Paul and God's temple

Hogeterp, Albert Livinus Augustinus

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

PAUL AND GOD'S TEMPLE

A HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

OF CULTIC IMAGERY

IN THE CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

Albert L.A. Hogeterp

PAUL AND GOD'S TEMPLE

RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN

PAUL AND GOD'S TEMPLE

A Historical Interpretation of Cultic Imagery

in the Corinthian Correspondence

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de
Godgeleerdheid en Godsdienstwetenschap
aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
op gezag van de
Rector Magnificus, dr. F. Zwarts,
in het openbaar te verdedigen op
donderdag 29 januari 2004
om 16.00 uur

door

Albert Livinus Augustinus Hogeterp

geboren op 3 december 1973
te Dronrijp

Promotor(es)   : Prof.dr. G.P. Luttikhuizen
                          : Prof.dr. F. García Martínez

Co-promotor   : Dr. A. Hilhorst

Beoordelingscommissie   : Prof.dr. R. Roukema
                          : Prof.dr. E. Noort
                          : Prof.dr. P.J. Tomson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

For Journals, Book Series and Other Cited Works

This list of abbreviations generally follows the system as set out by Patrick H. Alexander *et al.* (eds.), *The SBL Handbook of Style. For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Hendrickson: Peabody, Mass., 1999). The same reference work has further been used for abbreviations of place names and sources.

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D.N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BCH	*Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*
BDAG	Bauer, W., F.W. Danker, W.F. Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago, 1999
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CHJ	*Cambridge History of Judaism*. Ed. W.D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein. Cambridge, 1984-
CII	*Corpus inscriptionum iudaicarum*. Edited by J.B. Frey. 2 vols. Rome, 1936-1952
CNRS	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
ConBNT	Coniectanea neotestamentica or Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FO	*Folia orientalia*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
GNS	*Good New Studies*
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Jastrow	Jastrow, M. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature.* 2d ed. New York, 1903
KBL	Koehler, L., and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros.* 2d ed. Leiden, 1958 Including the *Supplementum ad Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*. Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y.
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JDS	Judean Desert Series
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*

JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period*
JSJ Sup	Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H.S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon.* 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford, 1996
NewDocs	*New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity.* Edited by G.H.R. Horsley and S. Llewelyn. North Ryde, N.S.W., 1981-
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTApo	*New Testament Apocrypha.* Revised Edition edited by W. Schneemelcher. English translation of the German edition, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen* (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 1989-1990), edited by R. McL. Wilson. 2 vols. Clarke: Cambridge & WJK: Louisville, Ky., 1991 & 1992
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* Edited by J.H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983 & 1985
PAM	Palestine Archaeological Museum
PEFQS	Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement
PGL	*Patristic Greek Lexicon.* Edited by G.W.H. Lampe. Oxford, 1968.
PSI	Papiri greci e latini: Publicazioni della Società Italiana per la Ricerca dei Papiri Greci e Latini in Egitto. Florence, 1912 ff
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
RB	*Revue biblique*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumran*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943 –
ScrHier	*Scripta hierosolymitana*
SEG	*Supplementum epigraphicum graecum*
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB	Studia post-biblica
SubBi	*Subsidia biblica*
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TS	Texts and Studies

TS	*Theological Studies*
TWNT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament.* Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Stuttgart, 1932-1979
UBS	United Bible Societies
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher für Wissenschaft
VCSup	Vigiliae christianae: Supplement Series
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WJK	Westminster John Knox Press
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul's cultic imagery in the context of his time

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul addresses the Corinthians as "God's Temple", referring to the indwelling presence of God's Spirit among them (1 Cor 3:16-17). Paul's use of the expression of the Temple has often been interpreted as designating a 'spiritual temple'.[1] Paul's temple imagery does not stand isolated in his Letters. The concept of God's Temple recurs in 1 Cor 6:19 and 2 Cor 6:16. Moreover, Paul uses cultic imagery derived from the temple service, such as references to a priestly service (e.g. 1 Cor 9:13; Rom 15:16), incense offering (2 Cor 2:14-16; Phil 4:18), libation (e.g. Phil 2:17), sacrifices (e.g. 1 Cor 10:18, Phil 2:17, 4:18) and the offering of the Gentiles (Rom 15:16). This pluriform, recurring presence of cultic imagery in Paul's Letters suggests that Paul does not use a chance metaphor, but draws on relevant issues for himself and his readers when he employs this imagery.

What is the message underlying Paul's idea of the Corinthian community as God's Temple? What does Paul mean when he calls the material contribution by Diaspora congregations the 'offering of the Gentiles'? The cultic imagery of Paul, which might sound arcane in certain respects today,[2] must have appealed to his original readers in their world of thought and experience. At least, we may assume that Paul's aim was to make his message understandable to his readers. The phrase '*Do you not know* that you are God's Temple?' in 1 Cor 3:16a shows that Paul presupposed certain notions which were immediately clear to the intended hearers. An adequate understanding of Paul's cultic imagery calls for an interpretation which explores the relation between imagery and message in its contemporary context.

A historical interpretation of Paul's cultic imagery may bring the idea of the community as God's Temple out in sharp relief. This interpretation should clarify what Paul's undeniably figurative notion of a temple denotes and how Paul's figurative uses of cultic imagery may and may not be related to literal dimensions of cultic service. Apart from his figurative references to aspects of cult, Paul points to the Jerusalem Temple cult of his time in a concrete way in a number of cases (cf. Rom 9:4; 1 Cor 10:18). In fact, Paul's mentioning of sacrificial meals of the "Israel according to the flesh" in 1 Cor 10:18 has generated divergent or even opposite interpretations.[3] The question of how Paul's cultic imagery was connnected to the cult of the contemporary Jerusalem Temple merits close examination of both the historical context of Paul's time and of the theological dimensions of Paul's Letters with respect to the issue of cultic terms.

Before investigating these issues, it is, however, necessary to survey previous scholarly interpretations of Paul's cultic imagery as well as new approaches from which a historical interpretation may benefit.

---

[1] Cf. most recently, J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life* (Oxford University Press: Oxford & New York, 1996) 226 about Paul's "vision of the community as a spiritual temple (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19)".

[2] Cf. e.g. the comment on Phil 2:17 by G.D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* NICNT (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, Mich., 1995) 251 "in a sentence which was undoubtedly perfectly clear to Paul and probably reasonably understandable to the Philippians as they heard it read, the *distance of time and circumstances* has left us to wonder both what the imagery denotes and how the sentence fits into the letter".

[3] 1 Cor 10:18 has recently been interpreted by W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* 2 *1Kor 6,12-11,16* EKKNT (Benziger: Düsseldorf / Neukirchener Verlag: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1995) 442-444 as an example of the disobedient Israel tempted to idolatry, whereas G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* NICNT (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, Mich., 1987) 470-471 instead refers to it as Paul's argument "that there *is* religious significance to the Lord's Table and to the sacrificial meals of Israel" (471).

2. Previous scholarly interpretations of Paul's cultic imagery

2.1 Spiritualisation

The interpretation of cultic terminology in Paul's Letters is part of the study about the 'spiritualisation of the cultic concepts of Temple, priesthood, and sacrifice in the New Testament' which H. Wenschkewitz published in 1932.[4] Wenschkewitz distinguished between occasional, naïve forms of spiritualisation, as in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament and in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, and reflective forms of spiritualisation, as in Hellenistic and Hellenistic Jewish literature. In his study about cultic terms in the New Testament, Wenschkewitz elaborated an approach which has been very influential and nearly unchallenged in subsequent scholarship up till the 1970s. The influence of Wenschkewitz' idea of 'spiritualisation' has, however, also extended to some of the most recent publications.[5]

The idea of a contrast with literal cultic practices is inherent in the concept of 'spiritualisation'. Because of this contrast, 'spiritualisation' not infrequently entails a tension with or even a substitution for the literal dimension of cultic practices. From Wenschkewitz's study up till recent scholarship, 'spiritualisation' has been understood as a process of spiritual forms of piety superseding cultic forms of piety.[6] After I will have surveyed the scholarly use of the concepts of 'spiritualisation' and 'substitution', I will draw attention to similarities and differences between these two concepts.

Several scholarly studies on cultic terminology in Paul's letters and the other New Testament writings appear to have been derived from the approach of 'spiritualisation' or do even explicitly claim to follow this approach. In an article in the *Journal of Theological Studies* of 1950, C.F.D. Moule reads the cultic terminology in, among other New Testament writings, the Pauline letters in somewhat different terms of 'sublimation' of the sacrificial system, though also implying spiritualisation, for he notes Paul's use of cultic concepts in "*purely spiritual senses*".[7]

The article by K. Weiß in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* of 1954 aligns explicitly with the approach of 'spiritualisation' by Wenschkewitz. Weiß stresses the fact that 'spiritualisation' entails other aspects than the figurative use of cultic terms in a non-cultic context, instead creating an essentially new perspective.[8] It may be useful to quote Weiß's definition of 'spiritualisation' here:

> "Es handelt sich nicht um eine äußere, sondern eine innere Loslösung von den kultischen Vorgängen und Objekten, weil diese als nicht mehr gültiger Ausdruck oder geradezu als im Widerspruch zu den gemeinten und beabsichtigen geistigen Wirklichkeiten stehend empfunden werden".[9]

---

[4] H. Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe Tempel, Priester und Opfer im Neuen Testament.* Angelos Beihefte 4 (Leipzig, 1932).

[5] Cf. e.g. F. Siegert, '"Zerstört diesen Tempel …!". Jesus als "Tempel" in den Passionsüberlieferungen', in Johannes Hahn (ed.), *Zerstörungen des Jerusalemer Tempels. Geschehen – Wahrnehmung – Bewältigung* (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2002) 108-139 at 135-137 who appears to prefer the term *Metaphorisierung*, but on the other hand still uses the term 'spiritualisation' as applied to Hellenistic Judaism and 'Urchristentum'.

[6] G. Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im Neuen Testament* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1971) 144 quotes Wenschkewitz about 'spiritualisation' as a process in which "die Frömmigkeitsformen *geistiger* Art die Ausdrucksformen der *kultischen* Frömmigkeit für sich in Anspruch nehmen" (8) from the perspective of a "relative Freiheit vom Kultus, eine gebrochene Stellung zu ihm" (9).

[7] C.F.D. Moule, 'Sanctuary and Sacrifice in the Church of the New Testament', *JTS* n.s. 1 (1950) 29-41 at 36.

[8] K. Weiß, 'Paulus – Priester der christlichen Kultgemeinde', *TLZ* 79 (1954) 355-364 at 360.

[9] Weiß, 'Paulus', 361.

Thus, Weiß's longer definition of spiritualisation suggests that the actual Jerusalem Temple cult was either not a valid expression for Paul, or in tension with Paul's message of a spiritual reality. We perceive here that some of the implications of the 'spiritualisation' perspective are exemplified.

The monographs by B. Gärtner in 1965[10] and by R.J. McKelvey in 1969[11] further apply the concept of 'spiritualisation' to the cultic terminology in the New Testament and to contemporary Jewish writings. In view of Wenschkewitz's distinction between a naïve and a reflective form of spiritualisation, McKelvey has proposed to broaden Wenschkewitz's approach of '*reflective* spiritualisation'. McKelvey not only employs the concept in relation to Hellenism and Hellenistic Judaism, in particular Philo's writings, but also in relation to Palestinian Jewish literature, that is, the Dead Sea Scrolls in particular.[12] Both Gärtner and McKelvey understand 'spiritualisation' as a historical process which provides the context for the use of cultic concepts in the New Testament at large, and by implication also in Paul's Letters.[13]

The article about the 'spiritual Temple in the Pauline Letters' by J.C. Coppens in the *Studia Evangelica* of 1973 still suggests the idea of 'spiritualisation', even though Coppens casts doubt on the link between temple imagery in the New Testament and the literature of Qumran, as supposed by Gärtner and McKelvey.[14] The 'spiritualised' perspective on Pauline temple imagery in 1-2 Corinthians has also found its way into some older commentaries and into the Theological Dictionary to the New Testament edited by G. Kittel.[15]

Scholarly criticism of the approach of 'spiritualisation'

Since the 1970s, New Testament scholars have formulated methodological criticism against the approach of 'spiritualisation', although there were some antecedents before the 1970s of critical observations by Old Testament scholars.[16] In his monograph of 1971, G. Klinzing expressed caution against the term 'spiritualisation', which, because of its set theological connotations, gives a misleading perspective on the literature of Qumran. Klinzing prefers the term *Umdeutung* for his study of cultic terminology in the literature of Qumran and the New Testament.[17] Likewise, E. Schüssler Fiorenza has challenged the approach of 'spiritualisation'

---

[10] B. Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament. A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran texts and the New Testament* (SNTSMS 1; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1965) 17 refers to Wenschkewitz as "*one of the leading authorities* in this field"; cf. 44, 72.

[11] R.J. McKelvey, *The New Temple. The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford UP: Oxford, 1969) 42-57.

[12] McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 43.

[13] Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community*, 17-18; McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 122, 180.

[14] J.C. Coppens, 'The Spiritual Temple in the Pauline Letters and its Background', *Studia Evangelica* VI (Akademie-Verlag: Berlin, 1973) 53-66.

[15] E.g. H. Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1969) 96-97. G. Kittel (ed.), *TWNT* III *Θ-K* (Kohlhammer: Stuttgart, 1938) 189 about early Christian perspectives on sacrifice, in comparison to the New Testament, being "nichstdestoweniger *spiritualisierend*". Cf. F. Mußner, 'Jesus und »das Haus des Vaters« - Jesus als »Tempel«', J. Schreiner (ed.), *Freude am Gottesdienst. Aspekte ursprünglicher Liturgie* (Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk: Stuttgart, 1983) 267-275 (268-269) claiming a stronger degree of *Spiritualisierung* of cultic terms in the New Testament as compared to the Old testament and early Judaism due to developments in early christology, referring to the study of Wenschkewitz and other literature on p. 269 n. 9.

[16] For the antecedents, see S. Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien I-VI* (Kristiania, 1921/1924) 51; H.-J. Hermisson, *Sprache und Ritus im altisraelitischen Kult* (Neukirchen, 1965) 8, 24-28, quoted in Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus*, 145.

[17] Klinzing, 'Zum Begriff "Spiritualisierung"', in idem, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus*, 143-147 at 146 about the "dualism between cultic and spiritual piety" inherent in the term 'spiritualisation'.

because of its 'dogmatic presuppositions' and the diversity of meanings covered by it, preferring the "more descriptive term *transference*".[18]

The idea of the Qumran community as a 'spiritual' Temple which would substitute the concrete Jerusalem Temple cult has further received a divided evaluation on the part of Qumran scholarship. In an article of 1986, D. Dimant argued against this idea of substitution in favour of the view of analogy and complementarity with the Second Temple.[19] In her study of evidence for sectarian houses of prayer in the Damascus Document,[20] A. Steudel discussed the self-definition of the sectarian worship service as equivalent with and competitive to the Jerusalem Temple, suggesting that the sectarian public prayers were still oriented towards Jerusalem. Other scholars, like L.H. Schiffman and G.J. Brooke, who have recently published articles on the theme of the 'Qumran Community without Temple', appear to have no problem with the idea of substitution and spiritualisation respectively.[21]

With regard to recent critical evaluation of the 'spiritualisation' approach in New Testament scholarship, we should finally mention the contributions of W. Strack and Ch. Böttrich. In his monograph of 1994, W. Strack objected to the viewpoint of 'spiritualisation' of the Temple in Paul's Letters, claiming that Paul does not redefine the Temple cult itself, but the situation of the Gentiles in relation to salvation, which he expresses in cultic terms.[22] However, this still leaves the question why Paul expressed his message through cultic terms supposedly derived from contemporary Jewish tradition, while he had converts from the Gentiles in mind. Further cricitism against the approach of 'spiritualisation' was articulated by Christfried Böttrich in an article in a congress volume of 1999. Böttrich opposes the idea of 'spiritualisation' as well as that of 'substitution', believing that Paul's metaphor of the Temple must be seen in contrast to the contemporary Jerusalem Temple.[23]

Historical problems with the approach of 'spiritualisation'

The historical problem with the assumption of a 'spiritualisation' of cult is, in my view, twofold. The first problem concerns the presupposition of a contemporary *Jewish context* for a broad tradition of 'spiritualisation'. With regard to the literature of Qumran, we have already emphasised the fact that there is a divided scholarly reception concerning the question whether 'spiritualisation' applies to the temple imagery in the Qumran texts, and whether this concept constitutes the background for the spiritualisation of cult in the New Testament writings.

The idea that contemporary Judaism, in particular Hellenistic Judaism, as reflected in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, paved the way for the kind of 'spiritualisation' of cult

---

[18] E. Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Cultic language in Qumran and in the NT', *CBQ* 38 (1976) 159-177, there p. 161.

[19] D. Dimant, '*4QFlorilegium* and the Idea of the Community as Temple', in A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel and J. Riaud (eds.), *Hellenica et Judaica. Hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetzky* ז'יל (Peeters: Leuven-Paris, 1986) 165-189 at 187.

[20] A. Steudel, 'The Houses of Prostration. *CD* xi 21-xii 1 – Duplicates of the Temple', *RevQ* 16/1 (1993) 49-68 at 56-57 and 62-65.

[21] L.H. Schiffman, 'Community Without Temple: The Qumran Community's Withdrawal from the Jerusalem Temple', and G.J. Brooke, 'Miqdash Adam, Eden and the Qumran Community', in B. Ego *et al.* (eds.), *Gemeinde ohne Tempel. Community without Temple.* (WUNT 118; Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 1999) 267-301 at 272-274, 297.

[22] W. Strack, *Kultische Terminologie in ekklesiologischen Kontexten in den Briefen des Paulus* (BBB 92; Beltz Athenäum Verlag, Weinheim 1994) 'Spiritualisierung bei Paulus?', 375-399 at 380 and 397.

[23] C. Böttrich, '"Ihr seid der Tempel Gottes". Tempelmetaphorik und Gemeinde bei Paulus', in Ego *et al.* (eds.), *Gemeinde ohne Tempel*, 411-425 at 422.

which substituted the Jerusalem Temple cult is undermined by Jewish sources which express adherence to the concrete Temple cult. Thus, even though Philo uses cultic imagery in allegorical, figurative ways, he stresses the importance of pilgrimage to the Jerusalem Temple at the same time (*Spec.Laws* 1.66-70). Why would Philo of Alexandria, who wrote *On the Embassy to Gaius* to the Roman emperor Caligula, in order to dissuade him strongly from his plan to have his statue set up in the Jerusalem Temple, aim to substitute the concrete Temple cult with his figurative cultic imagery?

Another example from Jewish literature in a post-70 CE context may be mentioned here to emphasise that caution is needed against the assumption that 'spiritualisation' of cult, in the sense of substitution for the concrete cult, would be a long-standing process in contemporary Judaism. In *bMenah* 110a, we read the following about the rabbinic discussion surrounding the Mishnah-treatise *Menahot* on meal offerings:

> Rabba said: everyone who is engaged in the Torah does not have to offer a burnt-offering nor a meal offering nor a sin-offering nor a guilt-offering. Rabbi Isaac said: Whence is that proven? As it is said: 'and this is the Torah of the sin-offering' (Lev 6:18), 'and this is the Torah of the guilt-offering' (Lev 7:1). Everyone who is engaged in the Torah of the sin-offering is as if he sacrifices a sin-offering, and everyone who is engaged in the Torah of the guilt-offering is as if he sacrifices a guilt-offering.

This example from the Babylonian Talmud shows that the rabbis of late antiquity had come to redefine religious worship in view of the destruction of the Temple in such a way that the study of the Torah sufficed and could replace the actual sacrifices of the Temple cult. This idea of substitution is, however, not yet present in the Mishnah-treatise *Menahot*. Thus, the idea of an exclusively figurative sense of cult, which replaced the concrete cult, apparently became established in rabbinic Judaism only at a later stage.[24] It therefore appears tendentious to single out figurative usages of cultic imagery in Jewish literature as contemporary contextual evidence for the early Christian sense of a 'spiritualisation' of cult.

The second historical problem concerns the presupposed *early Christian context* of 'spiritualisation' for Paul's cultic imagery. The studies of Gärtner and McKelvey focus on a common tradition of temple imagery in early Christianity and its background, in which Paul's temple imagery is one component.[25] This perspective carries the danger of imposing post-70 CE notions of the established church, as the 'new Temple', onto the interpretation of Paul's cultic imagery. Paul wrote his Letters around the middle of the first century CE to nascent congregations which he or other missionaries had founded. By contrast, the late New Testament writings and patristic literature represent more developed notions of a clerical hierarchy,[26] and of Christianity as a separate religion.[27]

---

[24] Cf. G. Stemberger, 'Reaktionen auf die Tempelzerstörung in der rabbinischen Literatur', in Hahn (ed.), *Zerstörungen des Jerusalemer Tempels*, 207-236 at 207-215 about the idea that the reserved rabbinic perspective on the destruction of the Temple may be understood as a reaction to the repression of the revolt of Bar Kokhba, and as a response to the apocalyptic tendencies which focused on the transformation of the Temple.

[25] Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community*, 49-71 categorises 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, 1 Cor 3:16-17, but also Eph 2:18-22 and 1 Tim 3:15 under the heading 'Paul and the Temple of Christ'; in *The New Temple*, 98-107, McKelvey, rather than focusing on the difference between Eph and Cor, stresses how Eph 2:18-22 elaborates on 1 Cor 3:16-17. Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus*, 167-213, though avoiding the term 'spiritualisation', still surveys 'New Testament parallels' at large with a view to 'Traditionszusammenhang' (191), thereby passing too easily over the later developments in Christian traditions.

[26] Cf. the different ecclesiological context to the temple imagery in 1-2 Corinthians and in Ephesians respectively, and the clerical hierarchy reflected in 1 Peter 5:1-5. See my discussion in chap. 6, section 2.1.

[27] The term Χριστιανός, as an act of self-designation, figures only in the later New Testament writings, 1 Pet 4:16, and Acts 11:26, 26:28, but does not appear in Paul's Letters; the terms ὁ πιστεύων and πιστός dominate in Pauline usage. See chap. 3 about the distinction between pre-70 CE and post-70 CE levels of Jesus-tradition and of self-definition by congregations of believers in Jesus Christ.

The distinction between earlier and later texts and traditions within the earliest history of Christianity touches upon the issue of cultic imagery in a very direct way. That is, the later Christian standpoint of the church as a 'spiritual Temple' carries polemical aspects against Judaism in the light of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Patristic literature comprises the notion of a 'spiritual Temple' and the church as the true Temple.[28] The standpoint of the church as the true Temple in patristic literature is interrelated with the polemical Christian viewpoint of Christianity as the 'true Israel', as we may infer from, among other writings, Justin's work.[29] The tendency towards a spiritual understanding of cult and sacrifice is clearly discernible in later New Testament writings, like 1 Peter 2:5 and Hebrews. However, Paul does not specify his figurative use of cultic terms as spiritual (πνευματικός) concepts. Furthermore, Paul's theology on Israel (Rom 9-11), which warns against Gentile presumption and boasts against the Jews (Rom 11:17-24), stands in contrast with later polemical developments in Christian apologetical literature. Justin, for example, defined Christianity as the 'true, spiritual Israelite race', in contrast with Judaism and the former Temple cult.

The approach of 'spiritualisation' to Paul's cultic imagery is misleading as it often tends to take later theological developments and the historical situation of the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity after 70 CE as a referential framework for the perspective on Paul. The above-mentioned scholarly search for a common tradition in the cultic imagery in New Testament writings is just an implicit example of this. For a historical interpretation of Paul's cultic imagery, it is, however, necessary to interpret Paul on his own terms and in the context of his own time, that is, *before 70 CE* when the Jerusalem Temple still existed and when its worship cult was also vital for the Jerusalem church (Acts 21:17-26).

Finally, let us briefly return to the implications of 'spiritualisation' as we have come across this idea earlier in the case of Weiß's article. Weiß implies an inevitable contrast or tension between Paul's supposed 'spiritual' temple imagery and the contemporary Jewish Temple cult. It would, however, be too simplistic to start with the supposition of a complete disjunction between Paul's cultic terminology and cultic symbolism in contemporary Jewish literature, the latter of which certainly being to a large extent rooted in traditional temple religiosity.[30] With his landmark study about Paul and Palestinian Judaism, E.P. Sanders has eschewed the simplistic juxtaposition between Jewish and Christian religion as materialistic on the one hand and spiritual on the other.[31] It is therefore also necessary to reconsider Paul's cultic terminology.

---

[28] Cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1961) 897-898 with the following, significant entries about the metaphor of the Church as temple of God: *Barnabas* 4.11: γενώμεθα πνευματικοί, γενώμεθα ναὸς τέλειος τῷ θεῷ; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 7.13 (p.58.30; 516A): ναὸς δέ ἐστιν ὁ μὲν μέγας, ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία, ὁ δὲ μικρός, ὡς ὁ ἄνθρωπος; Origen, *Hom. 26.3 in Jos.* (p.463.15; M.87.1041C): παρ' ἡμῖν γὰρ ὁ ἀληθινὸς ναός; Chrysostom, *Hom. 6.1 in Eph.* (11.40A): ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ναός ἐστι, καὶ κοινῇ πάντες, καὶ ὡς ἐν σώματι Χριστοῦ οἰκεῖ, καὶ ὡς ἐν ναῷ πνευματικῷ οἰκεῖ.

[29] Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* (ed. Edgar J. Goodspeed, 1914) 11.5: Ἰσραηλιτικὸν γὰρ τὸ ἀληθινόν, πνευματικόν, καὶ Ἰούδα γένος (..) ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν; cf. 40.1 f. about Justin's christological interpretation of the cessation of the Jerusalem Temple cult. Cf. *Barnabas* 4.7-14.

[30] About cultic symbolism in contemporary Jewish literature, cf. e.g. Psalm 50:23; Philo, *Det.* 21; cf. literary and epigraphic evidence of designations of the pre-70 CE synagogue as ἱερόν (e.g. Josephus, *JW* 4.406-409; 7.44-45) and τὸ ἱερὸν περίβολον (e.g. *CII* 2.1433). For a discussion of this terminology for the ancient synagogue, see D.D. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts. The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period* (SBLDS 169; Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, Ga., 1999) 122-132. Cf. my chapter 5.

[31] In his *Paul and Palestinian Judaism. A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (SCM: London, 1977) 12-13 E.P. Sanders objects to the idea, inherent in much comparative scholarship up till then, of comparing and contrasting two religions, Christianity and Judaism, on the basis of a supposed 'essence of religion', like faith versus works of the Law, or spiritual versus materialistic.

2.2 Substitution

The second long-standing approach in scholarly literature concerns the idea of the church as the 'new Temple', which substitutes the Jerusalem Temple cult. This approach of substitution may be intertwined with the aforementioned approach of 'spiritualisation' in the older scholarly literature. R.J. McKelvey focused on the church in the New Testament as the 'new Temple' in his monograph of 1969; a work in which he also uses the concept of 'spiritualisation'.[32] The idea of a new, spiritual Temple which replaces the old, material Temple may, however, again be a scholarly interpretation influenced by later Christian tradition and not explicitly demonstrable in the text of Paul's Letters.[33]

The idea of temple imagery as substitution for a concrete temple cult also figures in recent scholarly literature which has abandoned the approach of 'spiritualisation'. G. Klinzing connects the christological orientation of atonement in the New Testament at large and in the Pauline Letters in particular with the idea of a definite substitution for a sacrificial cult.[34] Romans 12:1 and Paul's supposedly loose applications of cultic imagery provide important evidence for Klinzing in favour of the idea that the literal dimension of cultic practices has lost its significance for Paul.[35]

W. Strack has more recently studied the cultic terminology in Paul's Letters, abandoning the perspective of 'spiritualisation' for the idea of 'cult typology'.[36] Yet, this 'cult typology' still entails the idea of substitution. In his chapter on Rom 15:14-21 as an 'ecclesiological message of Paul', Strack interprets Paul's cultic terminology in Rom 15:16 in the following 'typological' way:

> "Wenn im Kreuzestod Christi eschatologische Sühne geschehen ist, bedarf es keiner weiteren kultisch-rituellen Reinigung und Heiligung der Glaubenden".[37]

Strack's ecclesiological interpretation of Paul's cultic terminology entails the idea that Christ substituted the Jewish cult of ritual purification and atonement.

In view of Strack's interpretation of Paul's cultic terminology, it should be noted that Paul does write about redemption through Christ's blood (Rom 3:25-26) and about Christ as the paschal lamb (1 Cor 5:7), but not explicitly about the idea that every ritual or cultic purification would be pointless since Christ's atoning sacrifice. If 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is accepted as a Pauline pericope, it may be noted that 2 Cor 7:1 suggests a kind of ritual purification, even though Christ is mentioned in 2 Cor 6:14. Paul's thought about atonement is undeniably christologically oriented, but it is difficult to find a Pauline passage in which Paul explicitly contrasts the atonement for sin through Christ with contemporary Jewish cultic practices.

In contrast with Paul's Letters, we do find the explicit idea that Christ's sacrifice has definitely substituted priestly sacrifices and cultic purifications in Hebrews 4:14-7:28, 10:1-18. The author of Hebrews repeatedly stresses that the priestly cult of sacrifices and offerings

---

[32] McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 42-57.

[33] Paul writes about a new covenant in Christ, ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη, in 1 Cor 11:25 and 2 Cor 3:6, but not about a 'new Temple'.

[34] Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus*, 221 about the death of Jesus as the eschatological sacrifice and atonement "das an die Stelle aller herkömmlichen Opfer tritt", referring to Rom 3:25, 1 Cor 15:3, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Cor 5:7, 1 Pet 1:19f., Heb 9:26, 10:5ff. (221 n. 4).

[35] Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus*, 214-217, 221.

[36] Strack, *Kultische Terminologie*, 69-70.

[37] Strack, *Kultische Terminologie*, 70.

cannot take away sins (Hebrews 10:1.4.11.18), and he contrasts this priestly cult of sacrifices and offerings with the offering of the body of Jesus Christ as an expression of the will of God (Hebrews 10:5-10). Hebrews 10:9b is revealing for this perspective of substitution: 'he abolishes the first in order to establish the second', ἀναιρεῖ τὸ πρῶτον ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ. The perspective of Hebrews 3:1 on Jesus as the 'apostle and high priest of our confession' is unfamiliar to Paul. Since Hebrews is usually dated to the last decades of the first century CE,[38] that is, *after 70 CE*, we should bear in mind that the idea of substitution may have been related to the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity in post-70 CE circumstances.[39]

Having surveyed the scholarly use of the concepts of 'spiritualisation' and 'substitution', certain similarities and differences may be noted. The approach of 'spiritualisation' has been characterised by a distance from and reinterpretation of the concrete dimension of cultic practices, due to a perceived contrast between cultic piety and spiritual piety. The supersession of cult by spiritual forms of religion is the ultimate consequence of the process of 'spiritualisation', and is equivalent to the idea of 'substitution'. Nevertheless, apart from 'spiritualisation', the concept of 'substitution' is also used in more recent scholarship, based on the interpretation of temple imagery in the New Testament at large, the Pauline tradition in particular, and the interpretation of cultic terms in Paul's Letters in connection with Pauline christology.

The ambiguous Pauline evidence, however, leaves the question whether the substitution perspective is an adequate interpretation of Paul's cultic imagery in all respects. The tentative argument of Christfried Böttrich against the interpretation of Paul's temple imagery as a substitution for the Jerusalem Temple cult, which we have already mentioned, deserves further attention. A comprehensive interpretation of Paul's cultic imagery in context, which will be undertaken in part three (chaps. 6-8), might yield further insights on this issue.

2.3 The comparative religions approach

In the above survey we have already come across scholarly tendencies to understand the cultic imagery of the New Testament writings in a broader historical context, drawing Hellenistic, Hellenistic Jewish and Palestinian Jewish texts into the debate. The study of common motifs and themes in Christian and non-Christian (Jewish and Hellenistic) texts, in search of an evolution from pre-Christian to Christian thought, was a traditionally common approach to the history of religions.[40] Many older studies on cultic imagery in the New Testament are characterised by a comparative perspective which reflects the influence of the history of religions school. The comment by R.J. McKelvey that, after the developments in Jewish and Greek thought about cult, "it was left to Christianity to solve the problem in terms of a temple which was at once new and spiritual", is a typical example of the influence exerted by the evolutionary perspective of the history of religions school.[41]

---

[38] See U. Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (UTB 1830; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, ²1996) 422; B.D. Ehrman, *The New Testament. A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (Oxford University Press: New York & Oxford, ²2000) 378-384 about early Christian self-definition in Hebrews as continuous with, but also superior to Judaism. Strack, *Kultische Terminologie*, 371-373 further refers to a post-70 CE 'historising' perspective of Hebrews on cultic practice.

[39] *Contra* Strack, *Kultische Terminologie*, 373 who compares cult typology in Hebrews with Philo's metaphors.

[40] For a brief historiographical survey, see e.g. W.A. Meeks, 'Judaism, Hellenism, and the Birth of Christianity', in T. Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (WJK: Louisville [etc.], 2001) 17-27.

[41] McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 57.

Introduction

The problematic aspects of a comparative religious approach are particularly illustrated by older studies which combine cultic imagery in the New Testament with contemporary Judaism. Pre-1950s scholarly work on cultic imagery in the New Testament, published before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls,[42] mainly focused on the comparison with Hellenistic and Hellenistic Jewish literature.[43] In the above sections we have already discussed how scholarly approaches to cultic imagery in the New Testament have been intertwined with spiritualisation and substitution since the influential study of Wenschkewitz, which drew mainly on a comparative approach to Hellenism and Hellenistic Jewish literature.

The main project of the studies by B. Gärtner in 1965 and by G. Klinzing in 1971 was a comparative study between temple imagery in the New Testament and the literature of Qumran. The study of R.J. McKelvey further accords an important place to the literature of Qumran in the survey of Jewish and Greek conceptualisations of the temple.[44] The studies by Gärtner and Klinzing served to point to the Palestinian, or even specifically Qumranite, background of traditions of temple imagery in the New Testament. However, the authors admit that the historical context for this background can be outlined only in a hypothetical way at best.[45] Since this historical context is not further specified, the idea of a direct link between Qumranite temple imagery and, in our case, Paul's temple imagery also remains suspect and hypothetical. The thematic comparison, which lacks specific historical connections, forms a weak point in the above mentioned studies.

The thematic comparison by itself has, however, been criticised by a number of scholars. First, we should mention the general caution expressed by S. Sandmel against speculations about one text as a literary source for another text.[46] Sandmel defines the search for connections between two texts on the mere basis of literary parallels out of context as *parallelomania*. He proposes to interpret acknowledged parallels in Jewish texts, without further specification, pointing to common Jewish tradition rather than to specific literary connections.[47] The epoch-making study of E.P. Sanders on *Paul and Palestinian Judaism. A*

---

[42] For the impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the exegesis of Paul's letters, note for example W.D. Davies, 'Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Flesh and Spirit', in K. Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (SCM: London, 1958) 157-182; the bibliographical survey of H. Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament* I (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 1966) 169-215; J. Murphy-O'Connor (ed.), *Paul and Qumran. Studies in New Testament Exegesis* (Geoffrey Chapman: London [etc.] 1968); W.S. LaSor, 'The Pauline Writings and Qumran', in idem, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, Mich. 1972) 168-178; H.-W. Kuhn, 'The Impact of the Qumran Scrolls on the understanding of Paul', in D. Dimant and U. Rappaport (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Forty Years of Research* (STDJ 10; Brill: Leiden [etc.] / Magness Press, Hebrew University / Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi: Jerusalem) 327-339; T.H. Lim, *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1997); J.A. Fitzmyer, S.J., 'Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls', in P.W. Flint & J.C. VanderKam (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years. A Comprehensive Assessment* II (Leiden [etc.]: Brill, 1999) 599-621; H. Räisänen, 'Paul's and Qumran's Judaism', in A.J. Avery-Peck *et al.* (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity. Part Five. The Judaism of Qumran: A Systemic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls* 2 *World View, Comparing Judaisms* (Brill: Leiden [etc.], 2001) 173-200.

[43] Cf. the study of H. Wenschkewitz cited in section 2.1 above. Cf. Gärtner's 'Introduction', in idem, *The Temple and the Community*, ix-xi about the "influence of Hellenistic civilization on the Christian thought-world" (ix) and the Dead Sea Scrolls as "a most important source of *supplementary* information" (x).

[44] Cf. McKelvey, *The New Temple*, 36-38, 46-53.

[45] Cf. Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community*, 138-142 after admitting "since our knowledge of the factual situation is strictly limited, we must present our findings in the form of a hypothesis" (138), concludes about the "Palestinian rather than the Hellenistic background" of Paul's temple imagery (142). Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus*, 210-212 recapitulates his argument about the idea of the early Christian community as Temple as ultimately originating from Qumran, but without a clear hypothesis about the historical context: "Fragt man aber, wann und wo sie zuerst übernommen wurde, so bleibt vieles im dunkeln" (210).

[46] S. Sandmel, 'Parallelomania', *JBL* 81/1 (1962) 1-13.

[47] Sandmel, 'Parallelomania', 5-6.

Comparison of Patterns of Religion in 1977 extensively discussed the failure of the older comparative religious approach. Sanders has illustrated the arbitrariness of a comparison of texts from different religions on the basis of literary parallels through the example of an analogy between identical blocks in two very different buildings.[48] Just as the blocks in two different buildings have a different place and function, the comparison between motifs and themes in Paul's Letters and Palestinian Jewish literature does not allow for conclusions by itself. Paul's perspective and the perspective(s) of Palestinian Judaism should each be taken on their own terms in order to avoid a biased comparison.

Second, J.C. Coppens and E. Schüssler Fiorenza have specifically criticised the comparative studies of B. Gärtner, R.J. McKelvey, and G. Klinzing. In his article published in 1973, Coppens has rather stressed the fundamental differences between Qumranite temple imagery, with its emphasis on cultic functions, and Paul's temple imagery.[49] Coppens has also criticised the lack of foundation for Gärtner's hypothesis that Jesus was aware of the Qumranite idea of the community as a Temple.[50] Schüssler Fiorenza has criticised the comparative approach of '*religionsgeschichtlich* background or parallels' as inadequate. According to Schüssler Fiorenza the inadequacy consists in the fact that this kind of comparative approach neither explains 'theological differences' between the two communities which are compared, nor studies the "social context and the theological interest and function" of the temple imagery.[51]

The recent study by W. Strack also carries problematic aspects of a comparative approach. The problem with Strack's perspective of 'ecclesiology' consists in the fact that it lends itself for intra-Christian discussion but less well for a comparative study between the New Testament and contemporary Jewish literature, to which Strack nevertheless applies the term.[52] Ecclesiology has too fixed theological connotations about the Christian Church to be useful as a comparative term.

Nevertheless, the reason for a comparison with contemporary Jewish traditions is clearly expressed by H.-J. Klauck, who has stressed the earliest Christianity's dependence on the Jewish "Umwelt, die voll war von kultischen Symbolen".[53] Paul at times explicitly mentions Israel's cult (cf. 1 Cor 10:18, Rom 9:4). He also writes about his relation to the Jerusalem church, fellow missionaries, opponents, and Judaism in his Letters. In order to understand Paul's position within the context of contemporary Jewish and Christian attitudes to the Temple, a historical comparative study will be necessary.

In my view, for a comparative approach to Paul's cultic imagery to succeed, we should start from a perspective which takes the above-mentioned scholarly criticism into account. We should not apply the comparative approach to a comparison between two communities, but, rather, to the larger fabric of contemporary Jewish culture, of which the earliest followers of Jesus Christ were part. The question will need to be addressed whether and how Paul's cultic imagery related to or contrasted with perspectives on cultic worship within contemporary Judaism and earliest (pre-70 CE) Christianity. It will be necessary to reconsider the historical context of Paul's cultic imagery by surveying contemporary Jewish

---

[48] Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 1-13.

[49] Coppens, 'The Spiritual Temple', 53-66 at 62.

[50] Coppens, 'The Spiritual Temple', 64.

[51] Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Cultic Language', 159-177 at 162.

[52] Strack, *Kultische Terminologie*, 141-156 at 142 about the '"ecclesiology" of Deuteronomy'; 149 about the 'ecclesiological understanding' of קהל in the Qumran-text 1QSa 2,4. Strack takes a study of L. Rost in 1938 about the 'alttestamentlichen Vorstufen von Kirche' as a point of departure (141).

[53] H.-J. Klauck, 'Kultische Symbolsprache bei Paulus', in Schreiner (ed.), *Freude am Gottesdienst*, 107-118.

attitudes to the Temple (chapter 1); by discussing how Qumranite perspectives on the Temple relate to the larger fabric of contemporary Jewish culture (chapter 2); and by examining what information the earliest Christian texts may yield about the perspective(s) of the early Jesus-movement on the Temple (chapter 3). Taking into account the reconsideration of this historical context to cultic imagery, a re-examination of Paul's own relation to Judaism (chaps. 4-5) is required.

Recent developments in Qumran scholarship and in discussions about the relationship between the parts and the whole in contemporary Jewish culture may give a further impetus to the renewed study of monotheistic temple-theological ideas in Paul's time. Recent discussions in Qumran scholarship about the dividing line between sectarian and non-sectarian Qumran texts and possible intersections[54] may help to elaborate a working hypothesis which can bring a Palestinian Jewish background to Paul's temple imagery into focus. It should further be noted that many new publications of Qumran texts since the 1960s and 1970s - like 4QMMT, the 4Q fragments of the Community Rule, and the 4Q fragments of the Damascus Document - have substantially added to our picture of the literature of Qumran in relation to the idea of the Temple (chapter 2).

In order to take scholarly criticism of the pitfalls of the older comparative religions approach fully into account, we should reconsider the historical context to Paul's references to Israel's cult as well as Paul's relation to Judaism. An accurate historical interpretation of Paul's cultic imagery can only be established on the basis of sound methodology. In the following sections, we will see how this interpretation may benefit from new approaches to biblical texts.

3.   The use of new approaches

3.1 Rhetorical criticism

The application of rhetorical theory to the exegesis of Paul's Letters

Since the 1970s, the application of ancient rhetoric to the exegesis of Paul's Letters has become increasingly influential as a method for analysing the argumentation and literary structure of Paul's Letters. Paul's Letters are not interpreted as a systematic expression of theology, but rejoined to their respective historical occasions and original audiences, and re-interpreted with a view to what Paul has to say in this historical context and how he says this. At this point, ancient rhetoric is put to the use of the exegesis of Paul's Letters: just as orators employed a specific kind of argumentation in their speeches to persuade or dissuade a specific audience, the writer of a letter may also have used a specific strategy of persuasion to convey his message to his addressees.

The commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians by Hans Dieter Betz has marked a breakthrough of rhetorical criticism in the exegesis of Paul's Letters.[55] While subsequent scholarship has agreed on the use of ancient rhetorical theory as the means to throw light on the structure of argumentation and the *rhetorical situation* of Paul's Letters, scholarly opinions have diverged about the kind of rhetoric identifiable in Paul's respective Letters. To

---

[54] Cf. the discussion in my chapter 2, section 4.1.

[55] H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1979). For a survey of scholarly interest in rhetorical criticism, as applied to biblical texts anterior to the 1970s, see e.g. R.D. Anderson Jr., 'Modern Rhetorical Criticism and New Testament Scholarship', in idem, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (CBET 18; Kok Pharos: Kampen, 1996) 13-28.

take Paul's Letter to the Galatians again as an example: Betz read this as an *apologetic* Letter, whereas G.A. Kennedy and J. Smit have interpreted Galatians as an example of a *deliberative* discourse.[56]

In his influential handbook on *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* from 1984, G.A. Kennedy has set out to explain how the three basic types of speech in ancient rhetoric, that is, the *epideictic*, the *deliberative*, and the *forensic* types, may also apply to written letters. Recent surveys and handbooks on rhetorical criticism as applied to biblical exegesis, have expressed more caution against identifying Paul's Letters with a particular ideal type of rhetorical genre which might amount to 'eisegesis' rather than to exegesis.[57] This caution is particularly expressed in reaction to previous identifications of Paul's Letter to the Galatians with one ideal type of rhetorical speech.[58]

According to the treatise on *Rhetoric* (1.3-2.17) by Aristotle, the integral parts of an ancient rhetorical discourse comprised the argumentation concerning the debated matter (λόγος), the argument about the reliability of the rhetor's position (ἦθος), and the appeal to the emotions of the audience with regard to the issues at stake (πάθος).[59] The structural elements of an ancient rhetorical discourse have further been compared to the literary structure of Paul's Letters in order to bring out the main issues in relation to the rhetorical situation.

Apart from paying attention to the application of ancient rhetorical theory, recent studies have focused on the modern definition of the *rhetorical situation* of a (written) act of communication. The influential study of L.F. Bitzer distinguishes three constituent parts of a *rhetorical situation*: the *exigence* (the occasion which gives rise to the communication), the *audience* addressed by the communication, and certain *constraints* (circumstances which defy the purpose of the communication.[60]

The reconstruction of the rhetorical situation of Paul's Letters is complicated by the fact that we only have Paul's part of the correspondence. Nevertheless, Paul refers explicitly to written communication by his addressees in the case of the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor 7:1) and to contacts with other believers and missionaries, as in the closing greetings in Romans 16:1-23. We only have Paul's perspective, since the account of the book of Acts,

---

[56] G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill & London, 1984) 144-152; J. Smit, 'The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech', *NTS* 35 (1989) 1-26.

[57] Cf. the emphasis in S.E. Porter, 'Paul of Tarsus and His Letters', in idem (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 B.C. – A.D. 400)* (Brill: Leiden [etc.], 1997) 533-585 on the formulation of criteria to avoid arbitrariness in the application of rhetorical criticism. In his article 'Rhetorical and Narratological Criticism', in S.E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament* (NTTS 25; Brill: Leiden [etc.], 1997) 219-239 at 227 D.L. Stamps notes: "The problem is whether rhetorical criticism, in analyzing a unit of text, discerns a textual integrity which was intentionally created, or critically imposes a pattern of coherence as an analytical procedure", but concludes that it is a "very helpful critical perspective".

[58] Cf. the caution against over-interpretation in J.D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; A & C Black: London, 1993) 20; see also P.H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians. Assessing an approach to Paul's epistle* (SNTSMS 101; Cambridge UP: Cambridge [etc.], 1998) 260-261 at 261 who pleads for the application of a "new rhetoric – one which accounts for developments in disciplines such as psychology, pragmatics and sociology of knowledge".

[59] For a survey of 'the Sources for Ancient Rhetorical Theory', see Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 29-92.

[60] Cf. e.g. the recent commentary by P.F. Esler, *Galatians* (Routledge: London & New York, 1998), 17 who refers to the definition by L.F. Bitzer, 'The Rhetorical Situation', *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968) 1-14; see also the discussion of Bitzer's theory in J.D. Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles. Rhetoric and Situation in Romans 9-11* (SBL: Atlanta, Ga., 2000) 33-35.

which was composed much later, cannot substitute contemporary perspectives of Pauline congregations.

E. Schüssler Fiorenza has argued that the rhetorical situation, as it may be reconstructed from Paul's Letters, cannot be equated with the historical situation. According to Schüssler Fiorenza, a careful analysis of Paul's rhetorical strategies should move beyond the face value reading of Paul's Letters as just a response to a rhetorical situation to the idea that Paul also "creates" the rhetorical situation.[61] With this approach, Schüssler Fiorenza distances herself from the idea that the rhetorical situation that can be inferred from Paul's text brings us automatically closer to the historical situation.[62] Schüssler Fiorenza contributes to the rhetorical analysis of Paul's Letters by the important methodological point of the difference between rhetorical situation and historical situation. With this distinction in mind, Paul's cultic imagery cannot be aligned with a presupposed idea of the historical context. For instance, some of the older studies presupposed a historical context to the (disputable) idea of spiritualisation of cult in the New Testament, taking the New Testament as the culmination of an evolutionary process within Judaism (cf. section 2.3 above).

Criticism of the approach of rhetorising Paul

In recent scholarship, the use of rhetorical criticism has also been challenged. R.D. Anderson Jr. has recently questioned the idea that Paul would have made conscious use of categories from ancient rhetorical theory to build up his argumentation in his Letters. Anderson aims at "a more careful approach to the application of rhetorical theory".[63] He observes that the idea that Paul would have had a formal rhetorical training cannot be demonstrated by the evidence which we have, arguing that Paul's Jewish education could only have allowed for a limited extent of Hellenistic rhetorical training (249f.). Anderson's rhetorical analysis of Gal 1-5:12 (111-167) and Rom 1-11 (169-219), and his discussion of scholarship on rhetorical criticism of 1 Corinthians (221-248) further point to the limitations of classifying these Letters according to rhetorical genres. Anderson finally concludes from "Paul's own characterisation of his literary abilities" that it is unlikely that Paul made deliberate and consistent use of ancient rhetorical theory throughout his Letters.

Anderson's criticism against the uncritical and rigorous application of ancient rhetorical theory to the Pauline Letters in previous scholarship is also reflected in other recent studies (cf. n. 57 above). However, Anderson's argument against too general assumptions about rhetorical training as part of Paul's upbringing is controversial, for this argument depends on the perspective taken on the extent of intersection between Hellenistic and Jewish education in the first century CE. In his critical biography of Paul, J. Murphy-O'Connor has recently placed Jewish upper class education in a Hellenistic context which included

---

[61] E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic. The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1999), 138, 139-140. Cf. eadem, 'Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Cor', *NTS* 33 (1987) 386-403.

[62] In her book *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (Crossroad: New York, 1983) 29 Schüssler Fiorenza argues that a 'feminist critical hermeneutics' should "move from androcentric texts to their social-historical contexts". As evidence for the androcentrism of Paul's Letters, Schüssler Fiorenza mainly refers to 1 Cor 14:33-36, but she also notes that "exegetes are divided on the question of whether the influence of Paul was negative or positive with respect to the role of women in early Christianity" (50). Cf. the evidence against generalisations about 'patriarchal' or 'androcentric' culture in antiquity presented in the studies like those of B. J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue* BJS 36 (Scholars Press: Atlanta, Ga., 1982) and S. Matthews, *First converts: rich pagan women and the rhetoric of mission in early Judaism and Christianity* (Stanford UP: Stanford, Calif., 2001) 96-100.

[63] Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 257, further concludes: "Despite the necessary restrictions and limitations to such application, there is still much to be gained from further study in this field".

rhetorical training. Murphy-O'Connor mentions Philostratus' information about rhetorical training in Tarsus (*Life of Apollonius* 1.7) and Philo's information about Hellenistic-Jewish education (*Spec.Laws* 2.229-230) to sustain the argument that Hellenistic rhetoric may have been a component of Paul's previous education.[64]

It is further possible to provide an interpretation of "Paul's own characterisation of his literary abilities", as in 1 Cor 1:17, 2:2.4.5; 2 Cor 10:10, 11:6, 11:1-12:13, which is different from Anderson's. Murphy-O'Connor has emphasised that Paul's presentation of his own (lack of) oratorical skills in reaction to the criticism by others should not be taken at face value, for it fits in a rhetorical context of countering his opponents.[65] Paul's awareness of different possible rhetorical situations for letters is apparent from his negative reference to opponents who would need 'letters of recommendation', συστατικαὶ ἐπιστολαί (2 Cor 3:1). This type of letter is included in the classification of epistolary theory, the τύποι ἐπιστολικοί, by the first-century BCE Pseudo-Demetrius.[66] Thus, even though Anderson has made an important contribution to the critical and careful use of ancient rhetorical theory, some of his points of criticism with regard to Paul's education and (un)awareness of rhetorical strategies are debatable.

Most recently, Lauri Thurén has criticised the implications of the use of rhetorical criticism for the exegesis of the Pauline Letters as a shift of focus from the theology represented by the texts of Paul's Letters to the historical 'context' of the rhetorical situations. Thurén formulates these possible implications as follows:

> "As a result of the "contextual" studies, many exegetes are increasingly persuaded that Paul was merely a situational thinker or a practical pastor, and possessed only a vague theology, if any".[67]

Thurén does not criticise the use of rhetorical analysis in the exegesis of Paul's Letters *per se*, but pleads for a *de-rhetorizing* of the text of Paul's Letters in order to find the underlying theological ideas expressed by Paul (28). Thus, according to Thurén, rhetorical criticism should not be one-dimensionally applied to the texts of Paul's Letters in terms of technical conventions and non-theological strategies of persuasion, but it should be combined with a dynamic perspective on how such rhetorical devices interact with and effect Paul's theological ideas.

Evaluation of the use of rhetorical criticism

Rhetorical criticism may be helpful in evaluating the argumentative context in which Paul uses cultic language, and in assessing its relation to the issues at stake which prompted Paul to write the particular Letter in which the idea of cultic language occurs. Even though Paul does not rigorously follow the scheme of a particular rhetorical genre, the significance of cultic language in a particular context of argumentation may yield information about what Paul means with these cultic terms, and about what message he aims to convey to his audience with precisely this language.

Determining the rhetorical situation of each specific Letter is important, both for the more general question of Paul's relation to Judaism (chapters 4-5) and for the specific issue of

---

[64] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life*, 49-51, 49.

[65] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life*, 50-51 at 50: "Paul's disclaimer in 2 Corinthians 11:6 is a *rhetorical convention*".

[66] Cf. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 98 n. 257.

[67] L. Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul: a dynamic perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law* (WUNT 124; Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2000), 5.

Paul's use of cultic imagery (chapters 6-8). It is vital to identify the context of communication at the different levels of structure of each Letter. A careful rhetorical analysis of Paul's Letters may yield a more critical perspective on the way in which one should proceed from text to historical context with regard to the subject of cultic imagery.

3.2 Cultic language and the philosophy of religious language

The central question about Paul's cultic language concerns not so much its meaning at face value, but its meaning as applied in the context, as we have already seen. Scholars have used different terms, like 'spiritualisation', 'sublimation', 'Umdeutung', 'transference', or 'Metaphorisierung', to characterise the kinds of application which Paul could have had in mind with his use of cultic imagery. In recent scholarly literature, Paul's temple imagery in particular is mainly described as a 'metaphor'.[68]

The identification of Paul's temple imagery as a metaphor makes sense, for this imagery goes beyond mere analogy or comparison. Metaphor may be defined as a figure of speech which applies language outside its original semantic context, thereby generating a creative tension from which a new perspective emerges. An example of a biblical metaphor from Paul's Letters may serve to illustrate my point. Paul uses the metaphor of the vessel and applies it to human beings in Romans 9:19-24. Although human beings cannot be understood as pottery, as made of clay on a literal level, the application serves to make concrete an aspect of the relation between human beings and God as the creation and the Creator respectively. Since the term 'metaphor' is relatively neutral in designating non-literal language, and since the word does not carry *a priori* suppositions about the nature of the application, we may indeed consider to take the Temple concept in 1-2 Corinthians as a *metaphor*.

It is important not to confuse the concept with its application, for the application depends on the context in Paul's Letters, and is not inherent in the cultic language itself. For instance, when Paul writes about God's indwelling Spirit in relation to the metaphor of the Temple in 1 Cor 3:16-17, this does not necessarily imply a process of 'spiritualisation', since the idea of God's presence and activity through his Spirit is a constant factor in biblical theology. 'Spiritualisation' implies a process, a development away from the material domain, while 'Umdeutung' suggests a direction to an entirely different domain. These descriptive terms, however, leave the question open as to why the concepts subjected to reinterpretation are used at all if their original meaning and context do not matter anymore.

Philosophical perspectives on metaphor in religious language may help to throw a light on the significance of metaphor in Paul's theology. Ancient philosophical theory about metaphors can be put to use in order to understand Paul's figurative language in a contemporary context. Modern philosophical discussions of metaphor, on the other hand, may contribute to the critical awareness of the sensitivities involved in interpreting metaphorical language.

First, we should note that the use of metaphor was an established form in ancient literary theory. Aristotle already noted the importance of metaphor as a literary mode of expression, as we read in his treatise on *Poetics*:

---

[68] Cf. e.g. D.R. de Lacey, 'οἵτινές ἐστε ὑμεῖς: The Function of a Metaphor in St Paul', in W. Horbury (ed.), *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple presented to Ernst Bammel* (JSNTSup 48; Sheffield AP, JSOT Press, Sheffield 1991) 391-409; C. Böttrich, '"Ihr seid der Tempel Gottes"', 411-425. Cf. F. Siegert, '"Zerstört diesen Tempel …!"', 135-136 who appears to prefer the term 'Metaphorisierung' to 'Spiritualisierung'.

'but it is of utmost importance to be apt at metaphors. For it is only this matter which one cannot receive from another and which is the sign of talent, since the right use of a metaphor constitutes the perception of resemblance' (*Poetics* 1459a 5-8).[69]

Aristotle emphasises the perception of resemblance, τὸ ὅμοιον, and analogy, τὸ ἀνάλογον, between current and metaphorical usage in order to avoid misunderstanding about the meaning of the metaphor. According to Aristotle, if metaphors cannot be received from others, this makes clear that metaphor is the product of creativity and natural gift of the one who coins the metaphor. Metaphor goes beyond the established conventions of descriptive language, whereas it illuminates the relation between two objects at the same time. Aristotle circumscribes metaphor by relating it to resemblance and analogy for the sake of clarity, σαφήνεια (*Poetics* 1458a 18-34).

Josephus conveys an interesting connotation to the act of transference, μεταφερεῖν, that is, the translation of his work from his native tongue into a foreign language and culture (cf. *Ant.* 1.7). Thus, we could also perceive a metaphor as the act of transferring something from one culture to another, or from one domain of culture to another. In the case of Paul's metaphor of the Temple, the metaphor transfers a concept of monotheistic worship to the Hellenistic domain of Paul's audience, the Corinthian congregation.

Different theories have been developed about the function of metaphor in modern scholarship. In her monograph on *Metaphor and religious language* of 1985, Janet Martin Soskice categorised three different types of theories about metaphor. These types are *substitution* theories, *emotive* theories and *incremental* theories.[70] Soskice characterises the 'substitution view' of metaphor as a 'decorative word or phrase' substituting 'for an ordinary one' and traces it back to classical accounts of metaphor.[71] She criticises this view for being reductionist and untenable, and redefines the question of what constitutes a good metaphor: "the good metaphor does not merely compare two antecedently similar entities, but enables one to see similarities in what previously had been regarded as dissimilars".[72] Soskice points to the emotive theory, which views metaphor as having an affective impact; and to incremental theories as the view that "what is said by the metaphor can be expressed adequately in no other way". Soskice prefers a philosophical perspective on metaphor along the basic lines of the incremental theory.[73]

Other scholars, who have discussed the use of metaphor in religious language, agree with Soskice that the substitution theory is unsatisfactory and inadequate. Thus, Sallie McFague emphasises the creative process which a metaphor entails by constructing new meanings.[74] Walter Van Herck has further criticised the 'substitution theory' of metaphor in

---

[69] πολὺ δὲ μέγιστον τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι. Μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε παρ' ἄλλου ἔστι λαβεῖν εὐφυΐας τε σημεῖόν ἐστιν· τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστιν. Greek text from J. Hardy, *Aristote. Poétique* (Les Belles Lettres: Paris, ²1995) 65. Cf. *Poetics* 1457b 6-33 about metaphor and analogy; 1458a 18-34 and 1458b 11-14 about the necessity of a balance between figurative language and current use of language for clarity. Cf. J.M. Soskice, 'Classical accounts of metaphor', in eadem, *Metaphor and religious language* (paperback ed. 1987; Oxford University Press: Oxford [etc.], 1985) 1-14.

[70] Soskice, *Metaphor and religious language*, 24-51.

[71] Soskice, *Metaphor and religious language*, 1-14 at 8 about Aristotle as the 'originator and Quintillian (as) the exponent of (this) clearly unsatisfactory view'.

[72] Soskice, *Metaphor and religious language*, 26.

[73] Soskice, *Metaphor and religious language*, 26, 30-44 at 44.

[74] S. McFague, 'Metaphor: The Heart of the Matter', in eadem, *Speaking in Parables. A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (2002 reprint with preface by Gerard Loughlin; SCM Press: London, 1975) 33-53 at 37-42.

light of the paradigm change in favour of a model of interaction (between the metaphor and the signified subject).[75]

Scholars disagree about the cognitive value of the religious metaphor. In her elaboration of a theory of metaphor applied to theology, Soskice connects metaphor in religious language with a 'theological realism', in that it is "reality depicting without claiming to be directly descriptive".[76] In this idea of 'theological realism', the emphasis is not on description but on experience, that is, the horizon of experience of a religious community with its traditions of conviction and practice.[77] As Walter Van Herck has objected to Soskice's notion of 'theological realism', this view rather undermines the cognitive value of religious metaphor.[78] The cognitive function of the religious metaphor is analysed by Van Herck as comprising a variety of possible forms of religious knowledge gained from natural reason, from the theology of religious traditions, and from religious experience.[79] Van Herck sees the metaphor in relation to the religious community as an embodiment of 'tacit knowledge', which is a combination of attitudes, practical knowledge and 'knowing how'.[80]

The implications of these philosophical arguments for our understanding of Paul's metaphor of the Temple may be put as follows. Following the philosophical criticism against the 'substitution theory', an interpretation of Paul's metaphor of the Temple as simply another, ornamental word for the church should be excluded. It is further interesting to follow the suggestion of Van Herck that religious metaphor should be seen as an embodiment of 'tacit knowledge'. Thus, we can specify the aim of our historical interpretation of Paul's cultic imagery as the search for the *tacit knowledge* which Paul presupposes by using this language.

3.3 Social-scientific approaches

3.3.1 *Cultural anthropology*

Anthropological models and Paul's cultic imagery

Cultural anthropology may provide us with a methodology for analysing the 'tacit knowledge' presupposed by Paul's cultic language in its ancient cultural context. Clinton Bennett has written that 'the anthropologist's task' consists in 'reading cultural sub-texts', that is, in approaching texts in search of the 'tacit knowledge' of unwritten rules and thought patterns underlying the 'explicit knowledge' which is presented in a straightforward way in texts.[81] Bennett thus elaborates on the perspective of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz who

---

[75] W. Van Herck, *Religie en metafoor. Over het relativisme van het figuurlijke* (Peeters: Leuven, 1999) 35-58.

[76] Soskice, *Metaphor and religious language*, 148.

[77] Soskice, *Metaphor and religious language*, 150-153, cf. 160.

[78] Van Herck, *Religie en metafoor*, 35-58.

[79] Van Herck, *Religie en metafoor*, 60-66.

[80] Van Herck, *Religie en metafoor*, 82-84, 107, 201-203.

[81] Cf. C. Bennett, *In Search of the Sacred. Anthropology and the Study of Religions* (Cassell: London & New York, 1996) 137 quoting L.W. Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Allyn & Bacon: Boston, 1994) 224 about 'tacit knowledge' as 'unspoken cultural norms' and about 'explicit knowledge' as 'what we know and talk about'.

expressed the aim to proceed from 'thin description' (observation) to the construction of a 'thick description' (interpretation of the meaning of an observation).[82]

Since Paul's cultic terminology entails notions of holiness and purity,[83] anthropological approaches may help us to 'read the cultural sub-texts' to holiness and purity in Paul's time. What did holiness and purity mean in contemporary Jewish culture and for Christian Jews? An influential anthropological approach to the concept of purity and its counterpart, impurity, in their social context is the study of 'purity and danger', which Mary Douglas first published in 1966.[84] In her introduction, Douglas argues how 'pollution beliefs' function analogously to beliefs about social order. She proposes the idea that "an understanding of rules of purity is a sound entry to comparative religion".[85]

Before entering the subject of comparative religion, however, Douglas reviews certain long-standing presuppositions in this field. Douglas observes that the traditional classification of a religion as primitive or advanced depends on the question whether or not rules of holiness are intertwined with rules of uncleanness.[86] Douglas subsequently counters assumptions about a dividing line between advanced, moral religion concerned with spiritual matters on the one hand and primitive religion which is concerned with material circumstances and devoid of ethics on the other,[87] by eventually demonstrating a link between pollution ritual and morality.[88]

The relation between purification ritual and morality is an important point: the expression 'purification of flesh and spirit from every defilement' in 2 Cor 7:1 has appeared to some scholars as an arcane, perhaps even non-Pauline idea.[89] However, ideas about ritual purification need not be viewed as inconsistent or even incompatible with morality in Paul's theology. In her study about 'ritual in the Pauline churches',[90] Margaret Y. MacDonald applies an idea of Clifford Geertz about ritual as 'consecrated behaviour' to the Pauline churches by viewing traditions of baptism and the Lord's supper in a ritual context which equally served to demarcate purity.

---

[82] C. Geertz, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in idem, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Hutchinson: London, 1975) 3-30.

[83] Cf. M. Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge UP: Cambridge [etc.] 1985). Note that Paul discusses holiness and uncleanness also in other contexts, e.g. in 1 Cor 7:14.

[84] M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (first published 1966; pagination of Routledge Classics, Routledge: London 2002). Cf. M. Douglas, 'Pollution', in eadem, *Implicit Meanings. Selected Essays in Anthropology* (2nd ed.; Routledge: London & New York, 1999) 106-115.

[85] Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 1-7 at 7.

[86] Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 8-35 refers to Christian rules of holiness which, from the standpoint of spiritual religion, set the standard for classifying religions as advanced or as primitive in influential anthropological discourses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

[87] Douglas, 'Ritual Uncleanness', in eadem, *Purity and Danger*, 8-35.

[88] Douglas, 'Internal Lines', in eadem, *Purity and Danger*, 160-162 at 162: "pollution rules can serve to settle uncertain moral issues".

[89] Cf. e.g. V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Doubleday: Garden City, N.Y., 1984) 376: "several of the most fundamental ideas in the passage seem to be non-Pauline (..) Nowhere else does he hold that believers are morally defiled in both *flesh and spirit*".

[90] M.Y. MacDonald, 'Ritual in the Pauline Churches', in D.G. Horrell (ed.), *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (T&T Clark: Edinburgh 1999) 233-247; reprint from M.Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and deutero-Pauline Writings* (Cambridge UP: Cambridge, 1988) 61-71.

3.3.2 *Sociology*

An early main exponent of an approach to the New Testament in the light of its social context is form criticism, which aimed to trace the *Sitz im Leben* of the genres of oral tradition underlying the written text of the New Testament. Since the 1970s, sociological approaches to the New Testament have started to explore the social setting of early Christian traditions and texts in a more extensive way.[91] More recently, a project of social-scientific commentaries on New Testament writings has been set up by scholars, starting with the synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.[92]

How should we regard the *Sitz im Leben* or social setting of Paul's cultic terminology? As we have already argued before, the interpretation of Paul's cultic terminology in terms of Christian spiritualisation as opposed to Jewish materialism is simplistic and erroneous. We have further seen that Paul's cultic terminology does not necessarily evade the realm of ritual. Nevertheless, Christian Jews instituted their own rituals in relation to their belief in Christ, and Paul argues against the view of his opponents that all converts to the faith in Christ should live a Jewish way of life (Gal 2:14f.). Thus, the question arises how Paul's view on relations between Judaism and the congregations of Christ corresponds with his use of cultic terminology.

A sociological approach to Paul may help to reconsider how Paul related to and at the same time differed from contemporary Judaism.[93] New Testament scholars have applied a sociology of ancient sectarianism to the study of the earliest Christian communities in order to analyse aspects of the process of separation,[94] self-definition[95] and the creation of boundary lines.[96] In this application of theory to textual interpretation, however, caution has been expressed against static models of sectarianism in favour of a dynamic model which allows for an analysis of developments in the attitudes among earliest Christianity in relation to Judaism.[97]

---

[91] Cf. Horrell, 'Social-Scientific Interpretation of the New Testament: Retrospect and Prospect', in idem (ed.), *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, 3-27 with further bibliography.

[92] Cf. B.J. Malina & R.L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 1992); B. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, Mich., 1998).

[93] An early example of a sociological approach to Paul and Judaism is F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (SNTSMS 56; Cambridge UP: Cambridge, 1986). Cf. my chap. 4, 'Paul's previous life in Judaism', about the interpretation of key passages in Galatians and Philippians in context.

[94] Cf. J.H. Elliott, 'The Jewish messianic movement. From faction to sect', in P.F. Esler (ed.), *Modelling in early Christianity. Social-scientific studies of the New Testament in its context* (Routledge: London & New York, 1995) 75-95.

[95] Cf. the 1980-1982 3-volume project edited by E.P. Sanders about *Jewish and Christian Self-definition*.

[96] Cf. e.g. R. Scroggs, 'The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement', in Horrell (ed.), *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, 69-91 with 'introduction' and 'further reading'; reprint from J. Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults, Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty, Part Two: Early Christianity* (Brill: Leiden, 1975) 1-23. For examples of sociological approaches applied to the study of early Jewish sectarianism, see the books of A.J. Saldarini (1988) and A.I. Baumgarten (1997) discussed in my chapter 1.

[97] Cf. the 'introduction' to Scroggs, 'The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement', 69-70.

4. Summary and outline of this study

Having discussed the problems with older scholarly approaches to Paul's cultic imagery and the potential usefulness of new approaches to Paul's Letters, it is clear that a re-examination of Paul's cultic imagery is needed. This re-examination also serves to put the theology underlying Paul's cultic language in a new historical perspective. My historical interpretation aims to answer the following question: *what does Paul's cultic imagery signify in view of Paul's gospel mission to the Diaspora?* As I have already pointed to different aspects to be taken up, I will systematically outline the structure of my study below.

Starting from the historical context to which Paul refers when he mentions Israel's cult and Jerusalem, chapter one will deal with *Jewish attitudes to the Jerusalem Temple from the Maccabees to Paul's time*, with an emphasis on temple-theological developments and ideas. The broad matrix of Jewish tradition related to cultic worship may be justified in view of Paul's Jewish background and his discussion of Israelite themes of God's covenant, the Law, and the concept of monotheistic worship. Chapter one will include a discussion of the renewed debate about Judaism and Hellenism, and of the place of Israel's cult in this debate as well as of the social boundaries expressed by the cult. The demarcation of a period of time starting from the Maccabees may be justified by the fact that from this period we have the first traces of Jewish schools which also characterised Jewish culture in first-century CE Israel.

The wealth of material from the literature of Qumran merits a separate chapter, even though I will include some discussion of the sectarian Qumran community in the historical survey of chapter one. Thus, chapter two deals with *The literature of Qumran about the Temple*. In this chapter, the issue of the dividing lines between sectarian and non-sectarian literature will be further analysed in view of the question of what temple-theological thoughts were more widely reflected in first-century CE Palestinian Jewish culture.

Chapter three, *The early Jesus-movement and the Temple*, will discuss the place of the early Jesus-movement within this matrix of contemporary Judaism. This chapter will deal with the historical issue of how to retrieve information about pre-70 CE traditions from New Testament writings, of which a large part is dated after 70 CE. It will centralise the question of how the attitude(s) of the early Jesus-movement to the Jerusalem Temple relates to or contrasts with contemporary Jewish attitudes to the Temple.

From the historical context of ideas about God's Temple in contemporary Judaism and earliest Christianity I will turn to the text of Paul's Letters in chapters four through eight. Thus, the question of how Paul's use of cultic imagery can be related to the contemporary matrix of Judaism and earliest Christianity may be divided in a subset of question discussed in the respective chapters.

Chapter four, *Paul's previous life in Judaism*, raises the question of how Paul represents his own Jewish background in the rhetorical context of his Letters. Rhetorical analysis of the passages in which Paul writes about his Jewish background may help to evaluate the function and significance of Paul's words about his previous life in Judaism.

Chapter five, *Paul and the contemporary Jewish culture of scriptural interpretation*, surveys the issue of Paul's use of Scripture in the context of contemporary Jewish culture. This issue may yield further information about Paul's relation to Judaism, and may provide a broader context for the question of how the apostle redefined his understanding of Judaism.

On the basis of this broader discussion of Paul's relation to Judaism in the context of his Gentile mission, the last three chapters will go into the subject of Paul's cultic imagery. Chapter six focuses on *Preliminary issues to cultic imagery in the Pauline corpus*, such as the delimitation of Pauline authorship from pseudepigraphy and interpolation, and the identification and application of cultic imagery. Since Paul's Letters to the Corinthians are the

only undisputed Pauline Letters which comprise the metaphor of the Temple (1 Cor 3:17, 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16) as well as as literal references to cult (1 Cor 9:13, 10:18), this Corinthian correspondence constitutes the main evidence for my study of Pauline cultic imagery. Chapters 7 and 8 will subsequently deal with cultic imagery in 1 Corinthians and in 2 Corinthians. This last and third part of my study integrates insights from the previous chapters about temple-theological views contemporary to Paul and from Paul's place among Jews and Gentiles.