to assess how Paul's Roman addressees might have received ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει, especially in regard to their conceptions and experiences as to the divine. Keck seems to recognize a problem in the work of scholars who have come before him when he counsels that "[g]uessing . . . whom the

[544] Cranfield, *Romans*, 623. Dunn thinks that any overlap between this gift and prophecy is "unimportant" since Paul is not denoting "offices with demarcated 'job descriptions'. . ." Dunn, *Romans*, 730.

[545] Cranfield, *Romans*, 623.

[546] Cranfield, *Romans*, 623-24.

[547] Cranfield, 624.

[548] Moo, *Romans*, 767.

[549] Ibid.

[550] Barrett, *Romans*, 238.

[551] Wilckens, *Römer*, 14.

[552] Leenhardt, *Romans*, 311.

[553] Jewett, *Romans*, 750.

exhorter is exhorting [and] about what," is futile and "detracts from hearing what Paul is saying."[554] While Keck is correct in suggesting that we should avoid conjecture about what the gift ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει might have meant to Paul's addressees, there is evidence available that can reduce speculation as to this issue. This arguably minimizes presumptions based on a stated lack of evidence.

In his analysis, Jewett presents ὁ παρακαλῶν in a different light by offering an association with "the Greco-Roman tradition of the 'care of souls.'"[555] Jewett explains that a formidable amount of literature was created to reprove and exhort those with "psychological, social, and intellectual difficulties. . . ."[556] He supports his claim that such help was needed by pointing out the "cultural dissonance"[557] that the early Christ-followers faced. Jewett thus concludes that ὁ παρακαλῶν is to be viewed as a "consoler."[558] His rationale rests upon data that is set forth in the *TDNT* article written by Schmitz and Stählin entitled "παρακαλέω κτλ."[559] Jewett finds the section entitled "Comfort and Comforters in Non-Biblical Antiquities" of interest for his analysis.[560] The reasoning behind an exploration into comfort and consolation in regards to παρακᾰλέω is somewhat of a departure from the lexical entry as set forth in LSJ above.[561] Schmitz himself admits that "it is noticeable how few

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[554] Keck, *Romans*, 300-01.

[555] Jewett, *Romans*, 750.

[556] Ibid.

[557] Jewett, *Romans,* 751.

[558] Jewett, *Romans*, 750-51.

[559] *TDNT* 5 (1967), 773–799.

[560] *TDNT* 5 (1967) 779–88; (cf. Jewett's text and his footnotes: 166–172). This particular section of the article is treated by Stählen.

[561] See section 1.1 of this chapter. Again, LSJ does not list the notions of comfort and consolation within the meanings that it assigns to the verb παρακᾰλέω. As for the noun, παράκλησις, LSJ gives a third sense as "consolation;" this is supported by LXX as well as one letter from the Philaris Epistolographus. Notably, in Stählen's section in n. 30 on 779, Stählen states that the information in section C, which is entitled "Comfort and Comforters in Non-Biblical Antiquities" (779–88), materially belongs to both παρακαλέω κτλ. and to the entry on the word παραμυθέομαι. Throughout this section under παρακαλέω κτλ., παραμυθέομαι and its cognates appear often in the examples from the citations to ancient sources. Examples, however, that present παρακαλέω and its cognates in terms of comfort and consolation are noticeably absent. In fact, παρακαλέω and its cognates do not appear again in the text of this section with the exception of n. 31 on 780. In this footnote, Stählen notes that the adjective παρακλητικός does "not occur" in the example he has given. Perhaps this section on comfort and consolation belongs under the word παραμυθέομαι and not under παρακαλέω κτλ.

and often only tentative are the instances of παρακαλεῖν for 'to comfort.'"[562] He explains the decision to include the notion of "comfort" in the Greco-Roman usage of παρακᾰλέω by stating, "[f]rom friendly encouragement it is only a step to comfort, esp. in times of grief."[563] Jewitt thus concludes that the gift ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει in Rom 12:8 is grounded in notions of comfort and consolation. I, however, am not as convinced that there is a strong association between παρακᾰλέω and comfort or consolation.[564]

In sum, the commentators I have surveyed speak of παρακᾰλέω solely in terms of person-to-person activity, including preaching, exhorting, and consoling. These are activities that they envision should occur within the Christ-following community. For the reasons set forth in section 3 in this chapter, I question this focus on communal practices as regards παρακᾰλέω.[565]

In the next section, I examine ancient sources that contribute to how Paul's audience may have perceived these words as well as some of the situations in which they were used. Since, as I have argued, Paul places this gift along with the rest of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 in the context of a life of worship, I will look at how παρακᾰλέω and παράκλησις are used with reference to divine-human relations.

4. A CONSIDERATION OF ΠΑΡΑΚᾸΛ'ΕΩ AND ΠΑΡ'ΑΚΛΗΣΙΣ IN LIGHT OF GRECO-ROMAN USAGE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DIVINE-HUMAN RELATIONS

4.1. The verb παρακᾰλέω and its cognates when used to invoke the presence of the gods

Παρακᾰλέω and its cognates were used to invoke the presence of the gods in various scenarios. An example of this is found in the singing of songs.[566] In Plato's ideal *polis*, cultic singers were in-

[562] *TDNT* 5 (1967), 776. On this slim evidence, Schmitz thus determines it is sufficient to include "to comfort" in the range of meaning for παρακαλέω κτλ.

[563] *TDNT* 5 (1967) 776.

[564] I discuss this point further in section 3.4 of this chapter.

[565] In the section of the *TDNT* article on the common Greek usage of παρακᾰλέω and its cognates, Schmidt notes that παρακαλέω κτλ. are used to call upon the gods in ancient sources (774–75).

[566] Aristophanes, *The Frogs* 384–403; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.4 [17].

vited [παρακαλοῦμεν] to perform during religious festivals[567] for this purpose.[568] Dio Chrysostom notes that Hesiod invited [παρακαλεῖ] the Muses to tell him about their father Zeus, and that the result was a hymn of praise.[569] In other settings, divine beings were invited to join in convivial gatherings.[570] Both Polybius and Xenophon remark that paeans invoked the presence of deity before military battles.[571] Plutarch also includes calling upon the gods as one of the preparations for war.[572] Songs and hymns were thus typical modes of prayer in which the gods were called to come near to the people.

4.2. The verb παρακᾰλέω and its cognates used to convey entreatment

Παρακᾰλέω and its cognates also conveyed entreating the gods for divine aid. Plato applies forms of παρακᾰλέω to depict requests for help regarding business matters.[573] Earnest prayers by parents on behalf of their children are another example of such entreaties.[574] Epictetus acknowledges that no one sets out on a journey without sacrificing to the gods and imploring [παρακαλέσας] them for their assistance.[575] Via παρακᾰλέω, the gods were entreated by persons in regards to issues of health. A marble stele, erected sometime in the imperial age by a man named M. Julius Apellas, narrates his request to the god Asclepius for healing.[576] This same language is presented in a letter from Zoilos to Appolonios (258–257 BCE), who relates how he besought the

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[567] *Laws* 2.670[d].

[568] *Laws* 10.893[b]: Ἄγε δή, θεὸν εἴποτε παρακλητέον ἡμῖν, νῦν ἔστω τοῦτο οὕτω γενόμενον· ἐπί γε ἀπόδειξιν ὡς εἰσὶ τὴν αὑτῶν σπουδῇ πάσῃ παρακεκλήσθων [Come then,—if ever we ought to invoke God's aid, now is the time it ought to be done. Let the gods be invoked with all zeal to aid in the demonstration of their own existence].

[569] *Orationes* 12.23.

[570] Plato, *Laws* 2.666[b].

[571] Polybius, *Histories* 10.11 [8]. In Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (3.58–59), the paean to the deity Zeus, as sung by Cyrus' army, created a strong and formidable foe for his enemies. See also Polybius' account of how the soldiers were reminded of this motivating speech [παράκλησις] that presented the help of the god Poseiden during the battle itself, the memory of which again motivated their enthusiasm in battle (10. 14 [12]).

[572] *Dion* (46 [1]). Dion's soldiers also offered prayers and supplications [παράκλησις].

[573] *Laws* 11.917 [b].

[574] *Laws* 11.931 [c].

[575] Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.21 [12].

[576] Guilelmo Dittenbergero, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* (Leipzig: Apud S. Hirzelium, 1915), No. 1170 [31-32]. Deissmann takes up this inscription with its use of παρακᾰλέω and argues for a parallel with Paul's appeal to God for healing of his thorn in the flesh in 2 Cor 12:7–8. See Deissmann and Strachan, *Light From the AE*, 308.

god Sarapis for permission to leave his work to build a temple for this god.[577]

4.3. The verb παρακᾰλέω and its cognates when used to invite others to worship

Παρακᾰλέω and its cognates also signalled an invitation to others to join in worship. Some inscriptional evidence shows that the word παρακᾰλέω was used to invite citizens to witness sacrificial offerings [παρεκάλεσεν δὲ[καὶ το]ὺς πολίτας ἅπαν̣τ̣ας ἐπὶ τὴν θ̣υσίαν].[578] Epictetus exhorts others to join him in songs of praise to god [καὶ ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ᾠδὴν παρακαλῶ].[579]

4.4. παρακᾰλέω and παράκλησις and the notions of comfort and consolation in light of ancient Greco-Roman sources

I have found but two examples of παρακᾰλέω and παράκλησις which may be interpreted to reference the genre of consolation literature in ancient Greco-Roman sources. Both have to do with dying and grief.

In Orationes 30, Dio Chrysostom speaks to a man named Timarchus and his son about the death of an older son, Charidemus. Dio learns that before his death, Charidemus had dictated words of consolation [παράκλησίν] meant for his father, brother, and friends.[580] This deathbed message is framed by a dialogue that gives Dio the opportunity to present Charidemus as an ideal young religious philosopher who wrestles with his own pain, suffering, and death. The role of god and hope in the face of such tragedy is a part of Dio's discussion.

The second example of the verb παρακᾰλέω in the context of consolation comes from Plutarch's *Consolatio ad Apollonium*. Here we learn that Plutarch has intentionally waited until an appropriate time to write and to urge [παρακαλεῖν] his friend to reign in his grief.[581] Plutarch values

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[577] Deissmann and Strachan, *Light From the AE*, 152ff.

[578] IG²(2).1299 (accessed at https://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/346657).

[579] Epictetus, *Discourses* I, 16, [21].

[580] Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* [6].

[581] *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, 1 [1]. Plutarch also intends to communicate words of encouragement [παραμύθιον] (1.[2]). Boys-Stones writes that Plutarch's *Consolatio* means to "engage someone in more thorough-going reflection on their relationship with their emotions." George Boys-Stones, "The *Consolatio Ad Apollonium*: Therapy for the Dead," in *Greek and Roman Consolations: Eight Studies of A Tradition and Its Afterlife*, ed. Han Baltussen (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2013), 123. Boys-Stones notes that the Stoic philosophers classified "grief" in a "sub-species of mental 'distress'

time in the mitigation of grief, and means for grief to be observed within socially accepted bounds. Plutarch, however, uses a different Greek word to convey his intent that the words of his letter bring comfort [παραμυθητικῶν] to his friend.[582] Note that Plutarch's writing here reflects two different purposes. In the first instance, Plutarch is urging his friend to move on from grief and loss. In the second, he is consoling him.

It is possible that first-century Roman inhabitants associated both παρακἄλέω and παράκλησις with consolation and comfort. It is equally possible, however, that for Paul's gentile audience, these words conveyed help that was given to the bereaved to turn away from the inertia of their grief. This is slightly different from the purpose of consolation, which is to convey empathy and assuage suffering and grief.

The evidence I have compiled from usages of παρακἄλέω and παράκλησις and their cognates in this section leads me to conclude that it is plausible for Paul's auditors to have associated these words in a vertical application for the purposes of invoking the presence of the gods and entreating their aid. There is also a horizontal aspect that could have encompassed inviting others to join in worshiping the gods. While παρακἄλέω does appear in the context of comfort and consolation, this is not its main use in the literature that I have surveyed. I now turn to the Pauline text of Rom 12:8 to apply the data that I have compiled.

5. A PROPOSED TRANSLATION OF Ὁ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΩΝ ἘΝ ΤΗ͂Ι ΠΑΡΑΚΛΉΣΕΙ IN ROM 12:8

I have suggested in previous chapters that Paul's addressees may have brought their experiences and expectations to the teaching that he presents in Rom 12:6–8. I have argued in this chapter that gentile understandings about these words, as reflected in the ancient literature and artifacts that I have discussed, should be considered in connection with how ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει was received by the Christ-followers in Rome. Along with the ideas of invocation and inviting, I have discussed notions of comfort and consolation, particularly in terms of grief. I now compare the Pauline text of ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει in Rom 12:8 for the purpose of translating this phrase.

(λύπη)" amongst other "disruptive" emotions, such as anger, fear, and lust that were meant to be subdued (124, n. 3).

[582] *Consolatio*, 1 [2].

As previously stated, commentators have largely ignored that there was a divine-human application in the ancient world for the Greek words παρακᾰλέω and παράκλησις. In their considerations of ὁ παρακαλῶν in Rom 12:8, scholars have applied ὁ παρακαλῶν solely to interaction between individuals. This has occurred despite the evidence that παρακᾰλέω and παράκλησις may also be used to connote the cultic activities such as prayer and inviting others to worship God. The conclusions of the commentators reflect their views, not on how these words were understood in their original context, but rather as to a theological subject that scholars have created in order to understand Paul and matters concerning Christian ethics. I am not suggesting that ethical behavior is not important to Paul. Yet to relegate the gift ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει solely to a person-to-person application simply because it sits within what some believe to be a section on ethical behavior is not supported by its common usage in the first-century. Moreover, such a perspective excludes an important aspect of how the words παρακᾰλέω and παράκλησις were used in the Greco-Roman world with reference to divine-human relations. Therein, these words conveyed prayer to the divine as well as an invitation to others to join in worship. I propose that we take into consideration the ancient sources I have discussed and test the notion of invitation upon the Pauline text.

Paul uses the word παρακᾰλέω four times in his Roman letter. The first is in Rom 12:1 in which he states

> Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·

In light of the uses of παρακᾰλέω in the evidence that I have compiled, it is possible that Paul may be issuing an *invitation* or call for his auditors to come near to worship God by presenting their bodies as living sacrifices. This application is in line with common usage as to the verb παρακᾰλέω, especially in contexts that reference divine-human relations. There is also a second occurrence of παρακᾰλέω in Rom 15:30 in which Paul expresses a desire for his auditors to join him in prayer for his future endeavors. In accordance with common usage of παρακᾰλέω that I have discussed, such an invitation using this word would be quite common. It is thus reasonable to apply this conception of inviting to the gift ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει in Rom 12:8. A translation of "the one who invites" is, in my view, a suitable one. Such an invitation could be given within or without the Christ-following community. I also hold open the option that Paul's addressees could have associ-

ated this gift with prayer. Thus, ὁ παρακαλῶν could take the lead in invoking the presence of God on behalf of the group when they gathered for worship, perhaps taking on the role of calling upon God for his aid based upon the issues and situations that arose.[583]

The person-to-person application that we have seen in ancient data may also be retained in Paul's teaching. It is clear that Paul sometimes used παρακἄλέω to urge his audiences to particular ethical behavior as in Rom 16:17. The scriptures they have been given contain encouragement in Rom 15:4. Paul also uses a related verb, συμπαρακαλέω in Rom 1:12, which is usually understood as conveying his wish for "mutual encouragement" upon his desired forthcoming face-to-face meeting with the Roman Christ-followers. I have not found the notion of "comfort" or "consolation" in reference to παρακἄλέω and παράκλησις in Paul's letter to Rome. However, 2 Cor 1 does contain such overtones.

My research into παρακἄλέω confirms that this word may mean making an appeal or urging persons on to make the right decisions. I do, however, also want to offer the added dimensions that were uncovered in this chapter. I propose that we translate ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσε as "the one who invokes and invites, in accordance with what the opportunities require." My gloss takes into consideration the potential vertical and horizontal aspects of this gift. Being entrusted with opportunities to pray to God or invite others to come near to God means doing so in accordance with what these situations require. In so doing, then, a Roman Christ-follower may live a life of worship that includes prayer to God. It also may encompass inviting others to worship, to prayer, and perhaps, even to assess their own ethical behavior.

6. CONCLUSION

We have seen how various commentators attempt to find meanings from the order in which Paul has listed the χαρίσματα. If a chiastic structure is considered, then the present gift would be the apex. Perhaps, by putting this gift in the center of the seven, Paul means to emphasize both its vertical and horizontal aspects. Παρακαλέω may be applied person-to-person as Christ-followers

[583] Paul models the vertical dimension of the word παρακαλέω by speaking of his own appeal to God to remove his "thorn in the flesh" with the word παρακαλέω in 2 Cor 12:8.

invite others into their community and worship. This word also conveys the idea of human activity that is directed to God as Christ-followers call upon him in prayer. In an instance of the word παράκλησις in Rom 15:4–5, Paul identifies this noun with God himself. This particular application would have been new for Paul's audience. There are no references in the ancient sources that associate παράκλησις or παρακαλέω to the gods Paul's auditors had formerly worshiped. In Rom 15:5–6, Paul pronounces a blessing on his audience:

> May the God of steadfastness and encouragment [παρακλήσεως] grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the God of παράκλησις has invited the Roman group not only to live in harmony with one another, which is a person-to-person endeavor, he has also called them to worship him, a human-to-divine privilege.

Having covered how the Christ-followers will invoke the presence of deity and invite one another to worship God, Paul turns to how they may offer themselves to God through worship as they share benefactions with others.

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers usages of μεταδίδωμι in ancient literature and investigates its meaning in terms of sharing. Diodorus Siculus, Cornutus, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom use μεταδίδωμι and its cognates to describe the generosity of gods such as Zeus, Dionysus, and Demeter. The types of things bestowed by these deities may be material or non-material. An example of a a material gift would be that of goods. Non-material gifts might consist of rights and privileges or information and knowledge. The commentators surveyed in this section believe Paul's use of μεταδίδωμι in Rom 12:8 refers primarily to monetary and material aid. These scholars, who have tended to monetize μεταδίδωμι, either do not comment upon or flatly reject the possibility that Paul may have envisioned any application as to ὁ μεταδιδούς other than one that is suggestive of financial resources. Indeed, ancient writers use μεταδίδωμι to refer broadly to *sharing what one has been given*, and there are examples in the works of these writers that encompass both material and non-material benefaction.[584]

This chapter gathers data containing instances of μεταδίδωμι in the ancient literature and compares these uses with the text of Rom 12:8a. I will also revisit a conversation that commentators have, somewhat ironically, silenced. This concerns the communicative aspect of μεταδίδωμι, which includes features such as the sharing of rights, privileges, knowledge, ideas, and concepts. In accordance with instances of μεταδίδωμι in the ancient sources, it is likely that Paul fully expected for his Roman audience, as the recipients of great generosity from God, to share what they had been given with others. It is logical to think that this sharing was to occur both within and without the Christ-following group.

[584] This sense of sharing is in line with the definitions of μεταδίδωμι in LSJ that I outline in section 1.1.

2. THE LEXICAL MEANING OF Ὁ ΜΕΤΑΔΙΔΟΎΣ

The fifth χάρισμα in Paul's list, ὁ μεταδιδούς, is a present active participle from the verb μεταδίδωμι. Μεταδίδωμι means

> *1. give part of*, or *give a share*;
>
> 2. *distribute*
>
> 3. *communicate, to be communicated, transmitted.*[585]

3. ROM 12:8: "THE GIVER, IN GENEROSITY" (NRSV) AS DISCUSSED IN SELECTED COMMENTARIES

In their examination of this χάρισμα, commentators tend to view ὁ μεταδιδούς from a practical standpoint. Most agree that μεταδίδωμι denotes some kind of sharing, but when it comes to the details such as who might be involved and what might be shared, there is no consensus. These scholars determine that ὁ μεταδιδούς likely refers to an individual who gives of his or her own possessions.[586] The intended recipients of such generosity are generally thought to be the poor.[587] Thus the agreement amongst the commentators that Paul has in mind the giving of material goods or financial aid in Rom 12:8.[588]

Ultimately, we must admit that in Rom 12:8, Paul does not give us details that would help us identify either personnel or the recipients involved as to ὁ μεταδιδούς. Yet in the ancient sources that I discuss, μεταδίδωμι and its cognates refer to benefactions both to and from individuals and groups, and in circumstances that are both official and non-official. Persons and gods extend generosity, but their giving is not always relegated to money matters. As to the types of resources bestowed, the commentators find that sharing in the Roman community should be understood in terms of economic aid. However, instances of μεταδίδωμι and its cognates that appear in the works

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[585] μεταδίδωμι, LSJ, 1111. The third sense that is listed in LSJ is a transitive use not listed under μεταδίδωμι in BDAG, 638.

[586] See, for example Dunn, *Romans*; Cranfield, *Romans*; Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*; Longenecker, *Romans*; Moo, *Romans*. There is no textual evidence that Paul means for ὁ μεταδιδούς to act in an official role. Most commentators admirably turn away from what might anachronistically be called an "office." For an exception, see Lagrange, *Romains*, 300.

[587] Cranfield, *Romans*; Barrett, *Romans*; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*; Morris, *Romans*. Alternatively, Jewett has contributions needed for the "daily love feasts" of the early Christ-following community in mind. Jewett, *Romans*, 751.

[588] Even Jewett's scenario focuses on material and financial goods.

of authors such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Diodorus Siculus, Dio Chrysostom, and Plutarch show the potential for enlarging our view of μεταδίδωμι. These primary sources show that μεταδίδωμι may be applied to the giving of material goods, and that it can denote the sharing of non-material items such as rights, privileges, knowledge and information.

3.1. Commentators discuss the kinds of things meant to be shared by the Christ-following community

Some commentators believe that an investigation into the collocation of ὁ μεταδιδούς with the two χαρίσματα that follow it provides insight as to the kinds of resources that are meant to be shared by the Christ-followers. Lagrange provides an example of this approach. He organizes the seven χαρίσματα into two groupings. The first four gifts—προφητεία, διακονία, διδασκάλια, and παράκλησις are broadly characterized as "spirituel," and, according to Lagrange, they refer to services rendered to the soul.[589] Lagrange then surmises that as to the last three gifts, i.e., ὁ μεταδιδούς, ὁ προϊστάμενος, and ὁ ἐλεῶν, Paul has shifted from the "spirituel" to "de l'ordre temporal."[590] Lagrange thus concludes that ὁ μεταδιδούς is expected to give "l'aumone" [alms].[591] Wilckens concurs with Lagrange and also projects a "charitable and organizational nature" [karitativer und organisatorischer Art] upon the last three χαρίσματα.[592] Leenhardt also opines that ὁ μεταδιδούς and the

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[589] Lagrange, *Romains*, 300.

[590] Ibid.

[591] Ibid. The exegetical move that Lagrange proposes is perplexing. There is nothing in the Pauline text of Rom 12:6–8 to suggest these bifurcated categories. Lagrange betrays his motivation in classifying the last three gifts in this way. He maintains that ὁ μεταδιδούς must mean the sharing of temporal or material content; otherwise ὁ μεταδιδούς would merely repeat the previous two χαρίσματα, teaching and exhortation. This conclusion is bewildering considering the wealth of information about teaching and exhortation uncovered in this thesis that pertain to divine-human relations. Such data clarifies that these two gifts are distinct from one another in terms of their essential qualities of either instruction or invocation/invitation. There is no danger that ὁ μεταδιδούς could be confused with teaching or invoking/inviting, even if we consider the possibility that ὁ μεταδιδούς may share information and knowledge. It must also be noted that the sharing of financial resources, which is only one in a range of material things that may be shared, is not merely "de l'ordre temporal," as Lagrange would have it. Upon considering Paul's teaching in Phil 4:18 and 2 Cor 8–9, we see that financial benefactions can actually constitute an expression of worship for Paul, and are thus "spirituel."

[592] Wilckens, *Römer*, 15. Cranfield states that John Calvin is behind the notion of an "office" pertaining to "the church's charity." Cranfield, *Romans*, 624-25. On Calvin's view of a two-fold "diaconate" wherein one person gives aid to the poor and another shows mercy to the poor, see Elise Anne McKee, "Calvin's Exegesis of Romans 12:8—Social, Accidental, or Theological? in *Calvin Theological Journal* Apr 1, 1988, Vol. 23, 6-18.

two gifts that follow it should be regarded as official activity that is done by an individual "in the name of the church."[593]

Dunn and Jewett agree that Paul intends for the Roman group to share material resources. Dunn asserts that ὁ μεταδιδούς "probably" meant sharing "food or wealth or possessions."[594] Jewett submits that this gift refers to the material resources that would have been needed for the "daily love feasts" of the early community.[595]

3.2. The contribution of W.C. van Unnik's essay

An essay by W.C. van Unnik illustrates the benefits of engaging with Greco-Roman sources to augment our understanding of the phrase ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι that appears in Rom 12:8. Unnik supports a central assumption of this thesis, which is that the χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8, as a whole, are set within a "religious context."[596] His goal, like my own, is "to discover the 'atmosphere' that surrounds" both μεταδίδωμι and ἁπλότητι and to "lay bare the associations it has in the Greek language of Paul's days."[597] Unnik's survey of the commentators of his own day within the mid 20th century shows that μεταδίδωμι was most often translated as meaning "to give to the poor."[598] He questions this conclusion, however, noting that it "does not seem to be implied in the verb itself."[599] Cultivating a collection of ancient texts, Unnik finds that μεταδίδωμι bears "a much wider radius of action than just giving to the poor,"[600] and that it covers "not just giving, but sharing."[601] Unnik's translation of μεταδίδωμι is "to let another person participate in precious goods one possesses."[602]

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[593] Leenhardt, *Romans*, 312.

[594] Dunn, *Romans*, 730.

[595] Jewett, *Romans*, 751.

[596] W.C. van Unnik, "The Interpretation of Romans 12:8: Ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. Van Unnik: Neotestamentica - Flavius Josephus - Patristica* (*Supplements to Novum Testamentum*) (*English and German Edition*), ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Pieter Willem Van Der Horst (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 2014), 56.

[597] Unnik, 56.

[598] Unnik, 46. Even in the more recent commentaries surveyed in this section, we find that this tendency to translate ὁ μεταδιδούς in terms of financial aid to the poor has endured.

[599] Ibid.

[600] Unnik, 49.

[601] Unnik, 55.

[602] Ibid.

Such "precious goods," which are apparent in the ancient sources Unnik surveys, "may consist in material matters, but in most cases they are immaterial—status, information, education, special knowledge."[603] Unnik thus interprets the phrase ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι in terms of sharing information and knowledge. His reference has to do with sharing the message of the gospel with simplicity.

Fitzmyer mentions the work of Unnik, but does not comment upon it.[604] Lagrange reasons that ὁ μεταδιδούς cannot bear a communicative interpretation because this would too closely resemble the gifts of teaching and exhorting, which are the third and fourth gifts in Rom 12:6–8.[605] Dunn dismisses van Unnik's argument, and states that "the thought of sharing in the riches of the gospel hardly fits so well with "ἐν ἁπλότητι" or with the immediate context."[606] Moo agrees with Dunn and states that the sharing of material goods as an application for μεταδίδωμι is "well attested," and thus "makes better sense in the context."[607] The meaning of Dunn and Moo as to what is meant by context is not well explained. Unnik readily admits that "the [biblical] context in this case does not offer any help, not even in an implicit way."[608] Unnik therefore moves on to the Greco-Roman usages in order to clarify meaning and application as to μεταδίδωμι.[609] Jewett also rejects Unnik's conclusion that the range of meaning for μεταδίδωμι could include communicating or the sharing of religious knowledge. For Jewitt, "generosity," his chosen gloss for ἁπλότης, is "hardly

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[603] Ibid.

[604] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 648-49.

[605] Lagrange, *Romains*, 300. I will continue to revisit in subsequent chapters the tendency of many commentators to group the last three gifts in Paul's list together. Suffice it to say that there is nothing in the Pauline text of Rom 12:6–8 signalling we should define the actual outworking of these last three gifts in close relation to one another.

[606] Dunn, *Romans*, 730. Dunn's conclusion that ἐν ἁπλότητι does not "fit" with sharing the gospel is unsupportable upon considering ἁπλότης within ancient primary sources.

[607] Moo, *Romans*, 768, n. 57. Moo cites to Luke 3:11 and Eph 4:28 for the meaning "share material goods." Unnik's work gets a mention in this same footnote.

[608] Unnik, "Rom 12:8," 51.

[609] Admittedly, Unnik's essay only lists some of the ancient sources upon which he builds his case for μεταδίδωμι in Rom 12:8. For a more thorough treatment of μεταδίδωμι in Greco-Roman sources, Unnik refers the reader to a book he has written in Dutch that is difficult to find; W.C. van Unnik, *Αφθωνως Μεταδιδωμι* (Brussels: Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België (= Klasse der Letteren 23:4), 1971). Thankfully, a thorough examination of the instances of μεταδίδωμι in the ancient world need not be reliant upon Unnik's book. The data is readily accessible to the scholar today through commonly used databases.

relevant to the communication of ideas."[610] The notion of "generosity," perhaps popular because it appears to snuggle neatly within a view of μεταδίδωμι that means sharing financial resources, is not the only translation option here.

Unnik translates ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι as meaning the sharing of religious information in a straightforward and simple manner. This aligns with the range of possibilities evidenced in the writings of the ancient authors I will discuss. Unnik is likely correct in stating that even though "it is extremely difficult to abandon an exegesis that has been adopted by all modern commentators," we are "forced by Greek usage to do so."[611]

The commentators I have considered determine that μεταδίδωμι categorically refers to the sharing of material goods. This conclusion forecloses other possibilities as to the meaning of μεταδίδωμι that are reflected in the primary sources that I examine below. These concern the sharing of rights, privileges, and words. It is true that the Pauline text does not clarify precisely who will share the resources as to this gift, nor does it answer questions such as whether these resources are personal or communal. Neither does Paul's text identify the recipients of the generosity that might be extended. Usages of μεταδίδωμι from Greco-Roman sources are, however, helpful in addressing these issues. We will see here a symmetry between the kinds of things gods and persons share and how recipients ought to respond in terms of their own acts of sharing. Embedded within the conception of μεταδίδωμι as revealed in writings from ancient sources is the idea of a regenerative or recurrent sharing which simply means that what is received is to be shared. This insight will be useful as we evaluate the Pauline text concerning ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι because the sharing that is implied by this phrase is consistent with Paul's missional goal. Moreover, what the Christ-followers themselves have been given and thus be expected to share will mark them as unique.

4. A CONSIDERATION OF ΜΕΤΑΔΊΔΩΜΙ IN LIGHT OF GRECO-ROMAN SOURCES WITH

[610] Jewett, *Romans*, 752. Jewett considers the work of many other biblical scholars in his treatment of ὁ μεταδιδούς, but does not reference any primary Greco-Roman ancient sources. Jewett mentions scholarly research on the association of ἁπλότης with the "Judaic ideal of integrity." In the same footnote he also remarks that ἁπλότης may also be connected to the Greco-Roman "philosophical ideal of the simple life" (752).

[611] Unnik, "Rom 12:8," 56.

My review of the Greco-Roman usage of μεταδίδωμι and its cognates has two objectives. The first is to investigate instances of μεταδίδωμι that refer to divine-human relations. In particular, I will note some of the benefactions made by three particular gods—Zeus, Dionysus, and Demeter. I also point out the significance of μεταδίδωμι in disclosing the intentions that undergird the gifts of these gods. We will see that ancient writers use μεταδίδωμι to signal a mandate that was meant to accompany the divine gifts. This course of action meant that the recipients of benefactions were expected to share what they received with others. I then turn to ancient writings to see if their uses of μεταδίδωμι and its cognates can help us understand what *kinds* of things may be shared. These may be both religious and non-religious.[612] My purpose is to create a backdrop with which to examine ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι in Rom 12:8.

4.1. Benefactions attributed to the gods

Zeus bequeaths knowledge, intelligence, and virtues

Both Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch ascribe divine intellectual powers to the god Zeus. Dio relates that knowledge originates either from heaven or from human beings. It is Zeus who possesses the knowledge needed by kings to rule well, and he "imparts it to whom he will" [οἷς ἐθέλει μεταδιδούς].[613] Plutarch also holds Zeus in high esteem for his special knowledge and intelligence, noting that he grants "only a share" [νοῦ δὲ καὶ φρονήσεως μεταδίδωσιν] to mere mortals.[614] In another work, Plutarch states that Zeus is pleased with those who emulate his virtuous and divine qualities.[615] As a result, he causes his devotees to prosper and "gives them a share of his own equity, justice, truth, and gentleness" [καὶ μεταδίδωσι τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν εὐνομίας καὶ δίκης καὶ ἀληθείας καὶ

[612] We will see that the sharing of rights, for example, is not cultic. In the hands of Paul, however, there are rights and privileges that become a part of his addressees relationship with God, and are therefore seen as blessings from God that may be shared with others.

[613] Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 4.27.

[614] Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 1.3.

[615] Plutarch, *Ad principem ineruditium* 1.

πραότητος].[616]

Zeus is also known for bequeathing more corporeal benefactions. Cornutus relates that humanity is dependent upon Zeus because he gives "a share of life-giving moisture [dew] to the living" [ἢ μεταδιδόναι τοῖς ζῶσι ζωτικῆς ἰκμάδος].[617] Moreover, a son of Zeus, the god Heracles, is portrayed as strong and mighty on behalf of the entire universe because he is a "giver of strength and power to its various parts" [μεταδοτικὸς ἰσχύος καὶ τοῖς κατὰ μέρος καὶ ἀλκῆς ὑπάρχων].[618]

Dionysus shares his mysteries, wine, and viticulture

In various passages of Book III and V of his *Bibliotheca Historica*, Diodorus recounts some of the benefactions [εὐεργεσία] that humans traditionally attributed to particular gods. Various deities were believed to have visited many regions of the inhabited world "conferring benefactions" [εὐεργετοῦντας] upon humankind and "distributing among each of them the advantage which resulted from the discoveries they had made" [μεταδιδόντας ἑκάστοις τῆς ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων εὑρημάτων ὠφελείας].[619] Dionysus instructed humans in the knowledge of his cultic rites and "initiated them into his mysteries" [μεταδοῦναι τῶν μυστηρίων].[620] Diodorus also relates that, according to mythology, Dionysus discovered wine.[621] Dionysus then allowed others "to share in" [μεταδόντα πᾶσι] the means by which the vine could be cultivated.[622] This god was also specifically responsible for sharing [μεταδιδόναι] important knowledge about the storing of fruits for the wine.[623]

Diodorus attributes generosity to Dionysus for sharing both religious knowledge and natural

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[616] Ibid.

[617] Cornutus, 2, [2].

[618] Cornutus, 31, [62-63].

[619] Diodorus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 5.77 [4]

[620] Ibid., 3.64 [7]. Diodorus also relates that the god Dionysus was supposed to have "shared" [μεταδίδωμι] his own immortality with his mother, Semele (4.25 [4]). Clement also commandeers μεταδίδωμι to relate Jesus' offer to impart immortality to those who will follow him (Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 12 [7]).

[621] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.70 [8]. Dionysus, a consort of Athena and supporter of Zeus, was also known to have selected women to be his soldiers (3.74 [2]). Diodorus explains the role of women in the Dionysiac cult in 4.3 [2-3].

[622] *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.63 [4]. Josephus also relates that an obedient Jew that has received the blessings of God should "share" [μεταδίδωμι] these generously [φιλότιμος] with others (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 4.237-238).

[623] *Bibliotheca Historica*, 2.38 [5]; see also 3.70 [8]; 4.1 [7].

blessings. The mandate to share [μεταδίδωμι] such discoveries with others is inherent within the gift.[624] Throughout the Roman Empire the followers of Dionysus thus participated in the mysteries, rites, and Bacchic revelries that were part of the Dionysian cult in ancient history.[625]

Demeter bequeaths cereal cultivation

The origins of wheat and corn, crops that were integral to the health and wellbeing of those living throughout the Roman Empire, were also explained in mythology as the result of divine benefaction.[626] The goddess Demeter first bestowed the fruit of the corn upon the inhabitants of Sicily "to give" [μεταδοῦναι] a share in her benefaction.[627] Demeter was not only worshiped for her agricultural contributions, she was also known for the famous Eleusinian mysteries.[628] The goddess was generous with her benefactions of sustenance. Those who received Demeter's gift were expected to share the gift of the seed with their neighbors [καὶ τοῖς πλησιοχώροις μεταδιδόντες τοῦ σπέρματος, ἐπλήρωσαν πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην].[629] These benefactions and the ability to sustain and cultivate them were given along with the mandate that such valuable and life-sustaining informa-

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[624] Josephus also uses μεταδίδωμι to denote the sharing of religious knowledge. In Josephus' description of the Jewish sect of the Essenes, he states that a proselyte was expected to transmit [μεταδίδωμι] the rules of the sect exactly as he himself received them (*De Bello Judaico* 2.142).

[625] Additionally, the festival of Vinalia rustica was traditionally celebrated each August in Rome to mark the beginning of the grape harvest. Vinalia priora occurred in April to celebrate the new wine crops. In the ritual associated with these festivals, neither the grapes nor the wine could be touched or tasted before a libation was made to Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. Wine was also associated with the blood of a sacrificial victim destined to the gods, according to Scheid. See John Scheid, "Roman Animal Sacrifice and the System of Being," in *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and F. S. Naiden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 91-92.

[626] Beard, et al., state that "there was probably never a time when the city of Rome ceased to think of agricultural concerns as central to its way of life." Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome II*, 46. Scheid builds on this and asserts that Roman sacrifice "consisted in offering a meal" to the gods, whether meat, wine, or grain. Scheid, "Roman Animal Sacrifice," 86.

[627] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 5.69 [3]

[628] Demeter was "responsible for the greatest blessings to mankind . . . she [was] accorded the most notable honors and sacrifices, and magnificent feasts and festivals as well, not only by the Greeks, but also by almost all barbarians who have partaken of this kind of food" (*Bibliotheca Historica* 5.68 [2]).

[629] *Bibliotheca Historica* 5.4 [4]. See also 5.68 [2] in which Demeter instructs Triptolemus to "share the gift [of sowing corn] with men everywhere" [ᾧ συντάξαι πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις μεταδοῦναι τῆς τε δωρεᾶς]. Moreover, the Athenians are praised for being the first who "gave to the Greeks" ["Ελλησι μεταδόντες] a share in "a food gained by cultivation of the soil" (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 13.26 [3]).

tion would then be shared with others.

Pagan worshipers in the Greco-Roman world have thus perceived that some of the basic necessities of life such as corn, wheat, and wine came from the gods. However, gifts of a more immaterial nature such as religious knowledge did so as well. The recipients of such bestowals were not to keep the blessings to themselves, but were instead expected to share them.

4.2. A survey of the kinds of resources that may be shared

I have noted that commentators wish to relegate to the material realm the kinds of resources that Paul's addressees might share. This position is not supported by uses of μεταδίδωμι that appear in the works of ancient Greco-Roman authors. It is important to understand the *kinds* of benefactions Paul's addressees would naturally associate with the word μεταδίδωμι because it is these kind of benefactions that are likely to be shared. Moreover, I take issue with the commentators who have eschewed the communicative or verbal aspects of sharing associated with usages of μεταδίδωμι. These scholars sometimes involve the accompanying word ἁπλότης from Paul's text in Rom 12:8 (ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι) to support their conclusion that both μεταδίδωμι and ἁπλότης are best translated in terms of economic assistance. I maintain that the ancient Greco-Roman usages of μεταδίδωμι not only reveal material benefactions, but may also denote the sharing of ideas. Moreover, I will present instances from these works in which ἁπλότης, does connote the manner in which ideas can be communicated.

We have already seen that the gods shared both material and immaterial items with humankind. I now briefly note a few instances of μεταδίδωμι that tell us about the kinds of concrete and practical things apportioned between persons. These include money,[630] alms,[631] goods,[632] and property,[633] as well as basic necessities like shelter and warmth.[634] If these examples were all that was available to us, the commentators might be warranted in their assumption that Paul's audience should bestow financial and material aid upon those in need. But we have other information that

[630] Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 3.15.

[631] Plutarch, *Apophthegmata 69.*

[632] *Orationes* 3.109; 7.82, 83; Diodorus Siculus, *Historica* 5.34 [3]; Plutarch, *Alexander* 50.

[633] Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 4.16; Diodorus Siculus, *Historica* 5.58 [5].

[634] Plutarch, *Questiones Convivales* 8.7 [13]; Plutarch, *Alexander* 57.

comes to us from the works of ancient writers. The examples in this section do not relate to divine-human relations, but they are helpful in showing the types of things that may be shared, some of which apply to blessings Paul signals his addressees have received from God. These literary works show that μεταδίδωμι may also be used for granting citizenship,[635] privileges and advantages,[636] and for bestowing liberty,[637] kindness,[638] and even happiness.[639] Someone may also share authority or power[640] as well as opportunities.[641]

As noted, μεταδίδωμι may signify the bestowal of rights.[642] More specifically, μεταδίδωμι may convey the right or permission to communicate something.[643] This can take the form of philosophical wisdom,[644] information,[645] or argument within rhetorical discourse.[646] Plutarch specifies other communicative ideas by way of the word μεταδίδωμι and its cognates. These include the sharing of doubts[647] or words of comfort.[648] Plutarch uses μεταδίδωμι to convey the joys of sharing poetry[649] and his own thoughts about such art.[650] There is accordingly a range of usages that existed within the world of the first-century Roman Christ-followers to suggest that μεταδίδωμι points not only to

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[635] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.15 [4], 17 [1]; 2.16 [1]; 3.10 [4]; 4.22 [3]; 6.19 [4]; 8.35 [2]; 15.7 [4]. See also Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica,* 19. 2 [8]; 20.90 [3]; *Library* 12. 9 [2] and 54 [7]; 14.8 [3]; 16.70 [6]; *Historica* 5.53 [4]. For sharing the right to speak, see *Bibliotheca Historica* 18.33 [3] and Plutarch, *Apophthegmata Laconica* 38.

[636] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 8.47 [2]; 8.49 [1]; 8.70 [2]; 14.6 [3].

[637] *Antiquitates Romanae* 4.23 [2]. See also Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 10.26.

[638] Plutarch, *Alexander* 13.

[639] Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 3.39.

[640] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 11.56 [3]. See also Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 3.89 and Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 9.34; 13.42 [1], 105 [3]; 16.48 [2]; 16.60 [1]; *Bibliotheca Historica* 4.69 [2]. Diodorus also uses μεταδίδωμι to denote the sharing of glory due to success in battle (*Library* 10.33). See also Plutarch, *De fraterno amore* 12, who thought a well-known and accomplished thinker could "make another an equal sharer" [μεταδίδωμι] in his reputation, excellence or prosperity.

[641] Plutarch, *Praecepta gerendai republicae* 1. In *Caius Marcius Coriolanus* 31 [1], Plutarch observes that an authority figure may bestow a share of his influence and authority upon those under him.

[642] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 10.29 [5].

[643] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 10.40 [2]; 10.9 [3].

[644] Strabo, *Geography* 15.1 [59].

[645] Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.21 [10]; 4.13 [2].

[646] Plutarch, *Questiones Convivales* 7.0 [4].

[647] *Questiones Convivales* 8.10 [1].

[648] Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 1.

[649] Plutarch, *Nicias* 29 [2].

[650] Plutarch, *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* 1.

the apportioning of material goods, but also to matters non-material, such as the sharing of rights, privileges, words, and ideas.

There is another matter to consider before moving on to ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι, as this phrase appears in Rom 12:8. I have mentioned that some commentators think that ἁπλότητι, the accompanying idea for μεταδίδωμι in Rom 12:8, is best translated in terms of generosity. This conclusion is tied to a preferred translation of μεταδίδωμι in terms of material aid. For example, Jewett translates ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι as "the sharer–with generosity."[651] Jewett thinks the sharer should generously share financial aid with others. He rejects a gloss for ἁπλότητι that might include sharing words because for him, "generosity" may "hardly be relevant to the communication of ideas."[652] Jewett is stretching here. On this rationale, a teacher who spends extra time communicating his or her ideas with students would not be considered ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι.

Ancient authors use the word ἁπλότης to describe both the manner and attitude that lies behind spoken and shared words. Thus, ἁπλότης may refer to the kind of straightforward and simple communication of ideas that is marked by truthfulness and clarity.[653] These writers may choose ἁπλότης to denote *sincerity* in dealing with others[654] and to convey a *singleness* of mind that contrasts ἁπλότης with maliciousness.[655] Even enemies should be treated in a *straightforward* manner.[656] Ἁπλότης is also used to convey a *simplicity* of living.[657] Ἁπλότης, then, may express an inner attitude of sincerity, a simplicity as to belief, and a straightforward fashion of communication.

As will be seen, Paul's use of the term ἁπλότης in the phrase ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι is malleable. It may simply describe something of *how* that which is shared is to be shared with others. Ἁπλότης, however, need not dictate the *kind* of thing that is to be shared.

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[651] Jewett, *Romans* 736.

[652] Jewett, *Romans*, 752.

[653] Dio uses ἁπλότης to describe the simplicity of a certain sculpture of Zeus that he admires (Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 12.77). He goes on to explain what he means by ἁπλότης. For Dio, the artist has constructed the artwork with clarity and thus truthfully portrays the deity as a god who gives [δίδωμι] and bestows blessings [χαρίζομαι] (*Orationes* 12). Cornutus wonders if the god Apollo should be called "Haplon" [ὡσὰν ἁπλῶν εἰρημένος εἴη] because of his ability to simplify and reduce the matter of the world into accessible parts 32, [66]).

[654] Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 1.26; Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 11.67 [4]; *Bibliotheca Historica* 5.66 [4].

[655] Plutarch, *De Herodoti malignitate* 1.

[656] Plutarch, *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* 1.

[657] Diodorus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, 1.86 [2]; 3.17 [5]; Strabo, *Geography* 15.1 [53]; Plutarch, *Antony* 24 [6].

5. A PROPOSED TRANSLATION OF Ὁ ΜΕΤΑΔΙΔΟΎΣ ἘΝ ἉΠΛΌΤΗΤΙ IN ROM 12:8

I have argued that in the ancient literature surveyed, μεταδίδωμι is used to convey the sharing of resources, both material (e.g., goods) and immaterial (e.g., words, rights, blessings). I have also noted that the addition of ἁπλότης likely refers to the *quality* or *manner* of such sharing, whether in an accompanying attitude (e.g., sincerity, ungrudging), or a mode of sharing (e.g., straightforwardness, with simplicity). This evidence suggests how first-century inhabitants might have understood these words.

The debates among commentators that I have recounted regarding Rom 12:8 question whether Paul has in mind a person sharing his or her own goods, or whether he envisions a person with an official position who acts on the behalf of others. As to the type of goods shared, the majority of the scholars believe Paul is referring here to material resources. This results in a rejection of immaterial possibilities that relate to the sharing of words, ideas, and even privileges and positive qualities. Ancient literature regarding μεταδίδωμι and its cognates shows a large range of usages that includes the sharing of both material and non-material goods and resources. As to the full phrase ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι, I have provided other evidence demonstrating that to share both material and immaterial resources ἐν ἁπλότητι may mean that the benefactor acts generously, sincerely, simply, and straightforwardly. This depends upon what is shared, which I have shown covers quite a broad range. I thus propose the following translation for the gift ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι in Rom 12:8a: "the one who shares with generosity, simplicity, or sincerity, as required."

The accompanying phrase ἐν ἁπλότητι may refer to the manner or attitude with which the sharing is to be done. How ἁπλότης is translated will depend upon the item shared. Perhaps the introduction of the gift ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι in Rom 12:8 is Paul's invitation for his audience to view themselves not only in terms of being a sharer, but also to take inventory of what they have to give. This helps them to see what they have to share in terms of what it is that has been shared with them. Paul refers to some of these benefactions in his letter.[658] Thus, Paul may perhaps be

[658] Paul also mentions something else that he means to share with them in person in Rom 1:11. As Paul begins his epistle, he states his desire to see his audience "in order to share with you some spiritual gift" [ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν]. The nature of the "spiritual gift" Paul means to share is debated by various commentators. Some believe it is the gospel (see Keck, 248; Longnecker, 116; cf. 1 Thess 2:8). Dunn believes Paul that may not know what might

viewed as a "broker" of God's blessings via his letter.[659]

Here are a few examples of how the translation that I have offered could be applied to blessings that Paul mentions in the Roman letter. Some of these benefactions may be shared ἐν ἁπλότητι. In Rom 15:14, Paul acknowledges that the Christ-followers are "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct [νουθετέω] one another." When members of this group are called to share such knowledge and instruction, they should arguably do so with simple clarity. Generous monetary aid and hospitality are encouraged by Paul in Rom 12:13 and 15:25–27. In Rom 2:4, "riches" [πλοῦτος] from God, such as his kindness, forbearance, and patience, should not be despised or withheld from others (2:3–4). These qualities are to be shared with sincerity. Such qualities are perhaps evidence of "the first fruits of the Spirit" (8:23; cf. Gal 5:22–23) that Paul's audience has received. Genuine love, building up neighbors, and a welcoming attitude that mirrors the way "Christ has welcomed you" may also serve as examples of the types of things that are meant to be shared generously with others. Paul's addressees have received the mercy of God (9:23–24; 11:31). That the quality of mercy is itself communicable is evidenced by Paul having listed it as a gift in Rom 12:8. On the whole, we may think of the seven χαρίσματα themselves as gifts that have been given to the Christ-followers and are intended to be shared sincerely, simply, and generously.

Paul takes care to assure that his audience has received the gospel message in a way that makes it possible for them to go forth and share its good news. The gospel contains its own gifts and promises for all who receive it, and sharing it with others is itself a privilege (Rom 10:15). The

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happen until he arrives in Rome, and so the gift in question is simply unspecified (30); see also Jewett (124) and Fitzmyer (47). Perhaps Paul is signalling a further development as to the χαρίσματα, something that he wants to supervise himself after his arrival. The notion that Paul would handle the subject with caution is understandable when we consider the confusion in terms of the χαρίσματα in the Corinthian gatherings.

[659] See Blanton IV, *A Spiritual Economy: Gift Exchange in the Letters of Paul of Tarsus* (*Synkrisis*). In chapter 6 of this monograph, Blanton provides examples from the letters of Pliny the Younger (61 - 113 BCE) in which Pliny serves as a broker who bestows positional status such as citizenship and public office upon his clients. Blanton then finds parallels with how Paul may be viewed as a broker of God's blessings to gentiles. In his study, by comparing selected Pauline passages with examples from the letters of Pliny the Younger, Blanton determines that certain benefits associated with status may be shared via an epistolary form. These advantages may be "symbolic" in that they are conveyed through a letter, but they also "exist discursively in the form of promise and assurance" (21). Thus, the writer, whether Paul or Pliny, proves to have the authority to mediate blessings to the recipients of his missive. These blessings are among the things that Paul's addressees could share with others.

benefits that are inherent in the gospel include forgiveness (4:7), receipt of a new purpose and calling (1:7; 12:4), peace with God (5:1), the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (5:5; 8:12–16, 23, 26-27), grace (5:15–17), adoption into God's family, and being made an heir with Christ (8:17). Ultimately, Paul is overwhelmed, not only at the thought of the wisdom and knowledge of God, but also of the value of the "riches" that have been given to those who have received the gospel (11:33). Riches of this magnitude are not to be kept to themselves, but rather are to be shared.

6. CONCLUSION

The commentators who have not considered ancient usages of μεταδίδωμι and ἁπλότης have overlooked what these instances can tell us about the words and their possible reception by Paul's Roman auditors. There is a range of possible applications and associations that Paul's audience may have been able to make based upon their knowledge and cultural experiences with these usages. Paul's lack of textual specificity in Rom 12:8 arguably benefits his audience because it puts no restrictions either on who can share, or on the kinds of benefactions that may be shared. My interpretation of the phrase ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι suggests that upon receiving benefactions from God, members of the Roman Jesus-group may signify that they are offering themselves back to him in worship by sharing what they have been given by him through either material or non-material means. Finally, with the gift ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι, Paul has not precluded his audience from applying it to the sharing of the gospel with others in sincerity and simplicity. The verbal and communicative aspect of sharing the gospel is consistent with all of the χαρίσματα that we have considered so far. These last two points support the imperative in Paul's writing about the need to share the gospel. That God has generously bestowed gifts upon the Christ-followers is a motivation for them to show such beneficence to others in their dissemination of the good news.

1. INTRODUCTION

The sixth χάρισμα that appears in Rom 12:8 is ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ. The participle ὁ προϊστάμενος is from the verb προΐστημι. In this chapter I gather instances of προΐστημι and its cognates from pertinent ancient sources, examine their uses, and then present a glossary of terms based on these sources. Paul's treatment of προΐστημι in the letter to the Romans follows. My goal is to sound out a plausible first-century reception of the phrase ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ as to Paul's Roman addressees.

2. THE LEXICAL MEANING OF Ὁ ΠΡΟΪΣΤΆΜΕΝΟΣ

Ὁ προϊστάμενος, which is the middle-voiced participle of the verb προΐστημι, appears in Rom 12:8. As set forth in LSJ, προΐστημι may essentially mean:

(1) *set before*;

(2) *set over*;

(3) *exhibit publicly, prostitute*.[660]

In addition to the three senses given above, LSJ offers another option in which the verb προΐστημι may mean to "*stand for* so as *to guard*."[661] LSJ supplements this general category with examples that indicate support, succour, protection, and championing.

3. ROM 12:8: "THE LEADER, IN DILIGENCE," (NRSV) AS DISCUSSED IN SELECTED COMMENTARIES

Notwithstanding the four possible definitions recounted above, the commentators surveyed in

[660] LSJ, προΐστημι, 1482. I will reference the third meaning in section 3.2 when I discuss προΐστημι and "protection."

[661] LSJ categorizes this use as a "genitive of persons," 1482. LSJ gives additional possiblities that are not relevant to my discussion here (e.g., a metaphorical use that means "put forward as an excuse; prefer, value").

this section have generally chosen one of two glosses for ὁ προϊστάμενος as it appears in Rom 12:8.[662] These translations convey either: (1) presiding, or (2) caring or giving aid. The first instance reflects the conclusions of LSJ that I have detailed. As to the second option, caring or giving aid, the commentators have not reflected the meanings of προΐστημι that are used in LSJ. This second association occurs in BDAG as well as in Louw and Nida's lexicon. These two reference works, which treat instances of Greek words in the NT, differ from the assessment of LSJ in that they offer an alternative sense for ὁ προϊστάμενος that is not present in LSJ. While all three lexicons present ὁ προϊστάμενος in terms of leadership, both BDAG and Louw and Nida add a second category of 'helping' and 'aiding.'[663] This second sense is only broadly related to the classification of the *genitive of persons* from LSJ that I have referred to above. While a perusal of LSJ offers the additional meanings of protecting and guarding, these authors do not list the possibilities of "aiding" or "helping."

The second option of helping and aiding offered by BDAG and Louw and Nida is attractive for commentators who take Paul's meaning as to the gift ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8 in terms of leadership, but who wish to have an alternative gloss for the related noun προστάτις that Paul uses to describe Phoebe in Rom 16:2.[664] The conclusions of the commentators in the section that follows

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[662] Commentators do not reference the third meaning as set forth above, i.e., *exhibit publicly, prostitute*. As for the fourth category (*stand for* so as *to guard*), the influence of the following two lexicons will become apparent as we take up the commentator's translations of προΐστημι that are reviewed in this section. Johannes P. Louw, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (2 *Volume Set*) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988); Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). These works will hereafter be known as Louw and Nida and BDAG, respectively.

[663] For example, Louw and Nida place προϊστάμαι in the domain designated as "Guide, Discipline, Follow." Within this domain, they determine that προϊστάμαι means "to guide, to direct, to lead" (*Semantic Domains,* 465). This usage parallels the first sense in BDAG: to exercise a position of leadership, *rule*, *direct*, *be at the head* (*of*), 870. Louw and Nida also place προϊστάμαι in a second domain called "Help, Care For," where they determine that προϊστάμαι means "to be engaged in helping or aiding" (*Semantic Domains*, 458-60). This parallels the second use in BDAG, which means to have an interest in, *show concern for*, *care for*, *give aid*, 870.

[664] In LSJ, both προστάτης and προστάτις appear in their respective masculine and feminine forms under προστᾰτ-εία, ἡ, 1526. LSJ glosses this noun as *rule over*, *lord it over*. The masculine προστάτης is given as *one who stands before, front-rank man* and *leader*, *chief*, as well as *guardian* or *champion*. There are a few additional examples of *patron*. LSJ then lists προστάτις as the feminine form of προστάτης, and does not add any other meaning to its definition. As stated above, Louw and Nida do not treat the masculine form, προστάτης, since it does not appear in the New Testament. However, they do situate the feminine form προστάτις under προϊστάμαι and locate it in the domain "Help, Care For" to denote "a woman who is active in helping—'helper, patroness (in the sense of one engaged in supporting an individual or endeavor)'" (*Semantic Domains,* 459). These scholars note Phoebe's role in Rom 16:2 as the sole example of this usage. Also, in contrast with LSJ, the authors of BDAG gloss the masculine form προστάτης as "one who looks out for

reflect the data contained within LSJ along with additional information from BDAG and Louw and Nida. We will see that most commentators translate ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8 in terms of leadership. This decision, however, only flags up more questions as to the interpretation of this gift. Two of the key debates here are: (1) were the early Christ-following communities organized enough to sustain formal offices at the time of Paul's writing? (2) if a scholar asserts that Paul is putting forth the role of a leader in Rom 12:8, what does this say about his meaning in applying the related noun προστάτις to Phoebe in Rom 16:2? Commentators agonize over whether Phoebe could be deigned as a leader who is potentially higher in stature than Paul. This results in "interpretation by avoidance" on the part of some of the commentators.

Alternatively, other commentators have translated ὁ προϊστάμενος in terms of giving help, care, or aid. While the basis for this decision is unclear, it is consistent with the work of Louw and Nida and BDAG. Even if this translation truly reconciled the "Phoebe problem," it would only create others. Applying the notion of "helper" tends to downplay Phoebe's significance, something contemporary commentators are reluctant to do. These scholars must therefore engage the social construct of Greco-Roman patronage to justify why they have not chosen to gloss προστάτις as leader. Independent of this, the concepts of giving help, care, or aid are not strongly reflected in the usage of προΐστημι in the ancient sources. I take up these issues in the section below in which I cover ὁ προϊστάμενος and προστάτις.

3.1. Ὁ προϊστάμενος: 'the one who presides'

Many commentators translate ὁ προϊστάμενος in terms of leadership, even while admitting their own uneasiness over this choice. Among the range of possibilities of what might constitue a leadership role, Barrett selects "the president."[665] He is uncertain, however, whether the reference here might apply to "an office" in the church.[666] Fitzmyer defines ὁ προϊστάμενος as "the one standing at the head," and "the one who presides, directs, or rules."[667] He finds that presiding and govern-

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the interest of others, *defender, guardian, benefactor*," 885, whereas the feminine προστάτις is defined as "a woman in a supporting role, *patron, benefactor*", 885.

[665] Barrett, *Romans*, 239. Dodd chooses "superintendent." Dodd, *Romans*, 194.

[666] Barrett, *Romans*, 239.

[667] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 648.

ing appear to be the meaning intended by Paul.[668] Moo translates ὁ προϊστάμενος as the "one who presides," and asks, "presides over what?"[669] He then acknowledges that Paul does not answer this question.[670] Jewett attributes an "allusive style" to Paul's list of χαρίσματα.[671] He commends Paul for choosing ὁ προϊστάμενος to refer to "the head of the congregation," adding that even though ὁ προϊστάμενος may be a "bland expression," it is to be preferred over "technical terms like 'bishop' or 'elder.'"[672] For Sanday and Headlam, ὁ προϊστάμενος refers to "ecclesiastical officials," or to "a man ruling his family."[673] Based upon these glosses, the foregoing authors assert that ὁ προϊστάμενος "need not be any further defined."[674]

The scholars that I have surveyed default to glosses regarding ὁ προϊστάμενος that would more appropriately apply to an established organization than to the mid first-century Jesus-group that Paul addressed. Some of these conclusions, such as the suggestion that ὁ προϊστάμενος might best be understood as "the president," tilt towards anachronism.

3.2. Ὁ προϊστάμενος: 'the one who helps,' or 'the one who gives aid'

Other commentators, much in the same vein that appears in the lexicons BDAG and Louw and Nida, choose to gloss ὁ προϊστάμενος in terms of 'helping' and 'aiding.' For example, Dunn translates ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ as "he who cares with zest."[675] He rejects the idea of presiding, not because it may be anachronistic, but because "it would be surprising if a regular leadership function were placed so far down the list."[676] Dunn thus chooses the following possibilities: "concerned about, care for, give aid . . . 'protect.'"[677] He notes as a "fact" that προϊστάμενος is set between

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[668] Ibid.

[669] Moo, *Romans*, 768.

[670] Ibid. Moo concludes that the participle is probably the "ministry" of the "leaders of the local church" that is "usually associated with the elders/overseers" (769).

[671] Jewett, *Romans*, 752.

[672] Ibid. Käsemann opines that ὁ προϊστάμενος is called to "a thankless task," so in need of σπουδή or "total dedication . . ." Käsemann, *Romans*, 342.

[673] Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 358. The authors cite 1 Thess 5:12, 1 Tim 5:17 and 1 Tim 3:4-5, 12.

[674] Ibid.

[675] Dunn, *Romans*, 731.

[676] Ibid.

[677] Ibid.

"two forms of aid giving (μεταδιδοὺς and ἐλεῶν),"[678] and so would "most naturally be read as denoting one of a sequence of three kinds of 'welfare service.'"[679] Cranfield also finds it "more likely" that ὁ προϊστάμενος is "the administrator of the charitable work of the congregation" due to its proximity with ὁ μεταδιδούς and ὁ ἐλεῶν.[680] Dunn imagines that ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8 refers to a wealthy member of the congregation with a high social status.[681] He then puts forth Phoebe as a fitting example of a person who might act as a "champion" on behalf of those in the congregation who need material and financial aid.[682] Keck appears to consider Paul's identification of Phoebe as a προστάτις in Rom 16:2.[683] Keck defines προστάτις in terms of patronage.[684] His conclusion is that "the leader" of Rom 12:8 may be a "person who functions as a patron looking after the well-being of the community. . . ."[685]

3.3. Ὁ προϊστάμενος and προστάτις

The idea of patronage edges into the discussions of commentators as to ὁ προϊστάμενος and its use in Rom 12:8. This comes about because of Phoebe, whom some scholars believe Paul presents as a "patroness" in Rom 16:2.[686] However, E. D. MacGillivray convincingly argues that the gloss "pat-

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[678] In my chapters on these three gifts, I present evidence that contradicts this assertion.

[679] Dunn, *Romans*, 731. See also Wilckens, *Römer*, 15. Morris thinks that "he who gives aid" is "surely the wrong sense," and feels it is "better to let it remain general, 'he who leads.'" Morris, *Romans*, 442.

[680] Cranfield, *Romans*, 626. Cranfield muses, along with Leenhardt, that these last three gifts are related. The first, ὁ μεταδιδούς, provides the group with the wealth; ὁ προϊστάμενος or "administrator," organizes it; and ὁ ἐλεῶν distributes the funds to help others in need. See also Leenhardt, *Romans*; Lagrange, *Romains*. Alternatively, Jewett views the list of gifts in Rom 12:6–8 as a "random series" and asserts that the "neighboring gifts" should not be defined by each other. Jewett, *Romans*, 753, n. 204.

[681] Dunn, *Romans*, 731.

[682] Ibid. I return to the possibility of Phoebe as "champion" in section 2.3 of this chapter. We will see that the assertion that such championing should be relegated to giving financial aid does not align with the ancient usages of προΐστημι and its cognates. Dunn provides no rationale for his translation of "champion."

[683] Keck, *Romans*, 301.

[684] Ibid.

[685] Ibid. I revisit "patroness" as a gloss for προστάτις in the following section. There is no scholarly consensus regarding this translation.

[686] Jewett, *Romans*, 941-48. For Jewett, such a translation benefits his claim that Paul's intention in writing the letter to the Romans is to gain their support (financial and otherwise) for his mission to Spain. As such, Jewett envisions that Phoebe, as Paul's patroness, might persuade others in Rome to contribute financially to Paul's mission. See also Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 731.

ron" is too narrow for the semantic range of both προστάτις and προστάτης.[687] Instead, he finds that patron-client relations should be viewed as a "subset" of the broader ideas of reciprocity in the ancient Meditteranean world.[688] MacGillivray reminds the reader that patron-client relations entailed specific legal and social requirements in ancient societies, and that such entanglements of obligation were perhaps at odds with the message of equality and unity that Paul seems to want to convey to the Christ-following community.[689] MacGillivray thus rejects the translation of "patroness" for προστάτις in Rom 16:2.[690]

In Rom 16:2, Paul depicts Phoebe as having been a προστάτις with respect to him. This causes scholars to struggle with translations that might construe Phoebe as occupying a leadership role more elevated than that of Paul.[691] Hence the commentators appear to reduce the authority which might otherwise have been conveyed by the word προστάτις, which is simply the feminine noun form of προΐστημι. Translations of patroness,[692] benefactor,[693] "ein Beistand" [a help],[694] and protectress[695] are perhaps offered because of this aversion. Fitzmyer proposes that προστάτις "may be related" to ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8.[696] He glosses ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8 in terms of leadership, presiding, and ruling. Yet in his consideration of Phoebe as a προστάτις in Rom 16:2, we can

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[687] Erlend D. MacGillivray, "Romans 16:2, Προστάτις/Προστάτης, and the Application of Reciprocal Relationships to New Testament Texts," *Novum Testamentum* 53 (2011), 183-99.

[688] MacGillivray, "Romans 16:2," 186-187, esp. n. 12. MacGillivray also remarks upon the limitations of the modern English term "patronage" which for him has a "wide semantic field" that is "used to describe almost any distribution of wealth or support to individuals or groups." Conversely, the "classical patronage relationship was an altogether narrower, formalized relationship" that emphasized the social and material obligations between the persons involved. See MacGillivray, "Romans 16:2," 188.

[689] MacGillivray notes that the nature of patronage creates an "asymmetrical" relationship that is "intrinsically" hierarchical and even "exploitative," while προστάτις and προστάτης "held contrasting connotations of altruism and beneficence" (193-94).

[690] In the end, MacGillivray renders προστάτις as "benefactor" (199).

[691] Notably, Moo translates ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8 in terms of leadership. Yet when he arrives at Paul's reference to Phoebe in Rom 16:2, he expresses concern over translating προστάτις as "leader." He reasons that it would be "difficult to conceive how Phoebe would have had the opportunity to be a 'leader' of Paul" (Moo, *Romans* 916).

[692] Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 417-18.

[693] Moo, *Romans*, 915-16.

[694] Wilckens, *Römer*, 131.

[695] Barrett, *Romans*, 283.

[696] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 731.

see that the status of this word is reduced because Fitzmyer deems Phoebe as a "patroness."[697] Fitzmyer speculates about the kind of assistance Phoebe might have given as a patroness to the group in Cenchrea. This may have included hospitality, the championing of causes before secular authorities, and the furnishing of funds for journeys.[698] As to Paul's remark that Phoebe was a προστάτις on his own behalf in Rom 16:2, Fitzmyer falls prey to an unecessary gender stereotype when he offers that Phoebe "perhaps played hostess" to Paul during his time in Corinth.[699]

Ultimately, patronage concepts may not help us understand either Phoebe's role or what is meant by ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8. There is both a lack of linguistic support for the application of this concept and a tendency to fall into the trap of self-contradiction. Applying the realities of the patronage system within the Greco-Roman world as a solution for how we should view ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8 and Phoebe's role as προστάτις does not solve the conundrum that we have seen in the analysis of the commentators. This problem is apparent by the translations of these scholars that toggle back and forth between whether ὁ προϊστάμενος/προστάτις means leadership or helping. In other words, it must mean one or the other.[700] Moreover, the notion of helping, which appears to have been introduced because of Phoebe and her role as a προστάτις, is not supported by the uses given in LSJ. It also conflicts with the ancient data that I next consider.

The section that follows revisits the discussion as to meanings for προΐστημι and its cognates

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[697] Ibid.

[698] Ibid.

[699] Ibid.

[700] The same debate occurs in commentaries on 1 Thess 5:12. Here, Paul employs ὁ προϊστάμενος, the same participial form that he uses in Rom 12:8. In both 1 Thess 5:12 and Rom 12:8 προϊστάμενος is the middle participle in a trio of participles. Commentators who treat the Thessalonian correspondence apply their findings to Paul's use of ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8. Fee argues that both instances mean caring for others. Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 205. Marshall also chooses "the showing of concern and care" as a "probable" meaning for Rom 12:8. I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* [*A Commentary*] (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1883), 148. Weima opts for "the one who gives aid." Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 384. While Wanamaker prefers to gloss προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8 as "the one who cares for others," he translates the same term in 1 Thess 5:12 as "patron." Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1990), 192. Richard brings Paul's reference to Phoebe into his argument. He worries that viewing her as a "leader" might put her in competition with Paul's own leadership role. According to Richard, προϊστάμενος should be translated as "benefactor" and not "leader" in both 1 Thess 5:12 and Rom 12:8. Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 268. From these examples, we can see that debate and confusion continue as to how to translate ὁ προϊστάμενος in either passage.

with special attention to instances pertaining to divine-human relations that appear in ancient literature. In so doing, I will offer a glossary of terms from which we may draw definitions and meaning as to ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8.[701] I assess the relevant data in three categories wherein προΐστημι and its cognates may describe championing, divine protection, and presiding over cultic rites.

4. A CONSIDERATION OF ΠΡΟΪΣΤΗΜΙ IN LIGHT OF ANCIENT GRECO-ROMAN USAGE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DIVINE-HUMAN RELATIONS

The uses of προΐστημι in the ancient literature that I address in this section reveal several broad categories. These are championing, protecting, and presiding. With LSJ's basic definition of προΐστημι, as meaning "to set before," we will see that προΐστημι and its cognates may involve a person taking up a political, philosophical, or personal cause on behalf of someone else. In these instances, he or she becomes a champion of such causes or people. A god or person could also be set before others as a protector. Persons may also preside over religious matters and personnel.

4.1. Προΐστημι and its cognates as descriptive of championing

In the ancient literature, we find a variety of causes and people that require a champion. Military leaders such as Deinocrates drew many supporters by proclaiming himself a "champion of the common liberty" [προστάτην αὑτὸν ἀναδείξας τῆς κοινῆς ἐλευθερίας].[702] Eumenes "championed the kings" [προστῆναι τῶν βασιλέων] who had formerly been his enemies in battle."[703] There is one instance of a pretended champion. Agathocles swore at the shrine of Demeter that he would be "a supporter" [προΐστασθαι] of democracy, but his pledge proved to be false.[704]

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[701] As for the accompanying idea ἐν σπουδῇ, Jewett determines that it "correlates with a leadership role in an administrative sense" (Jewett, 753). This leads him to choose "diligence" for his translation (753). Other translations include "eagerness," "devotion," and "conscientiousness" (Keck, *Romans* 301). Other possibilities include "with diligence," "with zeal" (Cranfield, *Romans,* 627), and "zest" (Dunn, *Romans 9–16,* 731). This word appears again in Rom 12:11: "do not lag in zeal" [τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί].

[702] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 20.57 [1].

[703] *Bibliotheca Historica* 18.53 [7].

[704] *Bibliotheca Historica* 19.5 [5].

Skillful debaters were "put forward" [προστησάμενοι] to champion causes.[705] The renowned orator Demosthenes was moved "to take up the cause" [παρώξυνε προστῆναι] of the city of Hellas.[706] Plutarch tells of "advocates" [προϊσταμένοις] who take on a particular side in an argument.[707] One might also "champion" [προϊστάμενος] the claims made in a friendship,[708] while others could act as "champions of justice" [τοῦ δικαίου προϊσταμένους].[709] Strabo criticises Arstarchus because he "champions a false doctrine" [ψευδοῦς προΐσταται δόγματος].[710]

Broadly speaking, Greco-Roman usages of προΐστημι and its cognates may convey a sense of championing. Individuals may champion persons, causes, or a particular set of beliefs.

4.2. Προΐστημι and its cognates as descriptive of divine protection

Προΐστημι and its cognates also convey the protection provided by a deity or supernatural force. Dio states that the goddess Artemis is the "protectress of the child-bed [τὰς προεστώσας ἀνθρωπίνης γενέσεως]."[711] Epictetus tells us that god watches over and protects [προϊστάμενον] like a father.[712] Cornutus explains that the cosmos may be considered a "'Good Daimon,'" who is a "defender and preserver of household matters [προστάτης δὲ καὶ σωτὴρ τῶν οἰκείων ἐστὶ τῷ σώζειν καλῶς τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον]."[713] Plutarch similarly finds a domestic theme when he explains why the household gods are called "πραιστίτεις" [Lares] and why they resemble guard dogs:

> Is it because "those that stand before" are termed praestites, and, also because it is fitting that those who stand before a house should be its guardians, terrifying to strangers, but gentle and mild to the inmates, even as a dog is?

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[705] Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* 14.324. See also *De bello Judaico libri vii* 1.243.

[706] Diodorus Siculus *Library* 16.54 [2].

[707] Plutarch *De communibus notitiis adversus Stoicos* 40.

[708] Josephus, *De bello Judaico libri vii* 1.391.

[709] Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 5.234.

[710] Strabo, *Geography* 1.2 [25].

[711] Dio Chrysostom, Orationes 7.135-6. In this seventh discourse, Dio, using προΐστημι, also condemns brothel-keepers who expose [προϊστάντας] women and children captured in battle into forced prostitution.

[712] Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.24 [3].

[713] Cornutus, 27 [51].

[Ἡ πραιστίτεις μὲν οἱ προεστῶτές εἰσι, τοὺς δὲ προεστῶτας οἴκου φυλακτικοὺς εἶναι προσήκει, καὶ φοβεροὺς μὲν τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις, ὥσπερ ὁ κύων ἐστίν, ἠπίους δὲ καὶ πράους τοῖς συνοικοῦσιν][714]

These instances show that προΐστημι and its cognates may describe divine protection over domestic life, including the households and families within it.

4.3. Προΐστημι and its cognates as descriptive of presiding over cultic rites and the individuals associated with them

Writers of ancient literature also use προΐστημι and its cognates to characterize those who preside over and perform various cultic activities. In *Geography*, Strabo details many religious rites and beliefs of different cultures throughout the Meditteranean world. He notes that in Iberia, a priest "had charge of the sacred land" [προεστὼς τῆς ἱερᾶς χώρας] and "the temple slaves" [καὶ τῶν ἱεροδούλων].[715] In Crete, ministers of Dionysus, which were called "Curetes" [Κουρῆτας], would "set forth the mythical story of the birth of Zeus" [προστησάμενοι μῦθον τὸν περὶ τῆς τοῦ Διὸς γενέσεως] with movements and dancing in "orgiastic worship" [ὀργιασμούς].[716] Plutarch also uses προΐστημι to describe those who "preside over auguries" [οἱ προϊστάμενοι τῶν οἰωνῶν].[717] Diodorus Siculus notes that Musaeus, the son of Orpheus, was once "in charge of the initiatory rites" [προεστηκότος τῆς τελετῆς] for the Eleusinian Mysteries in Athens.[718] There were also "the overseers of the oracle" [οἱ τοῦ μαντείου προεστῶτες] who were in charge of protecting the famous one located at Delphi.[719]

Authors also use forms of προΐστημι to describe divine roles and responsibilities in presiding over human matters. Dio muses upon the human conception of the divine being who is "in charge"

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[714] Plutarch *Questiones Romanae* 51. Elevated over the lares in the home, and situated in Rome in front of the temple at the head of the Via Sacra, were the Lares Praestites, "Lares of the home writ large." James B. Tschen-Emmons, *Artifacts From Ancient Rome: Daily Life From Ancient Rome Illustrated* (*Daily Life Through Artifacts*) (Santa Barbera, CA: Greenwood Press, 2014), 217-18. Pliny the Elder also mentions this "Temple of the Household Deities" in Rome (see *Naturalis Historia* 2.16).

[715] Strabo, *Geography* 11.4 [7]. In Rhodesia there are those who "were in charge" [προεστώτων] of the sacred precinct which contained votive offerings (14.2 [5]).

[716] *Geography* 10.3 [11]. Additionally, Strabo admires a woman, Pythodoris, who is wise and qualified "to preside over [προΐστασθαι] affairs of state" in Lesser Armenia. Strabo chooses προΐστασθαι, an infinitive and therefore non-gendered form (*Geography* 12.3 [28]).

[717] Plutarch *Questiones Romanae* 78.

[718] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 4.25 [1].

[719] *Bibliotheca Historica* 14.13 [7].

[προεστῶτος] of the whole spectacle of the cosmos.[720] Strabo recounts the Platonic tradition that "the Muses presided over the choruses, whereas Apollo presides both over these and the rites of divination" [αἱ μὲν τῶν χορῶν προεστᾶσιν, ὁ δὲ καὶ τούτων καὶ τῶν κατὰ μαντικήν].[721] Cornutus teaches that both Athena and Zeus are guardians as well as overseers of cities:

> καὶ πόλεως γὰρ καὶ οἴκου καὶ τοῦ βίου παντὸς προστάτιν ποιητέον τὴν φρόνησιν· ἀφ' οὗ δὴ καὶ ἐρυσίπτολις καὶ πολιὰς ὠνόμασται, καθάπερ ὁ Ζεὺς πολιεύς· ἐπίσκοποι γὰρ ἀμφότεροι τῶν πόλεων.
>
> for intelligence should be made the guard of the city and home and the whole life. For this reason she [Athena] is called Defender of the City and, like Zeus, Guardian of the City: both are overseers of cities.[722]

The examples from the Greco-Roman literary sources set forth above show that in situations depicting divine-human relations, προΐστημι may denote championing, protecting, and presiding in both human and deified figures. There is a communicative aspect at work regarding ὁ προϊστάμενος because the championing of a cause may strongly suggest verbal advocacy.

5. A PROPOSED TRANSLATION OF Ὁ ΠΡΟΪΣΤΆΜΕΝΟΣ ἘΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΗ̂Ι IN ROM 12:8

I now apply the information that I have discussed as to the usage of ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ that appears in Rom 12:8. This survey offers up three broad categories for the translation of ὁ προϊστάμενος: (1) the one who champions; (2) the one who guards or protects; and (3) the one who presides. I find the notion of championing to be the most helpful concept for translating ὁ προϊστάμενος in Rom 12:8, even though the ancient examples I have provided do not use the word in this way to refer to divine-human relations. The sense of προΐστημι that is used to describe championing causes and beliefs is attractive because of its focus on the mission to share the gospel. The other senses of guarding and presiding may apply to the Christ-followers as well. The advantage of choosing "the one who champions" takes into account both the glossary of terms that I have compiled from the ancient literature surveyed, and also Paul's reference to the role of Phoebe

[720] Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 12.34.

[721] Strabo, *Geography* 10.3 [10].

[722] Cornutus, 20 [37-38]. It is Athena's intelligence [τὴν φρόνησιν] that causes her to be a good προστάτις. Perhaps the criterion of intelligence applies to Paul's presentation of Phoebe as a προστάτις in Rom 16:2.

as a προστάτις.[723] There would be no cultural issue in terms of gender, if we take this option. Thus, I propose that we translate ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ as "the one who champions with zeal as required."

Because instances of προΐστημι and its various forms within the Greco-Roman literature reflect its common usage, Paul's identification of the gift ὁ προϊστάμενος may have permitted his audience to perceive themselves as being entrusted with persons and causes which they could champion. Paul's audience may thus champion others, or, perhaps more crucially, they may champion the cause of Christ. The ancient data attests to this understanding for προΐστημι because, as we have seen, this word can refer to the championing of persons, causes, or even a particular set of beliefs. Because Paul has presented himself as a zealous proponent of the gospel, this view is also consistent with how he has displayed himself to his audience in his letter to them.[724]

My preference for this translation is not meant to exclude or downplay other potential applications that may also be taken from the ancient evidence. We have seen that forms of προΐστημι were used in reference to the household *lares*. These figures were believed to guard and protect each family as well as the entire city of Rome. It is not hard to imagine that protectors and guardians would be needed in the early Christ-following community, especially when we consider the dangers that they faced. Ὁ προϊστάμενος could thus have presided over the rites that we assume occurred during the meetings that the Christ-followers attended. Individuals within this group were needed to supervise the personnel and materials involved in common meals and to preside over the rituals associated with baptisms. Whether it concerns championing, guarding, protecting, or presiding, all of this activity is to be done ἐν σπουδῇ, or with enthusiasm, eagerness, diligence, zeal, devotion, and earnestness. Thus the term ὁ προϊστάμενος, a so-called "bland description" for leader-

[723] A survey of Bible translations shows that in Rom 16:2, Phoebe's role as προστάτις has been translated as "helper" (ASV; NASB; NLT; RSV), "patron" (ESV), "patroness" (OJB; TLV), "succourer" (KJV), and "benefactor" (NIV; NRSV). There are three examples where προστάτις in this verse is translated as "leader" in Young's Literal Translation (YLT), the Contemporary English Version (CEV 1995), and The Passion Translation (TPT). The TPT states that Paul calls Phoebe "a great leader and champion for many . . . even me!"

[724] Paul does not define his own role in terms of προΐστημι or call himself by the term προστάτης. This does not mean, however, that he was not a champion of the gospel. In the first words of his letter, Paul self-defines as a servant [δοῦλος] of Jesus Christ who is called to be an apostle [ἀπόστολος] for the gospel of God. Throughout his Roman missive, he continues to mention his allegiance to the gospel and his call to proclaim it in Rom 1:9, 16; 2:16; 10:16; 11:28; 15:16, 19; and 16:25).

ship according to Jewett, could have been heard by Paul's first-century gentile audience as dynamic, multi-faceted, and attractive.

6. CONCLUSION

Προΐστημι and its cognates were words that already carried cultic currency for Paul's gentile audience. The commentators reviewed in this chapter have largely ignored the Greco-Roman sources that illustrate this point. There was enough information within the experiences of this gentile audience for them to have recognized what Paul may have meant by ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ and how this gift might be applied in the new circumstances of their Christ-following community. As to the question of Phoebe and her role with respect to the church in Cenchrae and to Paul himself, we would do well to remember that she was likely a former pagan worshiper.[725] She could therefore have been able to explain her role as προστάτις and what it might have in common with the gift ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ in Rom 12:8.

When Paul identifies the gift ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ, it is reasonable to say that his Roman audience could begin to see themselves as champions of the gospel who are to act within the sphere of this calling from God. Cultivating champions within the early Christ-following group in Rome who would further the cause of the gospel would be a significant motivation for Paul. Here again we see a possible missional goal on the part of Paul that is furthered in the seven χαρίσματα that he lists in Rom 12:6–8. How such champions might comport themselves by exhibiting the qualities of mercy is the subject of the next gift that Paul lists.

[725] Fitzmyer notes this probability. Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 729.

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter initially presents an overview taken from selected commentaries. I then examine ἔλεος-language in pertinent Greco-Roman literature and conclude by comparing the data I have gathered with Paul's ἔλεος-language in his Roman letter.

As before, I have stressed instances of ἔλεος-language within sources that reference divine-human relations. This data shows that ἔλεος was a deified virtue throughout the imperial period, one that Roman emperors attempted to appropriate along with its attendant divine qualities. Yet the rulers who aligned themselves with mercy were often inconsistent in displaying it. This contrasts with the God that Paul presents in his Roman letter, who is described as consistently merciful. He then offers it to the Christ-followers as a quality which they themselves can adopt.

2. THE LEXICAL MEANING OF Ὁ ἘΛΕΩ̂Ν

Ὁ ἐλεῶν is the present active participle from the verb ἐλεάω.[726] Ἐλεάω is a later form of ἐλεέω which means *to have pity on, show mercy to.*[727] Both verb-forms fall under the noun ἔλεος:

(1) *pity, mercy, compasssion;*

(2) personified, worshiped at Athens;

(3) *object of compassion, piteous thing*.[728]

I discuss all of these cognates in this chapter, including the noun ἐλεημοσύνη:

(1) *pity, mercy*;

(2) *charity, alms.*[729]

I will hereafter refer to this grouping as ἔλεος-language. The accompanying word in Paul's

[726] LSJ, ἐλεάω, later form of ἐλεέω, 530.

[727] LSJ, ἐλε-έω, 531.

[728] LSJ, ἔλεος, ὁ, 532.

[729] LSJ, ἐλε-ημοσύνη, ἡ, 531.

phrase, ἱλαρότης, is typically translated as "cheerfulness" or "gaiety."[730]

3. ROME 12:8: "THE COMPASSIONATE, IN CHEERFULNESS" (NRSV) AS DISCUSSED IN SELECTED COMMENTARIES

Practical questions as to who ought to exhibit and receive the gift of mercy and the attitude with which it should be displayed animate the discussions of commentators as to Paul's meaning in Rom 12:8. In terms of source material, scholars tend to turn to Judaism in an attempt to explicate this gift. This arises from the fact that ἔλεος-language is prominent within Jewish literature to denote the mercy of Yahweh.

Commentators disagree about how we should refer to the "one who shows mercy." Some have opined that ὁ ἐλεῶν may denote a "Christian social worker" or a "Good Samaritan."[731] Perhaps Paul means to denote those who are compassionate,[732] or a person with a special "function" that involves care.[733] These "men and women" were to perform deeds of mercy and acts of kindness in the "church."[734] Thus, we see a range of possible answers to the question of how we might characterize ὁ ἐλεῶν.

The recipients of merciful acts may be "the sick, the suffering, the indigent, and the like;"[735] they may also be the elderly and disabled.[736] Keck tells us more generally that ὁ ἐλεῶν "helps those in distress."[737] Longenecker envisions "providing for the poor, caring for the unemployed, burying

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[730] LSJ, ἱλᾰ́ρότης, 828.

[731] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 649.

[732] Keck, *Romans*, 301.

[733] Cranfield, *Romans*, 627. In his commentary, Cranfield is keen to view the seven χαρίσματα in Romans as early evidence of ministries that would eventually emerge in the early Christian community. This is a questionable approach because it forecasts developments that better pertain to a larger and more organized church. For example, acts of mercy later became attached to notions of Christian piety which would have been anachronistic for the Christ-following groups of Paul's day. That said, the reception of the gifts Paul lists, viewed in light of the teachings of the early church that begin with 1 Peter 4:10–11, the *Didache*, and 1 Clement, would constitute a possible future project. This endeavor might also include 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

[734] Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 358. This is the only χάρισμα for which the authors explicitly include women.

[735] Morris, *Romans*, 442.

[736] Moo, *Romans*, 769.

[737] Keck, *Romans*, 301.

the dead, and supplying what is needed for disabled, incapacitated, and imprisoned persons."[738] Jewett thinks ἔλεος should be extended both inside and outside of the "church."[739]

In dealing with the accompanying words ἐν ἱλαρότητι, many commentators think Paul is primarily interested in exposing underlying *attitudes*, both positive and negative, as to ὁ ἐλεῶν. Barrett, for example, believes the message conveyed by the phrase ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἱλαρότητι is that the "Christian" should view being merciful not as a duty, but as a delight.[740] Fitzmyer claims that the "spirit in which the acts are to be done is as important as the acts themselves."[741] Cranfield argues that suitable candidates should have a "particularly cheerful and agreeable disposition."[742] Morris suggests that merciful acts should not be done with "grim determination," but "cheerfully," and in a manner "radiant with joy."[743] Wilkens envisions a happy [fröhlich] attitude.[744] Moo advises that the one showing mercy should be "especially careful" to "avoid a grudging or downcast attitude."[745]

Jewett turns to Judaism in his examination of ὁ ἐλεῶν in Rom 12:8 and surmises that Paul has evoked familiar Jewish tenets such as "human kindness and pity."[746] These qualities are then to be shown to persons "in physical pain or deprivation, whether within one's family or with enemy groups."[747] Wilkens concurs that Judaism informs Paul's discussion, and confirms that the activities referenced by ὁ ἐλεῶν are likely to have been "das Almosengeben" [almsgiving].[748] Dunn agrees and claims that ὁ ἐλεῶν may evoke "welfare ministry" that is busy with "acts of mercy in general" or "almsgiving in particular."[749] Dunn's conclusion is bolstered by "the fact" that giving "cheerfully" is,

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[738] Longenecker, *Romans*, 929.

[739] Jewett, *Romans*, 753.

[740] Barrett, *Romans*, 239.

[741] Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*, 649.

[742] Cranfield, *Romans*, 627.

[743] Morris, *Romans*, 442-43.

[744] Wilckens, *Römer*, 16.

[745] Moo, *Romans*, 769.

[746] Jewett, *Romans*, 753.

[747] Ibid.

[748] Wilckens, *Römer*, 15-16.

[749] Dunn, *Romans*, 731-32. Dunn has concluded that Paul's instruction in Rom 12:8 refers to almsgiving by way of two related words: ἐλεημοσύνη and ἐλεημοποιός. Both are given in LSJ under ἐλεέω: ἐλε-ημοποιός, όν, "giving alms," 531, and ἐλεημοσύνη, ἡ, "pity, mercy," 531.

for him at least, a fairly common theme in Jewish piety."[750]

An analytical weakness of the commentators who believe that the Jewish notion of almsgiving informs ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἱλαρότητι is their assumption that the gentiles of Paul's audience would have viewed this activity as virtuous. These writers also presume that gentiles would attribute a religious motivation to such financial outreach to the poor. These are questionable assumptions. As seen in the scholarship of Van der Horst[751] and Parkin,[752] ancient Greco-Roman societal norms as to these subjects differed from Jewish ones. Van der Horst states that ἐλεημοσύνη, the word under discussion in Dunn's commentatry above, did convey a sense of almsgiving in the ancient world, but only within Jewish and later Christian idioms.[753] Conversely, in Greco-Roman usage, ἐλεημοσύνη "never has the poor as its primary object."[754] Instead, honor is the "driving motive behind most of Greek beneficence."[755] These factors lead Van der Horst to conclude that giving alms "could not be seen as a virtue" within first-century Roman society due to the ubiquitous Greco-Roman "principle of reciprocity."[756] The poor, in other words, could not reciprocate by returning the favors that might be bestowed upon them.[757]

Also pertinent here is Parkin's analysis exploring whether religious motivations could underlie what she calls *pagan* almsgiving in the ancient Roman world.[758] Parkin notes that while mercy [*clementia*] might motivate a person to give to a beggar, it would be an error to say that doing so necessarily reflected a religious motivation.[759] The pity felt for the underprivileged was an emotion

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[750] Dunn, 732. See also Barrett, *Romans*; Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans*.

[751] Peter van der Horst, "Organized Charity in the Ancient World: Pagan, Jewish, Christian," in *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World* (*Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*), ed. Yair Furstenberg (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 2016), 116-33.

[752] Anneliese Parkin, "'You Do Him No Service': An Exploration of Pagan Almsgiving," in *Poverty in the Roman World*, ed. Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 60-82.

[753] Van der Horst deduces that "organized charity" which he maintains was "unknown in Graeco-Roman culture," was "created by the Jews and expanded by the Christians." Horst, "Organized Charity," 132-33.

[754] Ibid., 117. Van der Horst states here that "one looks in vain in Greek and Roman literature" for "exhortations to give alms to the poor."

[755] Ibid.

[756] Van der Horst, 118.

[757] Van der Horst, 119.

[758] Parkin, "'You Do Him No Service'," 64.

[759] Ibid.

aligned with "an ancient awareness of the fickleness of fate."[760] Parkin thus concludes that within a Greco-Roman context, mercy has more to do with "an empathic response in view of an uncertain future"[761] than with an expression of religious piety.

The scholarly accounts of both Van der Horst and Parkin regarding Greco-Roman perceptions of almsgiving suggest that the views commonly held were distinct from those of Judaism. It therefore seems unlikely that Paul's gentile audience would readily relegate the notion of showing mercy to monetary assistance to the poor unless signalled to do so by Paul.

Because of their focus on Judaic roots as to ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἱλαρότητι, none of the commentators that I have surveyed derive information from Greco-Roman sources. However, we should acknowledge the possibility that first-century gentiles held views about the notion of mercy that differed from those within Judaism.[762] While almsgiving was likely not known in terms of religious piety outside of Judaism in the Greco-Roman world of Paul's day, ἔλεος did have associations with divine-human relations. Jews knew their God to be merciful. Gentiles however, would not have been assured of such certainty. Ἔλεος-language that refers to divine-human relations appears in literary texts and other material evidence. The usage of this language in such sources tells us that gentiles likely associated ἔλεος with suffering, disappointment, and helplessness. This gives us a context within which we can assess Paul's references to ἔλεος. It may also tell us something of how Paul's gentile audience may have perceived ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἱλαρότητι.

4. A CONSIDERATION OF ΄ΕΛΕΟΣ-LANGUAGE IN LIGHT OF ANCIENT GRECO-ROMAN SOURCES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DIVINE-HUMAN RELATIONS

Ancient literature contains several examples in which persons call upon a deity using ἔλεος-language. In their consideration of these examples, translators typically choose *mercy* or *pity* for

[760] Ibid.

[761] Ibid.

[762] Breytenbach would argue that Paul, in the Roman missive as a whole, has minimized his use of ἔλεος terminology and preferred the "χάρις-metaphor," which Breytenbach thinks would have been "more familiar to non Jews." Breytenbach, "'Charis' and 'Eleos'," 272. Unfortunately, Breytenbach does not include Rom 12:6–8 in his discussion. Paul uses both χάρις and ἔλεος terminology in these three verses. As I argue in the section that follows, there is evidence that Paul's audience *did* in fact understand ἔλεος-language and the concepts it evoked, but perhaps not from Judaism.

their glosses. Worshipers sought ἔλεος from various deities, including Zeus,[763] Vesta,[764] Serapis,[765] and Dionysus.[766] also represents a virtue for persons and gods that held within it the component of active compassion. The ideal of ἔλεος was deified and eventually became a divine attribute associated with various Roman emperors.

4.1. Ἔλεος-language and ideal virtues

Ἔλεος-language played a special role in the popular Greek tragedies of Aristophanes,[767] Euripides,[768] and Sophocles,[769] where it was used to heighten the drama of the story by evoking emotional responses from audiences.[770] Characters in such performances expected action from the god to whom they turned for mercy.[771] Classicist Lucia Prauscel comments that "[p]ity and the characters' response to it have always been recognized as one of the central themes of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*."[772] Prauscel compares the language of pity and compassion in this work by way of the words ἔλεος and οἶκτος.[773] She determines that the "feeling" of ἔλεος should be accompanied by "a willingness to act compassionately" on another's behalf.[774] Even though the semantics of ἔλεος and οἶκτος may overlap in Greco-Roman usage, (both are used to denote compassionate feelings) Prauscel finds that a distinctive aspect of ἔλεος is restorative action: "true *eleos* would require more than

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[763] Strabo, *Geography* 14.1 [4]; Homeric *Hymn 5 to Aphrodite* 5 210.

[764] Plutarch, *Parallela minora* 14.

[765] Xenophon, *Ephesiaca* 5.4 [7].

[766] Homeric *Hymn 7 to Dionysus* 53.

[767] Aristophanes, *Peace* 400. Here, Trygaeus pleads for ἔλεος from the god, Hermes.

[768] The title character calls upon Zeus for ἔλεος in *Orestes* 332-339. The chorus implores Zeus for ἔλεος in *Phoenissae* 1284-1295.

[769] Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 967.

[770] Parker states that the "characters of tragedy reject the mute and necessary stoicism of actual living and insist on the need for explanations. 'To think of the god's care for men is a great relief for me from pain. Deep within me I have hopes of understanding: but when I look around at what men do and how they fare I cannot understand,' sing the chorus in *Hippolytus* (11-2–6), in what could be a kind of motto for the whole of tragedy" ("Gods Cruel and Kind," 158).

[771] The chorus of Euripides' *Phoenissae* expects Zeus to show his compassion in practical ways (see 1284-1295).

[772] Lucia Prauscello, "The Language of Pity: Eleos and Oiktos in Sophocles' Philoctetes," *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 56 (2010), 199.

[773] LSJ, οἶκτος, ὁ, *pity, compassion*, 1206. Paul uses both ἔλεος and the verb form οἰκτίρω in Rom 9:15, his sole use of οἰκτίρω.

[774] Prauscello, "The Language of Pity," 205.

words."[775] In this way, the characters within Prauscel's representative example of a Greek tragedy evoke pity for the other characters within the play and also from the audience. This dynamic arguably creates an expectation that ἔλεος should be accompanied by action.

Writers of such theatrical works can be said to have contributed to societal norms, one of which is the notion of how ἔλεος might have been understood and practiced in the ancient world. This follows from the power that the literary device of narrative is capable of exerting on culture. Such cultural resonances should be considered when evaluating the original audience's reception of Paul's teaching.

4.2. The deification of ἔλεος

The virtue of ἔλεος was held up as an ideal in the ancient world, so much so that mercy became deified. Using ἔλεος-language, the historian Diodorus Siculus describes a famous altar that was attached to the deity Ἔλεος in Athens.[776] Supplicants who found themselves in unfortunate circumstances approached the Ἐλέου Βωμός in the hopes of being shown mercy [ἔλεος],[777] pity [ἔλεος],[778] and goodwill [ἔλεος].[779] In the *Thebaid*, written in the late first-century during Domitian's rule, Statius refers to this same Greek altar in Latin as *Ara Clementiae*. In this work, the altar of the goddess Clementia is depicted as a place where the helpless may go to solicit divine aid.[780] Writing

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[775] Ibid., 207.

[776] Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 13.23-27.

[777] *Library* 13.23 [1].

[778] *Library* 13.24 [2].

[779] *Library* 13.27 [2].

[780] Thus, Statius associates the altar of Ἔλεος in Athens with the Latin goddess Clementia (*Thebaid* 12.480ff). Statius aligns *clementia* with ἔλεος, a connection that contemporary scholars point out is evident elsewhere in ancient literature. For example, see James R. Harrison, "Augustan Rome and the Body of Christ: A Comparison of the Social Vision of the Res Gestae and Paul's Letter to the Romans," Harvard Theological Review 106, no. 01 (2013), 1-36; Emma Stafford, Worshipping Virtues: Personification and the Divine in Ancient Greece (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2000). Additionally, Wycherley states, "'O Eleos, thou are translated'" in regards to how "Greek Eleos can become Latin Clementia" (or Misericordia in Seneca). R. E. Wycherley, "The Altar of Eleos," *The Classical Quarterly* Vol. 4, n. 3/4 (1954), 148. It is plausible that Paul's addressees knew of the relationship between ἔλεος and *clementia.* This assertion brings up the issue of how much Latin Paul's Greek-speaking addressees in Rome knew. Rochett states that under the Empire, Greek and Latin are "two languages [that] coexist on a basis of complete equality . . ." Bruno Rochett, "Language Policies in the Roman Republic and Empire," in *A Companion to the Latin Language*, ed. James Clackson (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 288. The Emperor Claudius used the expression *utraque lingua* ("in either language"), according

a few decades later, the Roman historian Tacitus also notes that an *ara clementiae* existed in Rome.[781] In his *Annales*, Tacitus remarks upon an occasion of anxiety and political unrest when a version of this altar was erected during the reign of Tiberius.[782] Thus, both in Greece and the city of Rome, Ἔλεος/Clementia was known as the deific embodiment of mercy to whom ancient persons could turn in difficult circumstances.

4.3. Ἔλεος and the emperor

Historian J. Rufus Fears discusses the deification that was prevalent in the social and political life of Greece and Rome as to abstract ideas such as mercy.[783] The impact of this was significant, so much so that Fears deigns it a "religious phenomenon."[784] From the time of Ceasar Augustus and throughout the imperial period, ruling emperors typically aligned their reign with divine attributes such as mercy. During this period, deified virtues were central to the official imagery of each new principate.[785] A kind of partnership, such as it was, between emperor and deity began to emerge. In 45 BCE, a temple that depicted the goddess Clementia holding hands with Augustus was erected in Rome.[786] I have mentioned that during the principate of Tiberius, the Senate built an altar in Rome

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to Suetonius in *Claudius* 42.1. As for Paul's exposure to Latin, especially as it existed alongside the indigenous Greek language spoken in first-century Corinth, see Cavan W. Concannon, *"When You Were Gentiles": Specters of Ethnicity in Roman Corinth and Paul's Corinthian Correspondence* (London: Yale University Press, 2014), 69-73. Concannon sees "movement between the two languages, as the interaction of Greek and Latin created new grammatical structures or offered the possibility for sharing terminology" (69). In fact, Concannon points to inscriptional evidence that shows a "hybridization of Roman and Greek cultic practices in Corinth" (71). Since Paul spent a great deal of time in Corinth and was writing his Roman missive from there, he likely was aware that information could be expressed *utraque lingua*. Paul could have therefore imagined his Roman addressees following suit and perhaps making an association between ἔλεος and *clementia.* See Appendix 4.1 for an image of a statue of the goddess, Clementia.

[781] Tacitus, *Annales* 4.74. See also Wycherley, who insists that the Ἐλέου Βωμός [altar of mercy] became a source of comfort in the ancient world which eventually extended to all altars at which supplication was made. Wycherley, "The Altar of Eleos," 146.

[782] Tacitus, *Annales* 4.74.

[783] Fears, "The Cult of Virtues," 828. In using the term "abstract," Fears is careful to clarify that he does not mean that the deities themselves were abstractions within Roman cult life. Gods such as Pax, Fides, Victoria, and Fortuna were concrete and thus *pragmata* and *utilitates*.

[784] Fears, 828.

[785] Fears, 889. See Appendix 4.2 for a depiction of the "Clipeus virtutis" [the shield of power], which associates Augustus with the virtue *clementia*.

[786] Várhelyi finds the association between Caesar and Clementia significant for the history of what she deems "'forgive-

to Clementia at which sacrifices were made.[787] Coins were also minted that associated the reign of Tiberius with *clementia.*[788]

Although the association of Tiberius with mercy was widely made known to the public, this partnership does not appear to have lived up to its hype. Pliny the Elder came to believe that the cult of Virtues, of which mercy was a part, was sheer folly.[789] Such disappointment was shared by Tacitus, who saw imperial mercy as a negative symbol of imperial tyranny.[790] Tacitus remarks that the emperor Tiberius stubbornly held on to his ruthless [*inclementia*] methods even in the face of reproaches from the Senate.[791] The discussion of Tacitus regarding imperial *clementia* contains a "biting irony" that is pointed towards the emperor, who, though publicly aligned with mercy, acted

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ness territory,'" and goes on to say that "the divine worship connects *clementia* to the religious notion of an abstract quality associated with and sought in Caesar." Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, "'To Forgive is Divine:' Gods as Models of Forgiveness in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome," in *Ancient Forgiveness: Classical, Judaic, and Christian*, ed. Charles Griswold and David Konstan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 119-20. The association between *clementia* and ἔλεος is inexact. The primary sources listed above establish a relationship in two areas, that of a deity (Ἔλεος/Clementia), and that of a deified virtue (ἔλεος/*clementia*). It is possible, however, that with the introduction of a human element (e.g., the emperor), the notion of *clementia* became more associated with the pardoning of offenses, and less with feelings of pity due to suffering (see Seneca's "*De Clementiae*"). Such a shift may be due to the rise of Stoic philosophy in the imperial period. Várhelyi remarks that by the middle of the first century CE, "divine associations of clemency now mainly emerged in connection with imperial *clementia*, the almost superhuman capacity of a leader to resolve civil conflict. . . ." (Várhelyi, 131). Várhelyi notes that Seneca's work criticizes the emotional component of mercy, and that this may have led him to prefer *misericordia* in his references to it. Breytenbach extends this perception into his examination of Romans, and attributes to Paul an "affinity to Stoic mode of expressions" that he believes leads Paul to avoid the so-called "negative connotations" of ἔλεος-language in Greek Stoicism." Breytenbach, "'Charis' and 'Eleos'," 272. This leads Breytenbach to conclude that Paul favors "charis" throughout his Roman missive instead of ἔλεος. Because my focus is on contexts that reference divine-human relations, I cannot assess the influence of the philosophical school of Stoicism on Paul or his addressees. The evidence that I have provided shows that both Greek and Latin conceptions of ἔλεος/*clementia* in such contexts are portrayed in terms of mercy or pity felt for the suffering. Both words convey that this empathy should result in some sort of practical help towards those who suffer.

[787] Tacitus, *The Annals* 4.74. See also Fears, "The Cult of Virtues," 892.

[788] For an example, see Appendix 4.3 that shows one of a series of coins that associates Tiberius with the virtue of *clementia*. Later, during the reign of Gaius, a "yearly sacrifice to his *clementia* was also instituted" (Fears, 893). This trend continued into the reigns of Claudius and Nero. See the discussion in Fears, 889-924.

[789] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* 2.14.

[790] John F. Burgess, "Statius' Altar of Mercy," *The Classical Quarterly* 22, No. 2 (1972), 341. Tacitus himself states that his account, which includes a frank discussion of the ill deeds and degradation done to others by Tiberius, is meant to serve as a deterrent for future leaders (Tacitus, *Annals* 4.33).

[791] *Annals* 4.42.

in reality more like a despot.[792] Proudly displaying his "imperial prerogative" to pardon offenses, the so-called clemency of Tiberius was of but a "trivial nature."[793]

During the reign of Domitian, the writer Statius also voiced disenchantment with the way the emperor dispensed mercy.[794] Burgess argues that throughout books 1–11 of the *Thebaid*, Statius targets Domitian as tone-deaf to the actual needs of the people. In book 12, however, Statius introduces the goddess Clementia and her Athenian altar, arguably as a possible source for respite as to those suffering under Domitian. Supplicants approach the *Ara Clementiae* [Ἐλέου Βωμός], not for the pardoning of an offense due to human guilt, but because they suffer "at the hands of a power [they] cannot control" and need aid.[795] There was thus a kind of helplessness of the citizenry in the face of forces such as fate, the inconstancy of the gods, and political hypocrisy.[796] Contrast this with the approachability of Clementia/Ἔλεος that Statius describes: "no prayers did she condemn with a refusal; who so ask are heard."[797] Statius may thus illustrate what he believes is the proper ideal of a merciful emperor who shows *clementia*. He also advocates for a ruler who would adopt the kind of mercy that actively provides both pity and assistance for the oppressed and helpless who felt insignificant and frustrated by their inability to control their own destinies. We see in the examples of both Tacitus and Statius a tendency to critique political leaders because of their failure to act

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[792] Burgess, "Statius' Altar of Mercy," 340-42.

[793] Burgess, 340. Burgess allows that "especially in the poets," *clementia* could "also be used over a wider range to embrace situations not concerned with pardon for an offence, where only the idea of kindness or gentleness was present" (342-43).

[794] The analysis of this section of the *Thebaid* (Book 12) is put forth in Burgess, 343-49. Dowling observes that Statius and also the poet Martial, who wrote during the reign of Nerva (successor to Domitian), used the "same imagery of *clementia*" to undermine imperial clemency. Melissa Dowling, *Clemency and Cruelty in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 237-39. Most notably, in *Epigrams* XII 6.1–6, Martial, apropos of the apostle Paul, places *hilaris* (ἱλαρότης) alongside of *Clementia* (ἐλεάω) to describe, perhaps with a bit of irony, the Emperor Nerva: *"recta Fides, hilaris Clementia, cauta Postestas"* [upright Trust, cheerful Clemency, careful Power]. Dowling observes that pairing *hilaris* with *Clementia* would have been jarring to the ears of the reader (238). She further asserts that by referring to Cato, whose "response to Caesar's offer of clemency was to commit suicide," Martial "undercuts the picture of happiness" that he has painted by associating Nerva with *hilaris Clementia* (230; cf. *Epigrams* 1.8). Dowling notes that poets like Statius and Martial reveal the "shallowness of imperial and senatorial celebrations of the *clementia principis*," but that this "only strives to point out weakness in something that holds real power" (239).

[795] Burgess, 344 (cf. *Thebaid* 12.504-11).

[796] Burgess goes on to note that "these are the very forces to which Statius ascribes *inclementia*" (346).

[797] *Thebaid* 12.484-85.

mercifully.

Thus, the purported partnership between the virtue of mercy and the ruling emperor led to a perceived hypocrisy that ancient writers expressed regarding his failure to effectively dispense mercy to the people. These writings reflect a resignation that many Romans may have felt as to their prospects of receiving ἔλεος in difficult times. This disappointment provides a contextual backdrop with which we may now evaluate Paul's discussion of ἔλεος in his Roman missive.

5. ʾΕΛΕΟΣ-LANGUAGE IN ROMANS

Contrast the disillusionment of writers such as Tacitus and Statius with the the more positive tone that appears in the ἔλεος-language Paul uses in his Roman epistle.[798] Here, Paul presents ἔλεος as a proven attribute of God (9:15, 18). Moreover, Paul depicts a God who has shown mercy to Jews as well as to gentiles (9:23; 11:30–32; 15:9). Finally, as presented throughout Paul's epistle, God is not helpless in the face of difficulty, and he acts upon his promises of mercy as borne out powerfully in the life and work of his son, Jesus Christ. We may now ask how Paul might have meant for his Roman addressees to comport themselves with respect to the quality of mercy.

6. A PROPOSED TRANSLATION OF ʿΟ ʾΕΛΕΩΝ ʾΕΝ ʿΙΛΑΡʹΟΤΗΤΙ IN ROM 12:8

Paul precedes his list of χαρίσματα by clarifying for his audience that they are positionally "in Christ" and should therefore view themselves as his representatives in the way they live their lives (Rom 12:5). This speaks to the imperative of furthering Christ's earthly agenda. Indeed, the seven gifts can be seen as begracements that are meant to advance this goal. One aspect of this mission concerns the gift of mercy and the attitude with which it ought to be exercised. Whether it involves aiding the suffering, the helpless, or the unfortunate, mercy is to be displayed ἐν ἱλαρότητι,

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[798] I do not wish to enter the debate on whether Paul has a subversive anti-imperial theme in his writings. However, it is arguable that Paul's addressees could have made an unfavorable comparison between the ἔλεος of God as presented by Paul in his letter and the *clementia* promised by the emperor and the shortcomings of its application. This would have been feasible in light of the political atmosphere in which Paul's addressees lived. For practical guidelines pertaining to the study of Paul and Empire, see Christoph Heilig, *Hidden Criticism?: The Methodology and Plausibility of the Search for A Counter-Imperial Subtext in Paul* (*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe*) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

or with cheerfulness and joy.[799]

I propose that we translate ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἱλαρότητι in Rom 12:8 as "the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness and joy as required."

Is it reasonable for Paul to have expected for his audience to have adhered to his injunction to show mercy with cheerfulness? Through logic and experience, this group would have been aware that but for misfortune, there would be no need for ἔλεος. As the writer Statius relates, the altar of Mercy is "moist with tears" where Fortune has withdrawn.[800] However, Paul does not link ἐλεάω with tears in Rom 12:8, but rather pairs it with ἱλαρότης, which means cheer or joy. Perhaps Paul's gentile audience may have favorably viewed this pairing because their fickle and capricious gods have been replaced with a God who actively participates in their lives and is worthy of their belief. This new reality, coupled with the fact that grace and forgiveness are themselves acts of mercy, creates a legitimate basis for this virtue to be given with cheerfulness and joy.

7. CONCLUSION

In examining the ancient Greco-Roman usage of ἔλεος-language, I have considered a wide variety of conversation partners. The commentators that I have surveyed have not drawn from Greco-Roman sources. They thus have missed resonances that might well have been pertinent to Paul's first-century audience.

Within cultic contexts, ἔλεος-language was used to refer to pagan deities. This virtue was also held up as an imperial ideal. Emperors, however, often failed to genuinely demonstrate mercy. Paul's presentation of mercy as an attribute of God can thus be seen as an attempt to fill the interstices between the ostensible aspiration of Roman leaders to be merciful, and their failure to actually do so. Within this gap was a kind of helplessness that Paul's addressees might have felt, a help-

[799] Rom 12:8 is the only instance of ἱλαρότης in the Roman missive. An adjectival form, ἱλαρός, appears in 2 Cor 9:7. Paul's topic of discussion there is the offering he means to take to Jerusalem on behalf of the gentiles. Hoping to motivate the Corinthians to contribute, Paul offers the maxim, "for God loves a cheerful giver." There are only a few appearances in the Greco-Roman literature that relate the noun ἱλαρότης to religious contexts. Among these are Athenaeus (*The Deipnosophists* 5.19), Diodorus Siculus (*Library* 16.11; *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.17; 4.83 [6-7]), Cornutus (20 [15]), and Plutarch (*Caius Marcius Coriolanus* 24 [2-4] - 25 [1]). From these instances we may see that the ancients believed the gods were pleased when worshipers responded to their generosity with gaiety and cheer.

[800] Statius, *Thebaid* 12.490.

lessness that was sharpened by a sense that their lives were controlled by great and impersonable engines such as fate, the gods, and their rulers.

In his Roman missive, Paul has broadened the frame of reference for the Roman Christ-followers so that it now includes a God who is actively compassionate toward human suffering. The example of Christ's life further reflects such mercy. Paul's announcement of a deity that truly embodies this quality may be seen as an attempt to adjust his audience's former expectations about mercy. Moreover, for these members of the body in Christ, Paul presents an opportunity for mercy to be displayed in their group and beyond. This may be seen as another possible furtherance of Paul's missional objective, one that he could accomplish by appealing to his intended audience's familiar cultural experiences and traditions. Mercy practiced with joy reflects the source of this quality which is God and his son, Jesus Christ. As such, the merciful activities are acts of worship.

CONCLUSION

My conclusion begins with sharing a bit about how I became interested in this project. For the past thirty years, I have been keenly interested in the gifts that Paul lists in Rom 12:6–8. My approach before beginning work at New College was initially based on popular materials that were available about this subject. I later became more concerned with personality-based assessments that identify an individual's particular gift and supply information about it. My interest increased over the years and I thought myself to be an "expert" in teaching classes that applied this method.

I never could have predicted the direction in which my PhD studies at New College would take me as to my topic. As I look back now, it seems inevitable that in trying to amplify the meaning of the χαρίσματα listed in Rom 12:6–8 that I would seek to explore what the words Paul uses in this passage might have meant in the ancient world. Although my project comes from this basic viewpoint, I do not wish to disparage those who would pursue the materials that initially led me to learn more about the gifts given by God to Christians, nor have I renounced further interest in teaching classes that I have previously conducted at various churches and other locations. I do, however, mean to apply what I have learned as a result of the research I have taken up in this thesis.

A consistent part of my journey in exploring the χαρίσματα has been my sense that worship was central to an understanding of them, and I note here that I worked as a part of a worship team at a large church in Central Florida for approximately 18 years. Northland Church featured an outstanding music staff that put worship at the center of every service. This was accomplished through an "integrative" approach in which musical pieces and other elements were selected, arranged, and performed for the primary purpose of exploring aspects of a particular attribute of God. These attributes, such as holiness, faithfulness, and love, were derived from scripture that undergirded the central messages that our pastor, Dr. Joel Hunter, meant to convey at any given service.

My main goal in doing doctoral work at New College has been to put study of the subject of the χαρίσματα on a firm academic footing. The furtherance of Paul's missional objectives, the fulfil-

ment of the announcement of sanctioned worship practices that were critical to a group that was transitioning from a pagan past, and the provision of these practices that would help establish their identity, all contributed to the spread of the gospel. As such, they deserve far more serious reflection and treatment than the limited and often flawed approaches that I have detailed in the foregoing chapters. In making a case that the χαρίσματα are indeed worthy of more scholarly attention and commentary, it has also been my wish to encourage others to pursue their own study of a subject that I have found to be most rewarding.

1. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE PURPOSES AND VALIDATION OF THE METHOD OF THIS THESIS

I began this thesis on the χαρίσματα that appear in Rom 12:6–8 by flagging up two main issues: (1) the lack of information that Paul supplies to us about them in Rom 12:6–8, and why this has caused scholars to either consider resources beyond Paul's text, or give it less attention than it deserves; (2) the underestimation of the importance of the religious background of Paul's audience of gentiles on their reception of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. My response to these challenges has been to focus in on the text of Rom 12:6–8 within its context and the uses of its language in the ancient Greco-Roman world that pertain to divine-human relations. In so doing, I have sought to understand more about how Paul's Roman audience might have received the χαρίσματα, whether these gifts served to further his missional objectives, and how these gifts might be better understood by scholars today.

1.1. The purpose of my project

The purpose of my project has been to recover some idea of what a first-century reception of Paul's teaching as to the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 might have been for his original addressees. In order to do so, I have paid special attention to the gentile portion of this audience and their past experiences that pertain to divine-human relations. I have shown that Rom 12:6–8, the passage in which the χαρίσματα appear, has not received much attention from scholars who write about Paul's letter to the Romans. While scholars have often bypassed the χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8 altogether, retrofitted later developments within the church onto first-century usages that concern them, or

combined those announced in Romans 12:6–8 with Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians, I have focused an entire PhD project upon this subject. I have done so in the hope that my efforts will shed new light on what they might mean and how they might be applied by the Roman Christ-followers.

1.2. The value of considering the pagan background of Paul's gentile addressees

This project is largely centered on the pagan background of Paul's gentile addressees. That the persons in this group would appear on the scene without any past religious experiences is both naïve and illogical. It is a mistake to dismiss the presence and power of human interaction with the divine in trying to assess the first-century environment of Rome. Scholars who wish to discuss the reception of Paul's teaching simply cannot afford to avoid paying attention to the former worship activities of his Roman audience. The cities of Rome, Corinth, and even Ephesus were known to be religious centers in Paul's time. These locations, moreover, had specific attributes, favorite gods, and particular religious foci. Gentiles who became Christ-followers in the first-century faced special challenges as they transitioned from their former practices into sanctioned Christ-following practices. Scholars would do well to take these factors into acount in their future considerations of Rom 12:6–8.

1.3. My method and its benefits

My project addresses some of the oversights and missteps that I have detailed by focusing on the situation and historical background of Paul's first-century gentile audience in Rome. Evidence that points to myriad opportunities for worship in this city led me to consider the difficulties of finding replacements for former cultic activities as a primary concern for the gentile Christ-followers there. I proposed that the seven χαρίσματα may be viewed as examples of sanctioned practices that replace former pagan activities. My method examines ancient texts and artifacts that reveal usages of the seven terms listed as χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. Based on practical limitations of space, I have narrowed my investigation to uses of the terms in Rom 12:6–8 in contexts that reference divine-human relations. Another factor in this decision is based on the context of worship that Paul addresses in Rom 12:1ff. I have sought to treat the former pagan worship experiences of

his gentile audience with respect. Adopting this attitude helps us better understand the bridge by which Paul's teaching about worship might be joined with the experiences that his addressees already had about this important topic.

The data I have considered has included literary texts, inscriptions, and numismatic evidence which I have evaluated according to ancient usage. This information has been placed alongside the Pauline texts which also reference this language. I chose this approach for the purpose of analyzing distinctions and similarities between Paul's text in Romans and the witness of the words in other evidence that appear in ancient sources. I believe that my method may lead us closer to the meaning that the Roman Christ-followers could find in Paul's terse remarks as to the χαρίσματα. I maintain that much of the information this group needed to gain a fuller understanding of what Paul might have meant in his text was actually embedded in the religious experiences that were on display all around them. My inquiry has thus sought to provide us with tools that permit us to see Rom 12:6–8 in greater depth.

1.4. Why the χαρίσματα may be viewed as replacements for the former pagan cultic practices of Paul's Roman and gentile audience

Throughout this thesis, I have examined the role the χαρίσματα may have played for the Roman gentile audience. My analysis leads me to conclude that all seven of the χαρίσματα had cultic antecedents for first-century worshipers.

The assertion that the χαρίσματα can be seen as replacements for the former pagan practices of Paul's gentile audience is based on two conclusions. The first is simply that all seven χαρίσματα have cultic resonances that could have been recognized by first-century worshipers. Paul sanctions seven χαρίσματα and he presents them in a context that suggests they should be adopted and practiced as a part of a life of worship. There were, of course, other expressions having to do with divine-human relations familiar to the Roman group, but it is significant that Paul does not approve of other activities that possessed a pagan lineage in Rom 12:6–8. One valid conclusion that may be drawn from this omission is that the χαρίσματα that he does list are vestigial examples that were rooted in his audience's past which he left open for them to retain. For my purposes, the crucial question is how Paul's audience might have regarded Rom 12:6–8. Here again, the same conclusion

may be drawn, which is that Paul's auditors, based on their previous cultic practices, could have seen the χαρίσματα as acts of worship that bore Paul's imprimatur, and that his expression of seven specific χαρίσματα implies that these practices ought to continue--arguably to the exclusion of other ones. As I have repeatedly noted, the new Christ-followers were transitioning into a new belief system, and being entrusted with a clearly delineated series of callings, such as those that Paul establishes in Rom 12:6–8, provided something that his own audience might have perceived as something they sorely needed. I do not mean to suggest here that a one-to-one replacement mechanism was either intended by Paul or seen as such by his audience. What I do assert is that the χαρίσματα generally represent a group of pursuits that would supplant earlier ones. Certain previous elements have been jettisoned, while others have been retained and reoriented to serve a new purpose and one God.

The second reason why we ought to regard the χαρίσματα as replacements of cultic practices is based on a practicality, which is that Paul's audience needed something to supplant their earlier conduct as regards to worship. The χαρίσματα serve the purpose of helping them move forward into a new Christ-following orientation by assigning specific roles for them in a period of transition and adjustment.

2. THE VALUE OF MY ENQUIRY INTO THE SEVEN ΧΑΡ'ΙΣΜΑΤΑ IN LIGHT OF THEIR CULTIC ANTECEDENTS

2.1. The religious background of Paul's gentile audience offers valuable historical information that can shed further light on analyzing the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8

I have detailed how each of the χαρίσματα had associations with religion as it was practiced in first-century Rome. That Paul's audience would compare his teaching with what they already knew about these terms would have been a logical response to this situation. Paul's choice to place the χαρίσματα within the broader context of worship would have provided a framework within which this audience could gain a better understanding of how they might be readily understood and applied. Giving due regard to the antecedents of the χαρίσματα also helps with the dilemma caused by the lack of detail in Rom 12:6–8.

I have found that at some points, Paul's teaching may simply have affirmed what his gentile ad-

dressees perhaps already knew about the terms in Rom 12:6–8. This was especially true as to five out of the seven χαρίσματα, namely, προφητεία, ὁ διδάσκων, ὁ παρακαλῶν, ὁ μεταδιδούς, and ὁ ἐλεῶν. When I considered common conceptions of these terms as taken from ancient evidence and laid these perceptions alongside of Paul's teaching in his Roman missive, I found that Paul's gentile audience could retain some of their familiar qualities, albeit with the understanding that they were now being redirected by Paul onto God. As for διακονία and ὁ προϊστάμενος, my inquiry led to an expanded glossary of terms that is not reflected in the BDAG lexicon and the works of the commentators surveyed. It is my hope that the results of my research will create possibilities for fuller and more historically accurate English translations. Each of my chapters concluded by offering my own translation of the seven gifts in Rom 12:6–8 based upon my investigation into the ancient sources.

The contribution of expanding upon the conceptions of προφητεία, ὁ διδάσκων,ὁ παρακαλῶν, ὁ μεταδιδούς, and ὁ ἐλεῶν

As shown by my assessment of these five gifts in the commentaries that I surveyed, discussion has sometimes become mired in practical details that have to do with behavior and ethics. I have sought to move beyond this framework through a consideration of the broader themes that would have governed how the χαρίσματα might have been applied. By first taking into account the commonalities between the gifts that Paul has listed and then examining their pagan counterparts, we can hopefully gain a deeper appreciation of them. That Paul has not provided specific instruction about how the gifts are to be practiced by his audience is a suggestion that he could have felt that this group already understood what such practices might have required. Viewed in this way, Paul's concern may simply have been to supply his audience with a kind of shorthand as to the χαρίσματα so that the Roman Jesus-groups could repurpose the common activities associated with them in light of what it means to follow Christ. This would have given his addressees some freedom in applying the χαρίσματα as they saw fit. If they listen closely to Paul's teaching throughout the letter, however, they will realize that he does address several fundamental issues that relate to these five gifts.

προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως [prophecy, in accordance with what has been entrusted]

In the instance of prophecy, I have departed from commentators that have stressed prophetic behavior. For purposes of the χαρίσματα, it is a moot point whether prophetic behavior within the Roman group was ecstatic or predictive. We do not have evidence that prophetic conduct in the Roman community posed the same concern for Paul that it did with regard to the Corinthian assemblies. These factors led me to target my discussion on commonly held conceptions of prophecy in the ancient world that were present in literary texts and elsewhere. It was unlikely that the persons in Paul's audience had firsthand experience as prophets with respect to the various temples in Rome or elsewhere. What they did know of prophecy either came from the activities on display at public events, or from accounts of these events that were the stuff of legend. Perhaps the most striking result of Paul's mention of prophecy in his list of χαρίσματα is his audience's possible realization that this specialized role was now available to *them*.

In considering the possibility of what Paul's first-century gentile audience may have already known of prophecy, I again compiled data from ancient evidence in which the terms προφητεία, προφήτης, and the corresponding feminine form προφῆτις have appeared. I organized this evidence to highlight common conceptions of prophecy that would have been available to non-specialists such as the Christ-followers in Paul's audience. I found that in the Greco-Roman world, prophets were valued as spokespersons who were usually associated with one god. These figures were commonly located in special sacred places, and were approached by persons who desired to know the will of the god that they served. In listing prophecy as one of the χαρίσματα given by God to the Christ-following group, Paul affirms that this practice should continue into their new belief system.

In my view, Paul has approved of several common conceptions as to prophecy that preexisted his letter. For example, Paul acknowledges that Christ-following prophecy may continue to operate in sacred spaces, whether within individual bodies that have now been declared holy or in the gathered body of Christ. Prophets and prophetesses continue to be devoted to one God and may act as his spokespersons. Paul's letter also covers how a Christ-follower, perhaps one who is called to prophesy, might discern the will of God in Rom 12:1–2.

With the addition of the words κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως in Rom 12:6, Paul reminds his auditors that prophecy is a matter of properly handling what has been entrusted to them. In this case, as spokespersons for God, the messages originate with God and reflect his will rather than the ideas or concerns of the one who prophesies. To prophesy κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως thus entails that the communication of these messages should be no more and no less than what God has entrusted his spokesperson to convey. While such messages may be spoken within the Roman Christ-assemblies, there is no reason to think that prophecy that is accordance with God's message and will would not also be appropriate for persons outside of this group, especially in regards to sharing the gospel.

ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ [the one who teaches, in accordance with what the teaching requires]

My inquiry here led me to conclude that non-specialists and even illiterate persons within Paul's audience would find affirmation as to possible opportunities for engaging in διδασκαλία. Instances of *didask-* language in the sources that I surveyed that pertained to instruction regarding divine-human relations indicate that Paul's first-century audience likely learned about the gods, their identity, and their activities from several different sources, and that these sources would have also provided information about what the gods would have expected of them as worshipers. These included observations and interactions with nature, exposure to public readings of great literature, and attendance at public performances of plays. Other types of instruction encompassed stories about heroic and godlike figures and music that attended cultic activities. In his Roman letter, Paul shows that he also values these modes of διδασκαλία. As a διδάσκαλος himself, Paul teaches about God and what he expects of his worshipers in similar ways. Paul also instructs about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit through references to nature, stories that include legendary figures, and the Psalms. I also noted possible resonances in Paul's writing that speak to commonly known literature such as Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Euripides' *Medea*.

Paul's Roman audience were also likely aware of sacred texts such as the Sibylline Oracles that were meant for religious instruction. Citing the Jewish scriptures as a familiar mode of learning, while also stressing the importance and authority of this resource may have played upon this familiarity. Although these Jewish materials might not have been as readily known to the Christ-followers in Rome, Paul nonetheless maintains that his audience may grow in its understanding

about God by interacting with this source as well as through the created world. Music was also crucial in teaching valuable truths about divine-human relations in the ancient world. Paul's extensive citations of sections from the Psalms, including occasional christological exegesis, is an example Christ-followers could follow that would have enabled them to view themselves as διδάσκαλοι who create and teach music that instructs about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. That such commonly known pedagogical techniques were still available to the Roman Christ-followers may have aided their efforts to learn and become instructors in their new belief orientation.

ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει [the one who invokes and invites, in accordance with what the opportunities require]

I looked at παρακᾰλέω in terms of how it was used pertaining to divine-human relations in the ancient world and found multiple instances of παρακᾰλέω that were wielded to call upon the gods to come near. This vertical aspect of παρακᾰλέω that emphasizes an interaction sought between persons and divine beings was common in public cultic ceremonies, and would have been easily applicable for the Christ-followers that sought to invoke the presence of God, either by prayer or other means. The evidence I surveyed led me away from the singularly person-to-person or horizontal application of παρακᾰλέω that appears in the commentaries. It also helped to steer my inquiry away from a focus on ethical behavior. While I was able to affirm what might be viewed as a horizontal expression of παρακᾰλέω from the ancient sources that used this word to connote inviting others to draw near to God, I was also able to highlight new possibilities for this χάρισμα that point to the importance of prayer for the burgeoning Christ-following group.

Many commentators have mused upon the formation of the seven χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. Some have advocated for a kind of ranking in terms of importance. If the seven χαρίσματα are viewed within a chiastic structure, however, then ὁ παρακαλῶν is the apex. Being so situated may have been a reminder to the Christ-followers that God ought to be present in all of their activities. It might have also suggested to them the importance of inviting others to join in their recognition and appreciation of God. Thus, when viewing ὁ παρακαλῶν in terms of invocation and inviting others, the missional advantages of this gift begin to emerge.

ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἁπλότητι [the one who shares with generosity, simplicity, and sincerity as required]

The conclusions of my chapter on ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι were founded upon uses of μεταδίδωμι and its cognates as seen in the works of Diodorus Siculus, Cornutus, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Some of these authors considered μεταδίδωμι as helpful in describing the generosity of gods such as Zeus, Dionysus, and Demeter. Other works helped enlarge the possibilities of the types of things that might be shared to include both material and non-material benefactions. Recipients of these gifts were expected to share them.

Some of the commentators that I surveyed believe that ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι should be thought of exclusively in terms of sharing material items such as physical goods or financial gifts. If the ancient evidence is taken into consideration, this view emerges as only partially accurate. Such corporeal benefactions certainly exist in the ancient texts; however, the word μεταδίδωμι and its cognates were also used to express the sharing of non-corporeal benefactions. Commentators have tried to support the claim that ὁ μεταδιδούς ought to be relegated to the financial and material realm through the amplification of Paul's accompanying phrase ἐν ἁπλότητι, which they have deigned to mean "generosity." This parsing causes them to balk at the idea that ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι could mean disseminating information, even that which might concern the gospel message itself. Some scholars worry that if ὁ μεταδιδοὺς ἐν ἁπλότητι was applied to sharing information, then what would be the difference between this gift and other communicative ones like teaching and "exhorting?" With my treatment of the gifts of teaching and inviting, any imagined overlap with ὁ μεταδιδούς disappears in terms of how these three gifts might be practiced. I contend that all seven of the gifts may be exercised in terms of communication as a part of furthering Paul's missional objects. Moreover, when viewed in this way, all the gifts may be seen in terms of how they contribute to this goal. As for the word, ἁπλότητι, I sought to meet the claim that it would be unfit to apply it for the purposes of sharing information by providing Greco-Roman instances that show this word was used to communicate ideas and truths in a *straightforward* and *simple* manner.

The word μεταδίδωμι carried a sense that the benefactions shared were expected to be shared with others. This is a perspective that can help us develop an understanding as to what a first-century reception of this gift in Rom 12:8 might have looked like. As Paul's audience contemplated his inclusion of this χάρισμα, and recognized that he has left the content of what they might give open,

they could also have considered what God has given them, including the gospel and the benefactions that spring from it. As shown by Paul's teaching throughout the letter, what they have received from God is substantial.

ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἱλαρότητι [the one who shows mercy, with joy and cheerfulness as required]

The concept of mercy, as portrayed in the sources I have surveyed that reference divine-human relations, led me to conclude that ἔλεος was a deified virtue in the ancient world. Commentators have overlooked this point when treating ὁ ἐλεῶν as it appears in Rom 12:8. These scholars have been reticent to stray far from the subject of almsgiving, which was a pious activity within Judaism that was not central to first-century Greco-Roman religiosity. Mercy was generally shown to the poor and disadvantaged. This limited analysis ignores that the concept of mercy was in a kind of beseigement in first-century Rome, a status that derived, in part, from its having been co-opted by Roman emperors. This situation would have permitted Paul to capitalize on the chasm between the empty promises of mercy as advertised by the emperor, and the ἔλεος felt and shown by the God that Paul writes about to his Roman audience. Popular narratives and public propaganda had created an expectation that genuine mercy was not only to be felt in the face of suffering, but it was to be accompanied with appropriate action. This hope was not realized by the populace whenever a god or emperor who had aligned themselves with mercy did not demonstrate this quality to those who desperately needed it. In Rom 12:8, Paul expresses confidence in God's ἔλεος via his decision not to pair mercy with tears. Rather, it may be shown ἐν ἱλαρότητι, or with joy and cheerfulness. An audience that took seriously Paul's teaching that God has shown mercy to gentiles could have felt justified to go forth in showing it to others inside the Christ-following group. Perhaps more important to the gospel mission, however, is the possibility that the Christ-followers may also have been empowered to display mercy to individuals outside of their community. Paul's text in Rom 12:6–8 could thus have conveyed to his auditors that they need not view themselves as helpless even in the face of political leaders who may not be counted upon to show mercy, because they could depend upon such ἔλεος from a God who possessed this feature as an esssential trait.

The contribution of an expanded glossary of terms concerning διακονία and ὁ προϊστάμενος

My principal contribution as to the two gifts I cover in this section is the glossary of terms that I have compiled. These additional terms enhance the scope of how διακονία and ὁ προϊστάμενος may be seen beyond their current treatment in the BDAG lexicon and the *TDNT*. Translations of these two terms have been complicated by the fact that Paul designates διακονία and ὁ προϊστάμενος as gifts of God to the Christ-followers in Rom 12:7 and 8. At the same time, he also describes his friend Phoebe as both διάκονος and προστάτις in Rom 16:1–2.

διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ [a mission, in accordance with what the mission requires]

In my consideration of διακονία and the related word διάκονος, I noted that the commentators I surveyed typically viewed this gift in terms of humility and service. Others tentatively offered διακονία as a technical term for what they believe was an early form of a diaconal "office." "Ministry" and "service" have been frequent translations for this gift, and commentators have explained its practicalities for purposes of Paul's addressees only in the most general of terms. This has largely been based on the contention that the word διακονία is hard to define. Ancient sources of *diak-* language, however, are a help here because they enable us to gain a fuller perspective as to διακονία. It may also aid in future translations. My research took me away from the judgment that διακονία should be regarded as "ministry." Although this word eventually gained currency during its subsequent history of use in the church, it is unlikely that the early Christ-followers would have understood it theologically. My research into *diak*-language revealed the dynamic roles that messengers, envoys, heralds, guides, and go-betweens played in antiquity. I collected these roles under the descriptive term, mission. This is due to the expectation that the διάκονος acts fundamentally as a go-between who accepts direction from an authority figure or god and then executes whatever mission is assigned. My consideration has sought to open up new possibilities for translations of *diak-* language elsewhere in the Roman letter, namely the role of Christ as διάκονος in Rom 15:8 and Paul's own work, which he expresses in terms of διακονία in Rom 11:13. These indicia suggested an understanding of διακονία that encompasses notions of "messenger" and "mission." In Rom 12:7, Paul's lack of detail as to this χάρισμα may imply that he does not presume to know any particular mission that God might entrust to his addressees in Rome. With his choice of διακονία as a gift of

God, the possibility is created for the Roman Christ-followers to perceive that they have been entrusted with a mission that should be carried out in accordance with what that mission requires. The trustees of a διακονία could thus view themselves as representatives, heralds, envoys, guides, mediators, and go-betweens, for multiple purposes, including that of having been sent forth by God to spread the gospel.

ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ [the one who champions with zeal as required]

My analysis of ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ sought to resolve the complicated translation issue as to ὁ προϊστάμενος that has stemmed from the reliance of biblical scholars upon the BDAG lexicon. Translators have found two main meanings as to this phrase: "presiding" (a gloss that aligns the BDAG and LSJ lexicons), and "caring/giving aid." The latter translation appears in BDAG, but is absent from LSJ. An approach that seems to prefer the usage reflected in BDAG has enabled scholars to gloss the gift in Rom 12:8 as "leader," while at the same time reducing the role of Phoebe described in Rom 16:1 to that of a "helper," "benefactor," or "patroness." As for the term "patroness," I submit that the notion of Greco-Roman patronage is too narrow an application to support use of the broader term προστάτις, which is simply the feminine form of προστάτης. As MacGillivray has argued, patron-client relations bear specific legal and social obligations and entanglements that were perhaps at odds with Paul's message of equality and unity. Commentators who seem to prefer BDAG and the work of Louw and Nida on the subject of semantic domains over the conclusions of LSJ have produced unsatisfactory translations for both instances in the Roman letter largely because they have not capitalized on how both appearances of the related words προΐστημι and προστάτης may be helpful in grasping Paul's meaning. Accordingly, it is unnecessary to treat the two ways in which these words in Paul's letter as presenting a conflict.

My investigation adds the word "championing" to the glossary of terms from which we may translate the word ὁ προϊστάμενος. Accordingly, glosses for προΐστημ and its cognates may include championing, protecting, and presiding, concepts which were used to describe both human and deified figures in the ancient literature. My decision to translate ὁ προϊστάμενος as "the one who champions" underlines the communicative aspect that I have found in the other gifts Paul lists in Rom 12:6–8. A consequence of this is that the one who champions a person or a cause entrusted to them should do so with zeal. I acknowledge that other translations could also be appropriate

depending upon whether we apply the concepts of presiding or protecting. Yet Paul has ultimately left this question open. Perhaps this is simply because he believes that God has entrusted persons and causes to the Christ-followers that, depending upon the circumstances, may be in need of championing, leadership, and protection.

2.2. A TRANSLATION OF ROM 12:6–8

I began this thesis by providing examples of various biblical translations of Rom 12:6–8. Central to the one that I now offer is the assumption that the Christ-following recipients of the seven χαρίσματα that are located in Rom 12:6–8 should view themselves as trustees of the various gifts that Paul states have been entrusted to them by God. My approach is supported by the phrase that accompanies prophecy, the first gift in Paul's list: κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως. I have translated this phrase as "in accordance with what is entrusted." My contention is that this phrase implies a trusteeship that should be extended to all seven of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. Whether the gift in question is teaching, sharing, or mercy, the Christ-follower that has been entrusted with the gift should manage and use it in accordance with all that the gift requires. Each χάρισμα holds within itself the means by which it may be managed well.

After investigating the χαρίσματα in light of their cultic antecedents, I now offer my final translation and add vv. 4–5 to complete this effort.

> For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so the many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another, having gifts that differ according to the grace entrusted to us by God, whether prophecy, in accordance with what has been entrusted, or a mission, in accordance with what that mission requires; or the one who teaches, in accordance with what the teaching requires; or the one who invokes and invites, in accordance with what the opportunities require; the one who shares with generosity, simplicity, and sincerity as required; the one who champions with zeal as required; the one who shows mercy, with joy and cheerfulness as required (Rom 12:4–8).

Paul is himself the beneficiary of a divine calling and mission as an apostle to the gentiles. He is careful to relate that his apostleship is from God and that he should faithfully carry out the particulars of his calling in accordance with what has been entrusted to him. Paul describes this work as an act of worship in his letter to Rome. I noted that along with the call to worship that he announces to his Roman audience in Rom 12:1–2, the seven χαρίσματα may also be similarly viewed.

Each of the activities will involve appropriate responses that are in accordance with a range of activities that are inherent within the particular gift that has been bestowed.

One of my goals in writing this thesis is to construct an image of the nature of each of the χαρίσματα and how it might have been perceived by Paul's first-century audience. In my description, I have discussed and offered a range of activities that are taken from ancient usages of the terms in Rom 12:6–8 in order to consider not only what these gifts are, but how the Christ-following entrusted with them might manage what they have been given. As faithful trustees entrusted with gifts by God, the deployment of each gift is to be in accordance with its inherent qualities, and thus may be viewed as an act of worship.

3. WHAT THE SEVEN ΧΑΡΊΣΜΑΤΑ MAY TELL US ABOUT PAUL'S STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITIONING GENTILE CHRIST-FOLLOWERS

In this thesis, I have taken care not to put undue weight upon Paul's meaning as to the χαρίσματα. I have instead discussed these gifts in light of the reception of his gentile audience. However, in light of the data that I have provided, I now consider the possibility that Paul might have employed the χαρίσματα in a constructive matter for guiding his gentile audience in Rome as to the important area of their religious practices.

3.1. Insight provided by the χαρίσματα as to the establishment of Christ-following communities

My work has offered a perspective on the χαρίσματα that implies an important aspect as to the formation and establishment of a healthy Christ-following community. That Paul would take into consideration the common experiences from the polytheistic past of this group regarding divine-human relations would have arguably encouraged them by affirming that this past retained relevance for their future as Christ-followers. This is a strategy that has not been discussed by scholars in connection with the Roman group.

Paul has already dealt with the effects of past experiences of other Christ-followers as to divine-human relations with varying success. Paul's correspondence with the Corinthian Christ-following community shows his recognition that within this group there is still room for assistance in their transition from idol worship to the declaration, "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor 12:2-3). The letter that

we have as 1 Corinthians suggests that the influences of pagan religion are still in play as to this group even though the Corinthians are now Christ-followers.[801] Paul's interaction with the questions of his Corinthian addressees reflects lingering problems with competing traditional religious practices.[802] In Paul's letter to Rome, we may observe an approach that perhaps points to an evolution in Paul's thinking regarding the χαρίσματα. Paul's interactions with other communities that had experienced similar transitions could have taught him the importance of taking into account the previous religious environment of his audience, and this realization may have led him to appeal to existing ideological constructs that existed within his Roman audience. This appeal could have equipped Paul's audience with the intellectual scaffolding necessary to transition into a new belief system. It may have also helped to avoid a potential nest of problems and resistance that likely would have accompanied instruction that ignored the pagan past of Paul's auditors.

3.2. The seven χαρίσματα that Paul chose for his Roman letter are immediately available and applicable for the non-specialists in Paul's gentile audience in Rome

With his choice of the particular seven χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8, Paul has made it broadly possible for nonspecialists within his intended audience to immediately engage in mission. By "nonspecialists," I mean laypersons who did not necessarily have formal training in religious practices. Certain gifts in Paul's list, such as prophecy, were indeed practiced by experienced professionals in the Greco-Roman world. Paul's teaching in Romans, however, would have allowed his audience to grasp familiar elements of prophetic activity that they could have adapted to their new situation. We can see evidence of this in Rom 12:2, where Paul somewhat demystifies knowing the will of

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[801] See 1 Cor 5, 6:9–20, 8, and 10:14–33.

[802] It is possible that the Thessalonian assembly also faced this dilemma. Paul acknowledges in 1 Thess 1:9 that the group "turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God" and wants to see them progress "more and more" (4:1). Paul gives instruction that could have been applied to decisions as to opportunities still open to the group in Thessalonica. These include sexual relations that perhaps pertained to cult (4:3–8), funerary rites and traditions that, in paganism, were meant to ensure a happy afterlife (4:13–18), and the night-time customs associated with festivals that were celebrated on specific days and times (5:1–11). As regards Paul's correspondence with Galatia, Susan Elliott discusses circumcision along with castration as practiced by the priests of Magna Mater, a cult that originated in Anatolia. Susan Elliott, *Cutting Too Close for Comfort: Paul's Letter to the Galatians in Its Anatolian Cultic Context* (London: T & T Clark International: A Contiuum Imprint, 2003). See also Clinton E. Arnold, "'I Am Astonished That You Are So Quickly Turning Away!' (Gal 1.6): Paul and Anatolian Folk Belief," *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005), 429-49.

God. This pursuit had previously been a secretive activity conducted by specific prophets in the ancient world. Additionally, from his discussion with the Corinthian assembly, we can see that Paul is aware of the possibilities of apostolic calling (1 Cor 12:28), utterances of wisdom and knowledge (12:8), and faith and healing (12:9). In 1 Cor 12:10, Paul also lists the working of miracles, the discernment of spirits, along with the phenomenon of glossolalia and its interpretation (12:10). Paul's inclination not to include any of these gifts in the χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8, even though he acknowledges that they were useful to the assembly in Corinth, implies that he values the χαρίσματα he did choose in Rom 12:6–8 because of their relative ease of applicability. The gifts listed in 1 Cor 12, especially wisdom, knowledge, and glossolalia, appear to have provoked confusion and controversy. This is apparent in the text of the letter.[803] In Rom 1:11, Paul tells us that he intends to discuss the possibilities of additional gifts with the Rome Christ-followers upon his arrival. In the meantime, however, he may have felt that the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 were sufficient and that they would serve to further the mission of spreading the gospel.

3.3. Insights that the seven χαρίσματα may provide as to what Paul knew about Roman religion in the first century

Whether considered individually or as a group, the Greek terms that make up the χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8 may be viewed as a distillation of Roman religion in the first century. We have seen that each gift touches upon important aspects of cultic practices that were plausibly familiar to Paul's gentile audience. Some of the examples that I have noted herein are the imperial and public state cults and the household *lares*. These categories cover a wide swath of the landscape of divine-human relations in Rome. Elements of first-century Roman religion are also present in the *diak-* language that was commonly used to describe the activities of the god Hermes. While it is impossible to indubitably know Paul's intentionality here, it is nonetheless striking that the first two gifts, προφητεία and διακονία, have strong ties to the famous brothers Apollo and Hermes, who were sons of Zeus. Major pantheon gods such as Zeus, Demeter, and Dionysus have also been cited and discussed throughout this thesis in relation to the terms under consideration. These are deit-

[803] On the issue of wisdom, see Paul's discussion in 1 Cor 1:17–30, 2:1–13, and 3:19. He dispels false notions of knowledge in 1:17 and 8:1–2. Paul specifically addresses glossolalia and its practice in 1 Cor 13–14.

ies who held a place of prominence, and many of them famously had temples that were dedicated to their worship amongst the seven hills of Rome. All of these factors tend toward the conclusion that Paul could have curated the seven χαρίσματα based on the powerful resonances that they carried from his audience's pagan past, and that they may be seen as an historical snapshot that depicts how this group might have perceived a reality that was integral to their daily life, which was that of divine-human relations.

3.4. How the χαρίσματα may be understood notwithstanding Paul's lack of textual detail

In this thesis, I have provided a possible resource for future scholars to deal with Paul's lack of textual detail in Rom 12:6–8. This is based on the data I have adduced from the writings of antiquity and the glossary of terms that I have assembled. It has been my goal to establish an obvious and relatively underused resource, namely, the religious background of Paul's gentile addressees in apprehending the meaning of the seven χαρίσματα that Paul lists in Rom 12:6–8.

There is an additional source of information that I have found within the language of the text itself that bears upon the inferences that Paul's addressees might have drawn about the gifts they have been given. Because these χαρίσματα are entrusted to the Christ-followers by the grace of God, we may assume that there is a divine benefactor behind their bestowal. The onus is thus on the benefactor to choose the appropriate gift for each recipient. In this regard, I applied the phrase κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, which Paul has appended to προφητεία, to each of the successive gifts that he enumerates. This was to show that each gift holds the key to how it should be properly managed.

Unlike Jewett, who takes the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 to be a random grouping, I have shown that by referencing pagan antecedents, there is in fact evidence of intentionality in Paul's list.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF MY STUDY AND POSSIBLE FUTURE PROJECTS

4.1. Other potential investigations into the Greco-Roman background of religious terminology regarding Pauline texts

There is a world of relevant information that may be accessed by exploring how persons in the

Greco-Roman world related to the divine. Contemporary scholars should value the way ancient persons communicated their understandings as to deity so that new analysis can be brought to bear on Pauline texts and their reception. In short, paganism is important for understanding the Christ-following religion of the first century. It is more than a foil by which Christianity can be contrasted as "superior," and scholars who have approached this subject with this bias in previous centuries have erred in doing so. Accepting that the early communities of Christ-followers emerged from a rich polytheistic environment may provide more insights into how these groups perceived themselves. I would note here that the effect of paganism on developments within the nascent Christ-following communities did not neatly cease at the end of the first century. Take the 4th- 5th century writer Nonnus, who found the figure of the god Hermes helpful in explicating Christ's role as a messenger on behalf of God. This Egyptian poet refers to Christ with the epithet διάκτορος in his *Paraphrase of St. John* (5.22).[804] He thus used conceptions of the divine culled from polytheistic religion notwithstanding that they may have held associations with paganism. Contemporary scholars who are doing work that constructively takes in the pagan background of the terms Paul uses in his writings include Christoph Heilig[805] and James Constantine Hanges.[806]

4.2. Investigations into receptions of the Pauline texts by their original audiences should, at a minimum, be less reliant on the BDAG lexicon and the *TDNT*

There are instances in this thesis where the articles found in the *TDNT* and the BDAG lexicon, although helpful in apprehending how the lexemes in the Pauline epistles compare with and define one another, both become inadequate for finding the broader range of meanings *outside* of these texts. While I acknowledge that scholars should consult both BDAG and LSJ, I hope that my work in this project has made it clear that they should also engage primary sources that use the words in question in its various contexts throughout relevant periods in antiquity. Although com-

[804] Agosti, "Praising the God(s)," 230. Agosti reasons that by using this ancient epithet, Nonnus meant to describe Christ as both "messenger" and "servant" (230). See also Domenico Accorinti, "Hermes E Cristo in Nonno," *Prometheus* XXI, Issue 1 (1995), 32.

[805] Christoph Heilig, *Paul's Triumph: Reassessing 2 Corinthians 2:14 in Its Literary and Historical Context* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2017).

[806] Hanges, "A World of Shrines and Groves."

mentators obviously examine many of the words that we find in the Pauline texts that are used to describe the new Christ-following groups, they have frequently overlooked historical meanings that speak to divine-human relations outside of Judaism and Christianity. This omission is especially apparent in regards to religious language and terminology. There is much to be found out from what lies behind the texts that comprise Paul's letters through this method. Although dealing with the words as they are used throughout Paul's writings is often appropriate as a first port of call for scholars, these very words are inevitably rooted in previous usages, contexts, and cultural norms.

4.3. A future exploration of the χαρίσματα that Paul lists in Romans in light of their Jewish roots

Another area as to the χαρίσματα that has yet to be explored fully involves viewing the terms of Rom 12:6–8 through the prism of their Judaic origins. A picture of how the χαρίσματα would have been received by their first-century audience that does not countenance a full inquiry as to how they would have been known by Paul and the other Jews in the Roman community would be an incomplete one. A companion to such an analysis might include a consideration of ways in which the seven χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 may parallel the χαρίσματα that Paul lists in Rom 9:4–5. This endeavor could be informed by the work of Paula Fredriksen, who advocates that Paul has in mind two groups of worshipers who accept Jesus as their Messiah, one Jewish and the other gentile. These are distinct groups who worship the same God, albeit with expressions that reflect their respective backgrounds. Paul explicitly attaches the grouping of χαρίσματα in Rom 9:4–5 to Judaism. This list of descriptive qualities and activities might ultimately serve as a bookend to the list of χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8. Other possible benefits of this work would be an expansion of the conversation about Paul's relationship with his native religion toward the end of better analyzing the value he places upon Judaism in connection with the χαρίσματα. It is possible that both Jews and gentiles have been gifted with χαρίσματα appropriate to their respective Jewish and gentile identities. Both have also been given χαρίσματα for the purposes of worship and service.

4.4. Possible future projects that consider the groupings of gifts listed in 1 Cor 12 and Eph 4

The grouping of gifts that Paul lists in 1 Cor 12:8–11, like those of Rom 12:6–8, are set forth in light of the theme of worship in 1 Cor 12:1–3. There are nine gifts listed in 1 Cor 12:8–11, and seven listed in vv. 28–31. An investigation into these gifts in light of their pagan antecedents could expose issues particular to this congregation as they moved away from pagan beliefs. I propose comparing the nine gifts in 1 Cor 12:8–11 with the purposes and activities of the nine Muses in Hellenistic religions who were known for inspiring qualities such as wisdom and knowledge--two of the gifts Paul highlights in 1 Cor 12:8. Gifts of healing, also listed by Paul 1 Cor 12:9 and 28, may be set alongside the cult of Asclepius which was quite popular in Corinth and a center of healing in the ancient world. Observations of potential pagan antecedents of the gifts Paul lists in 1 Corinthians would logically lend themselves to a comparison between the religious situation in Corinth and the one that existed in first-century Rome. Ephesus was another capital of religion in the ancient world to which a letter was written that discusses gifts of God for a Christ-following community that was located there. The author states that the audience in Ephesus has received gifts of grace (Eph 4:7, 11) for the building up of the body of Christ (4:12). In Eph 4:17, the author strongly instructs that "you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds." An investigation into ancient religion in Ephesus that is connected to the grouping of gifts in this letter may disclose other insights as to its original and historical meaning and reception.

4.5. A theological overview that takes into account all of Paul's teaching about the gifting of the body of Christ throughout his letters

There is room to investigate the broader theme of the place and importance of gifts within the body of Christ. We have Paul's teaching about gifts in multiple letters, yet understanding these groupings within their respective contexts is but the first step in apprehending his purposes for including the subject. In instances where we have lists of gifts, there are similar themes of "in-Christ"-language, teaching about unity, and material relating to the Spirit. Included within such teaching is information about the body of Christ. Scholars do not agree on the author of the letter to the Ephesians. Taking in the particular grouping of gifts that appear in this letter as compared to other accepted Pauline epistles might contribute to the conversation about the subject of its au-

thorship. As well, the addition of the roles of pastor and evangelist in Eph 4:11 may either speak to a progression in Paul's thinking, or point to another author.

Paul believed that teaching about gifting was important in the formation and identity of the early Christ-following groups. This is a theme that I have not been able to fully explore in this thesis. Perhaps a survey of all of Paul's references to gifting in his letters will help us understand more about the role that he envisioned for the χαρίσματα to play regarding these foundational questions. It might point to some of the ways the Christ-following groups could become attractive to potential converts. While I have explored an association of the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 with potential missional objectives, an enlargement of how this enterprise might apply to the lists in other letters could also prove to be rewarding.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF MY INQUIRY FOR THE CHURCH TODAY

Even though my inquiry is situated in the first century, I want to briefly consider the implications of what I have discussed for the church today. The topic of "spiritual gifts" is still a very lively subject within Christian circles. Given the limited breadth of my project, I have been unable to engage with the subject of what many contemporary Christians refer to as the "charismatic" gifts such as glossolalia, miracles, and gifts of healing. These gifts, which Paul provides in 1 Cor 12, have been given much scholarly attention. Of course, my purpose has been to critically examine the texts of Rom 12:6–8. What follows is a brief discussion of how some of my conclusions as to the χαρίσματα therein might be viewed and used in contemporary Christian assemblies.

5.1. The χαρίσματα and so-called Christian specialists

We have learned that the χαρίσματα that Paul lists in Rom 12:6–8 are not to be relegated to so-called Christian specialists. Instead, these gifts should be seen as immediately applicable even for new Christians. This is important when we consider that new converts to Christianity today are looking, as did their first-century counterparts, for ways in which they may contribute both to their church and to its mission. Paul's strategy in Rom 12:6–8 implies that he sought to bridge the gap between the religious activities that the Roman Christ-followers had formerly practiced and ones

that would be acceptable in their new community. Churches today would do well to make sure that teaching about God's gifting for their body is not shrouded in language that alienates those who wish to participate. Paul makes it clear that God is the benefactor of all gifts, and that no Christ-follower is excluded from the possibility of being entrusted with any of the χαρίσματα that are present in Rom 12:6–8. Churches therefore ought to seek ways of helping their congregants see that certain aspects of their lives before becoming a Christian may be retained and even useful in their new life.

5.2. Emphasizing worship and mission in the church today based upon the teaching as to the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8

Chief amongst my contentions in this thesis is the premise that the χαρίσματα may be perceived as examples of acts of worship and that they are valuable for how they contribute to the mission of sharing the gospel. This perspective is important to the contemporary church and how she presents the gifts in Rom 12:6–8 to her congregants. Christians should remember that most of Paul's original audience was composed of pagans, and that these χαρίσματα answered a practical need that they had. For many churches in the West, the function that the χαρίσματα fulfilled for first-century Christ-followers may no longer exist. Yet Paul's teaching about the gifts, in particular how they relate to worship and how worship itself relates to calling and mission, is still vitally important for the church today. When we begin to see our lives as being full of daily opportunities for worship, we are aligning ourselves with how Paul's first-century audience might have perceived his teaching, and this realization is a meaningful connection with the realities of the earliest followers of Christ.

5.3. The χαρίσματα were not historically about individual talents or abilities

I have noted that many people in today's church view the χαρίσματα as individual talents or abilities. This is a framework that has led to competitiveness and pride amongst modern congregants. The church can benefit from the knowledge that in the first century, there is no evidence that the χαρίσματα were thought of in terms of self-expression or individual spiritual growth. The commentators discussed herein who have advocated how believers ought to avoid expression of bad

attitudes when exercising the gifts have voiced conclusions that are incongruous with first-century perceptions. I do not mean that talents and abilities are no longer important or relevant, nor that persons in all eras are not subject to selfishness, but rather that the gifts may perhaps be best understood apart from such a restricted and self-involved focus.

In contemporary thought, the χαρίσματα are also valued in terms of the benefit and health they provide for the church community. This stands in contradiction to what we have learned about how they were perceived of in the first century. Contemporary thinking has led to an insular application of the gifts within the modern church, and this is yet another unfortunate perspective that I have flagged up in the commentators that I have surveyed. In contrast, Paul's teaching in Romans 12, especially as it is viewed alongside of his explanation of his own calling in terms of worship and mission, effectively turns the application of the χαρίσματα outward to others. When the agency of the χαρίσματα is seen as good for the community within and without, and *also* in terms of sanctioned worship activities and mission that cover both horizontal and vertical aspects of the Christian experience, the χαρίσματα become missional and predominately centered on God and others.

Another aspect that is missing in Paul's grouping of χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 is any hint of a hierarchical structure or organizational pattern. I have noted how commentators have sometimes anachronistically drifted into applications of the χαρίσματα based upon developments that occurred subsequent to their appearance in Rom 12:6–8. In hindsight, it was perhaps predictable that as time passed and Christ did not return, the Christ-followers would adopt order, ranking, and a chain of command from the culture around them. Such structural imperatives, however, do not appear in the Pauline text of Romans. Perhaps Paul was naïve that such an egalitarian and relatively communal way of existence would survive. We are left to speculate how he would have adjusted his teaching in light of the delay in Christ's return. It is also significant that Phoebe, Paul's coworker, had been entrusted with two of the χαρίσματα that Paul lists. Phoebe stands as an illustration of one who fulfilled the gift of a mission by bringing Paul's letter to Rome and acting as his go-between. She is also a champion of Paul, and a valued leader for the church in Cenchrae. The church today should consider adopting a perspective that is more in line with these factual underpinnings because they tend to render as unpersuasive the view that the χαρίσματα were meant to

form gender-based hierarchical and structural organizations.

5.4. The χαρίσματα are for all Christ-followers regardless of status, age, or mental and physical capacity

Paul's list of χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 are meant for all in his Roman audience. Just as he has received his own calling from God to be an apostle, Paul seems to leave open the possibility that any person in this group could be similarly called to engage in any of the gifts he lists.

This differs markedly from the perspective that exists in many churches today. The gateway to discovering a congregant's particular gifting typically involves taking a class or completing a written test. Not everyone finds this a palatable way of entering the subject. An inevitable result of such testing and rapid categorization is that participants in this process may either feel superior or insecure, depending on which gift has been assigned to them. One searches in vain for evidence of such division in Paul's teaching, and it would seem basic that the body of Christ should not reflect this kind of approach. I hope that my work has shown that all are included as worshipers who may present their bodies to God and share in the mission to spread the gospel, and that this ideal ought to apply regardless of social status, age, or mental and physical capacity. One of the central features of the gifts is the fluidity with which they may be applied for this purpose, and procedures that run contrary to this ignore one of their most fundamental and appealing characteristics.

There are many Christ-followers today whose activities, such as walking, talking, reading or learning, are in some way restricted. We have an opportunity to consider the χαρίσματα in Rom 12:6–8 in light of those with such disabilities. When taught in terms of talents or abilities, it may be difficult for those who face certain challenges to envision how the χαρίσματα might apply to them. Yet Paul teaches that every one of his addressees are entrusted with gifts. From this teaching we may extrapolate that all Christ-followers today are similarly entrusted with gifts by God. It is imperative that we help people with disabilities understand the gifts God entrusts to them and how they might respond to what has been given. My own father, who has dementia, provides a personal example of this point. He has been entrusted with leadership roles both in business and in his church for the entirety of his adult life. How ought we to regard his gifting in light of his current condition? As his health status declines, does God mean to cease entrusting him with such a gift? I

have previously suggested that προΐστημι may be properly viewed as being broader in its scope and application than would be the case if its meaning were restricted to notions of presiding and leading. More specifically I have contended that ὁ προϊστάμενος may connote the championing of others, and that it may also be applied to championing the gospel message itself. In the case of my father, the commitment to promote the good news has only strengthened. God has entrusted aspects of the gospel message to him that he still keenly seeks to champion. The contributions to his church that he has made through his resonant baritone voice have increased in recent years and the sincerity of his heartfelt worship leading and the genuineness of his conviction have made his performances more emotionally powerful. Here again is an example of the wonderful flexibility that the χαρίσματα embody.

Another example of how the gifts may function in the context of those with challenges is Henry Bass. Henry is the son of my dear friend Alice. Henry, who is on the autistic spectrum, has willingly and effectively welcomed congregations of several thousand people at our church in Central Florida by issuing a winsome call to worship during church services. God has entrusted Henry with opportunities to invoke his presence and to call others to participate in worship. We have learned that these are activities that are associated with ancient conceptions of παρακἄλέω, and they are suggestive of how this gift may function in modern worship.

What about people with other disabilities such as blindness, deafness, and confinement to a wheelchair? Such Christ-following individuals have also been entrusted with gifts from God. How ought the χαρίσματα be read both to affirm their gifting and assure that they flourish in fulfilling the call that it represents? We might begin to answer this question by first remembering that Paul establishes no threshold in Rom 12:6–8 which must be attained before a Christ-follower may respond in worship by applying appropriately that which God has entrusted to them. It is here that Paul's stipulation that gifts should be offered in accordance with what has been entrusted becomes significant. This is because Paul's statement inherently permits flexibility as to how each person engages with what God has given them. For example, persons may act as prophets or spokespersons of God without using words. This can occur through sign language as well as other means of expression such as music, movement, sculpture, and painting. All of these means of communication can help others know of God's will and plan for us.

Persons who have faced significant physical and mental challenges can be effective instructors who teach others powerful lessons about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. God has bestowed special knowledge upon many who suffer so that they may share with others something about who he is and what he has done. Due to the specific challenges that these persons face, those in need of instruction may be more willing to listen to them. The effectiveness of their teaching may extend to both Christians and non-Christians.

On a personal level, I want to acknowledge that the seven χαρίσματα have themselves been a gift to me. It has been my goal to take seriously the task of analyzing them in their historical context, and to revisit the conclusions of those who have written about them. My study has shown the χαρίσματα to be surprising, confounding, and most often rewarding. It is my hope that this inquiry into the χαρίσματα of Rom 12:6–8 marks the beginning of further exploration and growth on this rich subject.

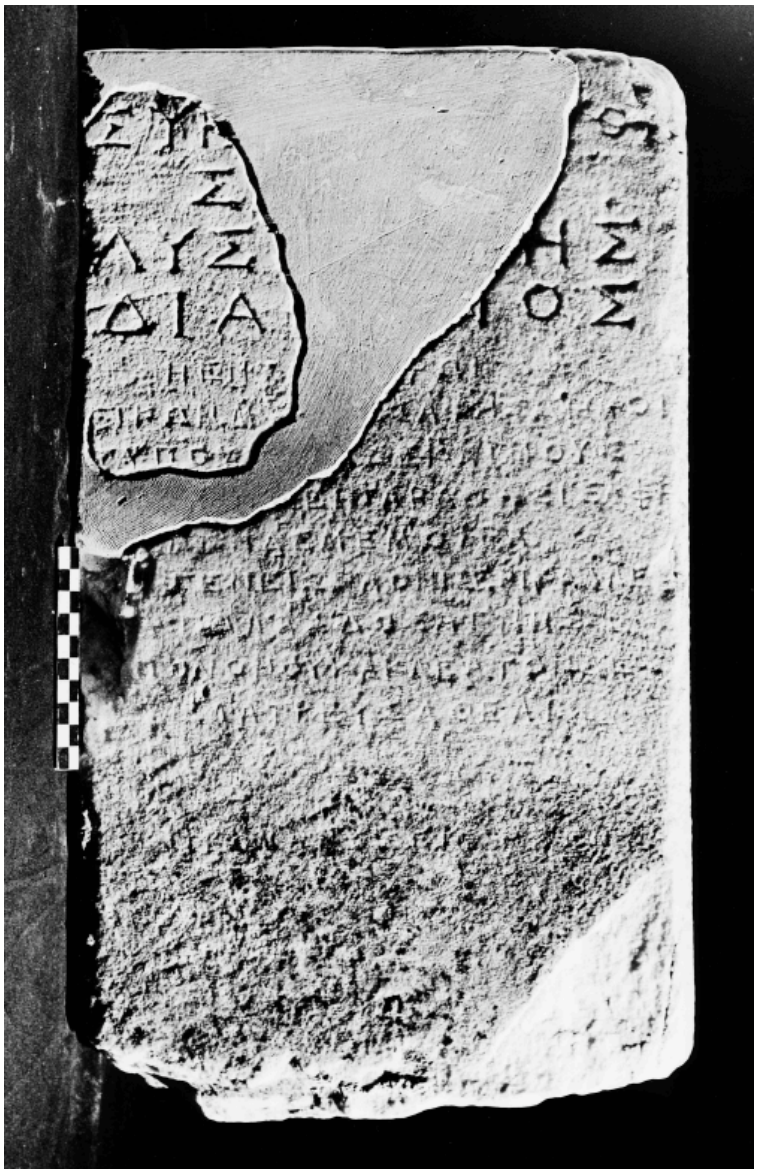
APPENDIX 1: προφητεία

1. Paestan red-figure bell-krater depicting the Delphic oracle with her tripod, c. 330 BCE[807]

[807] Public domain. It is hard to judge the age of this Pythia.

APPENDIX 2: ΔΙΑΚΟΝΊΑ

1. Statue base for a portrait of Syeris, *diakonos* of Lysimache (*IG* II² 3464)[808]



[808] Keesling, "Syeris, Diakonos," 470.

2. Detail of *IG* II² 3464, showing part of the name label and part of the epigram[809]

[809] Keesling, "Syeris, Diakonos," 471.

3. Hermes, Athenian red-figure lekythos, c. 500 - 450 BCE [810]

[810] Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

APPENDIX 3: διδάσκω

1. Horace, *Carmen Saeculare* (Hymn for a New Age)[811]

Phoebe silvarumque potens Diana,
lucidum caeli decus, o colendi
semper et culti, date quae precamur
tempore sacro,
quo Sibyllini monuere versus
virgines lectas puerosque castos
dis, quibus septem placuere colles,
dicere carmen.

Phoebus Apollo, Diana, queen of the forests,
O deities the glories of the sky,
Most worthy to be worshiped, grant, we pray,
Our prayers in the sacred season.
Now is the time the Sibylline Leaves ordain
That the chosen maidens and pure young men should sing
The poem written in honor of the gods
Who favor the Seven Hills.[812]

[811] *Carmen Saeculare* 1.1-8

[812] Translation by David Ferry.

APPENDIX 4: ἔλεος

Image 1: A Statue of the goddess Clementiae [813]

[813] Clemenza, rielaborazione romana da originale greco del IV secolo ac., testa di reaturo, inv. 2260. Used by permission under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License. Clementia holds a patera and perhaps a sceptre.

Image 2: Augustus' "Clipeus virtutis" [the shield of power] which associates him with the virtue clementiae[814]

[814] Used by permission under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License.

Image 3: Coin showing Tiberius' association with clementiae[815]

[815] Used by permission under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License.

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