What Do We Mean by the Pauline School? Evaluating the Category in Light of Recent Research on Education in the Roman World

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I remember Harold Remus well as a supporter of CSBS, the Corporation, and the fields of Christian Origins, Religion in Ancient Society, Biblical Studies, and Patristics with all their interdisciplinary intersections. I also remember his propensity to ask complex and probing questions and his willingness to examine widely accepted concepts and boundaries demarking identity.[1] For this reason, the seminar seemed an appropriate place for me to analyze a widely accepted concept which has informed my own work for decades, but which I have now begun to evaluate in a new light: The Pauline School.

My desire to examine the concept of the Pauline school has arisen indirectly from my work on children and childhood in early Christianity and more directly from interest in the theme of education and children in relation to the Pastoral Epistles which I now hope to pursue in a broader project on education in early Christianity.[2] What has struck me as being most remarkable about discussions of the Pauline school is the lack of direct conversation about the relationship between the school and broader educational pursuits and the surprisingly rigid boundaries drawn by scholars between notions of exhortation and edification within the context of gatherings of the *ekklēsia* and activities which properly belong within a "school." Typically, the school idea has been linked to a somewhat vague notion of a type of philosophical/rhetorical school with Paul the philosopher/teacher (perhaps drawing upon his own Pharisaic training) surrounded by disciples in the form of fellow-workers. The Pauline school has been envisioned as the locus for the perpetuation of tradition through the writing of letters in Paul's name – an exercise in

pseudepigraphy shaped by a Pauline inner circle which may have begun while the Apostle was still alive but which gained momentum in the years following his death. While it is generally recognized that this is hypothetical construction (though one firmly imprinted on decades of New Testament scholarship), the school has been understood by many as the best explanation for the production of Deutero-Pauline literature and ongoing evolution of Pauline tradition despite the lack of consensus on its actual shape or activities. Moreover, the leaders of the school in the decades following Paul's death have not been viewed as engaged in a neutral enterprise, but rather one with definite agendas, frequently identified as communicating greater patriarchal and imperial content than revealed by the undisputed letters and displaying less flexibility in terms inclusive participation, with varying degrees of loss and/or transformation of theological content.

While I will discuss some trajectories for future research on education in the Roman world, my purpose in this paper is modest but foundational: I hope to identify the major assumptions about the nature and origins of the Pauline school and to critically examine them especially in relation to select texts from Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles. At the end of the essay, I offer some thoughts as to whether the Pauline school remains a useful construct and make some suggestions as to how this theoretical concept may be revised.

Examining Assumptions and Debate about the Pauline School

The history of the concept of the Pauline school goes back more than half of century, with the significance of the contribution of Hans Conzelmann often cited. [3] There have been many important scholarly contributions.[4] But there have also been some notable critiques. Bart Ehrman has gone so far as to state that the theory that Deutero-Pauline letters "…were a product of the Pauline school should probably be put to rest."[5] Ehrman brings his more general thesis

about the practice of pseudepigraphy being condemned in the ancient world to bear on any reconstruction that points to a setting where "close associates of Paul who discussed and studied his teachings, produced writings in his name with impunity…".[6] But of more interest for the present essay is his argument against the existence of a Pauline school based on "followers of Paul claiming widely disparate views on a surprisingly broad range of topics." [7] While there are certainly theological and variations in disputed Pauline literature, together with differences with respect to ritual and organization, there are also key similarities such as emphasis on the household codes and evidence of engagement with the Roman imperial order especially in the context of Asia Minor.[8] Whether or not we wish to speak of a "school", it is important to aim for a fulsome understanding of the dynamism of exchange that led to the passing down of traditions in the decades following the composition of Paul's letters – a key period for the survival of Christ groups. For Ehrman, however, the school model is misleading on another level. Given to paucity of evidence for a philosophical school among first-century members of the *ekklēsia*, he wonders why the appeal to such as notion is necessary at all:

> It is fair enough to argue that the Deutero-Pauline letters evidence the oral transmission of Paul's teachings and discussions. But this kind of ongoing reflection does not require a "school." All it requires is a church. And that, of course, is what Paul speaks about abundantly: churches, not schools. It is in the church context that proclamation, edification, and education took place.[9]

Ehrman is no doubt correct that there is no requirement to link the production of Deutero-Pauline Literature with a school conceived of as a separate institution and to point to education as an integral component of life of the *ekklēsia*. His observations, however, raise the question of whether scholars have adequately considered the teaching and learning functions associated

Christ groups, including features that may closely resemble activities of philosophical schools, literary education, and the education of children. Like many scholars, Ehrman believes that 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastorals are pseudonymous based upon key aspects of style and content. But his analysis emphasizes the literary production of individual authors. Thus, with respect to Colossians, he observes: “Here a later forger puts a non-Pauline (or anti-Pauline) eschatological view on Paul’s pen in order to oppose ‘false teachers’ who do not appreciate the extent of salvation Christ has brought.”[10] But while the significance of literary production cannot be denied, it will be argued here that the disputed Pauline works point to wider educational activities and exchanges that have to some extent been captured by concepts of the Pauline school even if revision and possibly new terminology is required.[11]

Despite the rejection of the concept especially by scholars who consider disputed works to be genuine and reservations of various kinds, the concept of the Pauline school continues to be reflected in current scholarship. For example, the highly respected scholar David Balch clearly refers to the concept in his recent excellent collection of essays:

> …the domestic ethics of the deutero-Pauline school emanated not from earlier Jewish tradition, but from the Greek tradition of “household management” (*peri oikonomia*), to which the Aristotelian form of the code in Colossians belongs. Living and worshipping in Greco-Roman houses, Paul’s students acculturated a foreign patriarchal household ethic.[12]

Perhaps more than any other scholar, Balch has greatly advanced our understanding of elements associated with the Pauline school in the disputed Pauline epistles such as the household codes, but the presence of the concept in his most recent work also serves as testimony to the ongoing significance of the term as a major scholarly construct in Pauline studies. Despite the presence of anti-imperial elements in the literature, Balch concludes that the Pauline school is ultimately

"quietist" and operates with a trajectory of assimilation of Roman values.[13] Balch identifies a change within the Pauline school with respect to the treatment of women and constructions of gender with household codes traditions such Eph 5:21-33 which fail to narrate the earlier leadership of women in Pauline circles.[14] The extent of this change is an area of debate among scholars working on women and gender, but notions of shifting ethics and ethos continue to play a major role in assessment of Deutero-Pauline literature.[15] But as will argued below, expanding the examination of the school with respect to a wider consideration of educational activities may shed light on the implications of the presence of household code ethics.

In an effort to set the stage for analysis, it is useful to delineate the elements of the Pauline school as it is usually understood. Published at about the same time Ehrman's critique M. Eugene Boring set forth to describe the concept of the Pauline school in a detailed and systematic fashion in his *Introduction to the New Testament* (2012). [16] I summarize the main characteristics of his presentation of the school below:

1) Prepared by Pharisaic education to perpetuate "a continuing school tradition," Paul was a team leader who worked with numerous coworkers who were called upon to remind communities of his teaching. 2) Teachers formed an identifiable group in communities of Paul's days who aimed to "inculcate and elaborate traditions Paul had communicated" (1 Cor 12:27-28; cf. Eph 4:11). 3) Paul's letters include the unusual practice of co-sending letters and his frequent use of the first-person plural should sometimes be taken as a reference to "the teachers and evangelists around him." 4) There is evidence in Paul's letters of a type of Pauline school that existed already during Paul's lifetime such as the use of "pre-letter formulations" (1 Corinthians 13) or "midrashic arguments" that reflect dialogue rather than sole-author compositions (1 Cor 10:1-13; Gal 4:21-31). 5) In keeping with presentation of Paul's base in Acts, Ephesus (and surrounding region of Asia Minor) was the primary centre of the Pauline school. 6) In issuing documents in Paul's name, the Pauline school continued to use the letter form as "the primary mode of teaching and communication with communities." 7) Paul's distinctive epistolary form and an emerging "oral legendary tradition" were reworked into deuteropauline letters beginning with Colossians and reflecting a "fictive narrative world." 8) While much uncertainty exists about the process and dating, there is evidence that Paul's letters were beginning to be circulated as a corpus by about 100 CE. 9) One key purpose of collecting Paul's letters was to make them widely available to the *ekklēsia* and to reinterpret them in light of a shift away from the usage as

> occasional documents for particular groups. 10) Forming a corpus, letters were given titles, ordered, and potentially "edited by teachers in the Pauline school" (Boring points especially to Philippians, Romans and 2 Corinthians). 11) The reality of a Pauline school "seems to be confirmed by the existence of the deuteropauline writings" which reflect four different authors or groups and represent the activities of teachers who sought to extend Paul's voice by writing in his name. 12) Drawing from a foundation based on "the authentic Paul" and his associates in the decades following his death, deuteropauline authors sought to address new situations. 13) As literary products, the deuteropauline documents reflect "interchange, discussion, and debate among teachers who continue the Pauline tradition." 14) Postpauline tradition was not monolithic and already 2 Thess 2:2 reveals dispute about which letters represent the authentic Paul. 15) Deuteropauline works "continue the model of biblical reinterpretation" that can be seen, for example, in the Isaiah traditions in the Hebrew Bible or even in Matthew and Luke's reinterpretation of Mark and Q. 16) The leadership of the Pauline school "will originally have been Paul's personal associates," followed by this groups associates who did not know Paul. Virtually nothing in known about their networks of communication or authority structures and this second generation was "probably not formally organized."17) Both canonical letters and non-canonical works reflect ongoing issues of dispute in the Pauline school including, "the language and theology of the Holy Spirit, structure and church leadership, biblical interpretation, relation to gnosticizing thought, eschatology, ecumenism and apostolicity (relationship with opponents and other streams of Christianity).

It is important to recognize that Boring is presenting a type of "model" of the Pauline school – a type of scholarly construct. But it is a construct with the power to shape the scholarly imagination especially with respect to the existence of an informal network of teachers (what did this look like?) who looked back to Paul as their leader (to what extent should Paul remain at the centre?) and attempted to interpret his message for later contexts. In engaging with some of the main points, I hope to highlight what remains helpful but also to ask critical questions about what needs to be updated in terms of recent scholarship.

Paul as Leader of a School?

Boring's points (1-5) above deal with the identity and activities of the historical Paul. Expressed simply and succinctly, the idea of a Pauline school is based on the fact Paul viewed himself as an apostolic teacher surrounded by other teachers who collectively endorsed and

sometimes regulated teaching activities.[17] Teaching responsibilities are associated with the tasks of fellow-workers. There is clear continuity and circumscribed delegation of teaching authority, for example, in the direction that Timothy, Paul's faithful and beloved child, is to remind the Corinthians of Paul's ways (*hodos*) in Christ which he teaches everywhere in every *ekklēsia* (1 Cor 4:16-17; cf. Phil 2:19-23). An intriguing metaphorical interplay between Paul's child-delegate and community members as children occurs in 1 Cor 4:14-21, pointing to a hierarchy of authority where student apprentices convey traditions to their juniors.[18] This text reveals Paul's most detailed expression of his role as a fatherly teaching apostle who admonishes his children as their only true teacher/father in contrast to other tutors/guardians.[19] In identifying himself as teacher/father with disciplinary responsibilities (cf. 1 Cor 4:14, 21; cf. Rom 1:30), Paul was aligned with ancient associations between the two.[20] Scholarly considerations of Paul's authority and interactions with associates may have underplayed the crucial nature of fatherly modes in Paul's operations and teaching enterprises including modes of communication, even as he himself seemingly eschewed literal fatherhood.

Cultural notions of formation are crucial to many texts associated with Paul's life and legacy. Discussions of the Pauline school have rightly drawn attention to Paul's Pharisaic background as Boring highlights. Indeed, the presentation of Paul as a pupil of Gamaliel in Acts 22:3 (cf. Acts 5:34-39) is fascinating for what it reveals about cultural values. The notion of the disciple of a great teacher has been used to elucidate Paul's relations with his own fellow-workers/disciples who seemingly went on to perpetuate his traditions. But what has not received enough attention is the emphasis on Paul himself as a student.[21] In my view this is in keeping with a general problem in constructions of the Pauline school which is a focus on the identity of teachers without asking about the formation of the students and how learning is taking place.

Paul is clearly being positioned as a student who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel and trained/educated in ancestral law (cf. Luke 2:46). With elements of overlapping apologetic motivation, Josephus likewise draws attention to grounding in ancestral law in laying out schemes of education or training (*paideia*). The precepts of the law are complemented by practical instruction in morals, teaching from infancy involving every aspect of life in the home and learning the law.[22] In Acts 22 Paul's foundational identity is, admittedly, being presented as transformed by his experience on the way to Damascus as the revelation of God is depicted as breaking through history. This text has naturally invited comparison to Phil 3:4-11 (cf. Gal 1:13-14) where Paul refers to his own lineage and (indirectly) Pharisaic training. But despite his proclamation of radical disjuncture, his own direct and indirect appeals to scripture remind us of the significance of Paul's formation in emerging traditions and raise questions about how these traditions are being circulated, absorbed, interpreted, and reinterpreted in light of revelation. Especially if one shifts the focus away from the identity of the teachers to the act of learning, discussions of the development of a Pauline school need to pay greater attention to how communication of gospel messages was interwoven with the teaching of scripture, asking questions about how this might have occurred in practical terms.

The emphasis on revelation in texts from Paul's letters is not usually given much attention in constructs of the Pauline school but should be considered carefully when Paul identifies teachers. While teachers formed an identifiable group in communities of Paul's day, except for Paul's most trusted inner circle of collaborators, it is not clear that their roles can be described as mainly to "inculcate and elaborate traditions Paul had communicated," leaving little latitude for the independent influence of others and the generation of new content. The list Paul offers in 1 Cor 12:27-28 (apostles, prophets, teachers) reminds us of the close association

between teaching, revelation, and ecstatic experience tied to Spirit endowment not only for the source of Paul's communications as he understands it, but for the act of teaching in communities.[23] 1 Corinthians 14 presents these as tied to rituals, including prayer and accompanying opportunities for learning which must be intelligible: "When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up." (1 Cor 14:26; NRSV). Recent scholarship on prophetic practice introduces greater nuance and variety in terms of how we should think of it operating and engendering commitment. In her discussion of 1 Cor 11-14, Jennifer Eyl has made an important point in suggesting that "… prophecy has enjoyed such a status due, to some extent, to the privileging of text-based prophetic practices that have long overshadowed the practice of delivering, orally, the words of a god through a human mouthpiece who may well be illiterate. While oral prophecy is prominent in 1 Corinthians, Paul engages in literary-based prophecy ubiquitously elsewhere, and it is the preservation of this literate practice that has given credence to prophecy among intellectual theologians."[24] In this paper I am arguing a similar point to Eyl's, literary practices, and especially literary production, in the Pauline school have overshadowed the significance of oral currents within communities, especially as they relate to learning. To use Eyl's terminology, "delivering, orally, the words of a god through a human mouthpiece" represents as aspect of teaching in Christ groups which has a corollary in the form of an audience listening, repeating, memorizing, reciting sayings and traditions, orally and by singing. Recognition of oral practices is also crucial to consideration of development of the Pauline school which includes not only repetition of traditions, but also various innovations, including a theological emphasis on mystery, the household codes and a greater value attributed to the teaching of audiences across generations such as we find in the Pastoral Epistles.

In identifying characteristics of a Pauline school that have their roots in Paul's day Boring draws attention to dialogue in shaping correspondence (point 4).[25] While it is perhaps better framed as a tense conversation rather than a dialogue, Paul confronts the oral prophets of the Corinthian community with an uncompromising literary assertion of his authority to determine through a "command of the Lord" that only those who follow his direction are legitimate (1 Cor 14:37-38).[26] Such a strong assertion is "suspicious" and most likely related to the potential of prophets - including women prophets - to generate new material and to offer attractive teachings (1 Cor 11:16; cf. 1 Cor 14:34-36; 1 Tim 2:8-15). In placing himself defensively and directly at the center of the argument, Paul gives us a sense of a wider, potentially more inclusive, teaching momentum which allowed the group to traverse generations even as it took on distinct forms such as the narratives in the Acts of Paul and Thecla.[27]

While rhetorical analysis has been instrumental in uncovering the impact of communal dialogue on the argumentation of letters, scholarship exploring the intersection between Paul and ancient philosophy is debatably even more important for evaluation of the construct of the Pauline school. The very recent book by Timothy A. Brookins which concentrates on 1 Corinthians 1-4 offers a particularly germane example. Brookins argues that the self-professed *sophoi* who formed part of the Paul faction (1 Cor 1:12) adopted a type of "sub(ordinated) Stoicism," something akin to Stoicism but subordinate to the Christ-faith they professed. Introduced to Paul's teaching within a household, Brookins postulates that they adopted Paul as their teacher as a type of "founder of a new philosophical school."[28] The notion of Paul as head of a type of philosophical school with disciples who eventually went on to write letters in his name has been central to construct of the Pauline school even it is often left implicit. What is suggestive about Brookins' thesis is that the agency for development of a school, including ideas

and practices, is attributed to certain community members, drawing attention to educational motivation inherent to the Christ group itself. It is interesting to observe that in contrast to the recent work of Brookins, in his ground-breaking study of 1983, Wayne Meeks noted the typical emphasis on Paul himself and his inner circle: "…it is not usually the local congregation as such that is described as the 'school of Paul,' but more often the circle of fellow worker and leaders."[29] The work of Brookins points to wider educational pursuits with potential to challenge Paul and introduces the possibility of Paul being engaged in counter-educational discourse.[30]

Wayne Meeks' cautionary remarks around discussion of the existence of a school of Paul are valuable to revisit in light of recent scholarship: "It is useful to know that there was a strong scholarly, academic, and rhetorical element in the activities of Pauline groups, but it will not do to make these elements constitutive of the movement."[31] Responding in particular to E. A. Judge who emphasized the "scholastic" qualities of Christ groups in contrast to cultic elements, Meeks drew attention to the significance of initiatory ritual for understanding Pauline and Deutero-Pauline letters, the common meal, and "rapidly growing traditions of other sorts of ritualized behavior."[32] Meeks' reliance upon insights from the social sciences led him to reflect on the significance of ritual for the identity of the *ekklēsia*, but more recent research on education in the Roman world blurs the distinction between scholarly/teaching activities and ritual to a greater extent than Meeks' comments allow. As will be discussed further below, ritual practices closely tied to family life and religious expressions of various kinds beginning from childhood have shown to be far more significant to learning than has previously been thought and should be considered in revisiting the construct of the Pauline school.

Meeks and subsequent scholars have considered the Pauline school under the guise of adult pursuits and higher levels of rhetorical education rather than involving the education of

children – a point that highlights the failure to consider the ubiquitous presence of children in the environment.[33] In fact, although Meeks argued that the household provided the "basic context" for the life of Paul's communities, giving the household pride of place among other "models from the environment," he paid virtually no attention to the presence of children in keeping with scholarly discussions at this time.[34] Recent scholarship on childhood, families and education in the Roman world, however, has highlighted evidence suggesting that children and youths were important agents, key to the productivity of the household, and instrumental in growth and the passing on of traditions. [35] This raises new questions about how materials were conveyed to new generations, an area of central concern in any assessment of the Pauline school. Relatedly, it must be said that spatial dimensions have been largely neglected in discussions of a Pauline school. [36] Future analyses will need to pay attention to recent scholarship on the domestic setting of early Christ groups, but also to scholarship calling for greater attention to other spaces such as workshops often associated with living quarters, the rooms typically rented by associations of various kinds, and outdoor spaces such as gardens[37] as providing opportunities for educational interactions.[38] Moreover, the substantial work of scholars working on associations needs to be taken into account when seeking to understand the infrastructure that facilitated membership, allegiance and mentoring.[39]

The often-implicit reliance on the philosophical school as a model for the Pauline school along with assumptions about higher levels of education and training in rhetoric have led to a concentration (and I would argue over-emphasis) on literary production. This is reflected in points 6-10 of Boring's description above. While the significance of literary materials cannot be denied, it is worth assessing whether the letter was really "the primary mode of teaching and communication with communities" and whether we might be underestimating the potential for

quasi-independent teaching on the part of co-workers and emissaries including women such Prisca or Phoebe or even the potential for generating content or expounding on the meaning of scripture within the communities themselves with some material being incorporated in the epistolary evidence which survives. That the letter was a "second best" choice, is the opening argument of Benjamin P. Laird's recent in-depth study of the formation of the Pauline corpus: "Like many of his contemporaries, the apostle Paul's preferred method of communication was personal, face-to-face interaction rather than written correspondence dispatched from a distant location."[40] Those who accept, as I do, the Deutero-Pauline authorship of Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles, must concur with Boring's point about the letter becoming part of a "fictive narrative world," but this does not rule out the possibility of these documents providing information about modes of communication and teaching which operated in tandem with the letter genre. This becomes especially clear, as will be discussed further below, when we move our attention away from always considering the teachers to focus instead on learners.[41]

Deutero-Pauline Literature as an Educational Product

Despite the significance of Boring's insight that any notion of a Pauline school must be grounded in Paul's own practices, his most important argument is contained in point 11 – the existence of a Pauline school is confirmed by the existence of Deutero-Pauline literature itself.[42] Close examination of the texts, including the relationship between Colossians and Ephesians, does reveal "interchange, discussion, and debate among teachers who continue the Pauline tradition." Even if we should wish to reject the Pauline school as an overarching category, analysis of the relevant passages points to "scholastic" activities (points 12-13), and probable dispute over key themes (points 14 and 17). But it is comparative evidence broadly related to the

theme of education in the Roman world that elicits new perspectives on the evolution of traditions which surpassed Paul's lifetime and created an important bridge into the patristic era. While great uncertainty remains about operations and structures, using a comparative lens and expanding who we consider to be learners and which activities might be deemed "scholastic" or "educational," can lead to a new approach to the study of documents which have seemed to some to be little more than a collage of Pauline teaching, sometimes stripped of its most important content. More specifically, we need to move our attention away from narrow notions of literary repetition and revamping where a few teachers debate and rewrite texts, to the passing on of traditions in various forms, including oral forms, involving a variety of actors with varying levels of literacy and remembering the presence children. Reconsiderations of notions of a Pauline school require us to consider not only the role of teachers but also of various receptive audiences. It is possible here only to offer some initial thoughts.

Boring ties the leadership of the Pauline school to Paul's personal associates, suggesting further distance from the historical Paul as the Christ groups associated with him moved into the second century and beyond.[43] The collaborative nature of Paul's own work, and the central role of fellow workers especially in Colossians where they are founders and major emissaries (e.g., Epaphras, 1:7–8; 2:1; 4:12) and in the Pastorals where Paul's "children" Timothy and Titus are intermediaries between Paul and the communities, clearly supports this picture.[44] The texts themselves point to a chain of transmission. It is evident based on the founding role of Epaphras described in Col 1:7-8, for example, or exhortation to Titus to teach various community grouping (young and old) in Tit 2:1-8, that fellow-workers are being presented as teachers conveying Pauline tradition even though the link to literary composition of disputed Pauline literature is much more tenuous. One of the most intriguing features of comparing the undisputed and

disputed letters of Paul is the apparent transformation of traditions which itself has been connected to the informal network of teachers in the Pauline school. But exchange between key fellow-workers does not seem enough to explain either the transformation of traditions or the survival Christ groups associated with Paul's leadership beyond the first generation. Here it may be helpful to look beyond the exchange of ideas typically associated with scholastic activities and to consider other mechanisms that allow traditions to develop and be absorbed. Rather than focusing exclusively on the leadership of Paul's fellow workers, I would suggest that it is more fruitful to look for other signs of leadership and influences among a broader group of actors.

Colossians, for example, reflects exchange between several locations in Asia Minor and relationships between communities, with two other cities mentioned in the work: Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col 2:1; 4:13–16). Moreover, Col 4:15–16 Paul calls for an exchange of letters between the Colossians and Laodiceans.[45] Nympha is seemingly presented as hosting the assembly (*ekklēsia*) in Laodicea, but Colossae itself and even Hierapolis cannot be ruled out.[46] What seems to be in view here is the public reading of letters during gatherings and comparative evidence concerning hosting of banquets points to the strong possibility that Nympha would have invited a skilled reader to present the letter followed by the intervention of a respected teacher (Tychicus?). We cannot assume that Nympha as leader of a house church is being presented as a teacher, but her role as host suggests leadership and probably notable contribution to the interpretative conversation.[47] The importance of considering a broader group of activities and actors is also suggested by the intriguing relationship between Colossians and Philemon which has both raised historical questions and figured in discussions of pseudonymity, as Tychicus is presented as travelling to Colossae with the slave Onesimus, who is described as "one of you;" the two are apparently bearing Paul's letter (Col 4:7–9). Beyond the obvious

attempt to foster solidarity, it is important to note that since slaves sometimes received high levels of scribal and literary training, Onesimus may have served as the public reader of the letter (cf. Mark 13:14; Rev 1:3). Thus, ironically, given the hierarchical teaching in Col 3:18–4:1, both Nympha and Onesimus may even have been called upon to discuss, and possibly interpret or reinforce instructions giving guidance on living a way of life as a believer.[48] Colossians may, in fact, provide early evidence for reading events that occurred within scholastic settings in the Roman world.[49] The pseudonymous nature of Colossians means that the veracity of the events are far from certain. Nevertheless, the call for reading during community gathering points to the close association between the letter form and opportunities for conversation and the development of ideas (cf. 1 Tim 4:13). The call for the exchange of letters in Colossians suggests that we should remain open to the content of the disputed Paulines being the result of more than a narrow exchange between a small inner circle of Paul's (most male) fellow-workers in a Pauline school.

A focus on community gatherings also leads one to consider the association disputed Pauline literature with ritual. The emphasis on baptism and hymnic influences in Colossians and Ephesians was of notable interest to an earlier generation of scholars, with some tying the content and origins especially of Ephesians to liturgical forms.[50] Recent scholarship on education in the Roman world indicates the need to revisit some of these earlier observations. For example, the major study by Jacob L. Mackey (2022) includes treatment of the religious enculturation of children through cultic practices as a key to understanding the perpetuation of Roman religion, arguing that Roman children exercised cognitive agency in their religious learning:

> Roman children's social learning of their religious culture involved cognitive processes: perceiving the Intentional episodes of others, sharing the Intentional episodes with others, and imitating others. These processes resulted in distinctively cultural cognitive *products*: shared

> practical representations such as goals and intentions with respect to cult action; shared doxastic representations, such as theological beliefs; and shared deontic representations, such as deontic beliefs, all of which had consequences for cult performance. When process yields product, religious transmission has occurred.[51]

While it is impossible to do justice to Mackey's sophisticated and complex arguments in the context of this paper, his work raises important questions about the relationship between rituals, the development of traditions and the engendering of commitment, in addition to the significance of the presence of children in the audience. It is worthy of note that in both Colossians and Ephesians, children are addressed directly in the midst of the household code (Col 3:20; Eph 6:1).[52] Mackey draws upon the "apprentice model" of learning rooted in research from developmental psychology, which understands apprenticeship as often active, social, and collaborative, calling to mind the roles of Timothy and Titus.[53] His work challenges our notions of teaching and learning in communities and might also lead us to reconsider the educational significance of elements which we do not normally associate with children or very much with learning and passing down of traditions, such as prayer and song, which in Col 3:16 is explicitly stated as having an instructional purpose in the form of mutual admonition (cf. Ephesians 5:18-19).[54] Recent research on Jewish childhood has highlighted the significance of the learning attained through participation in rituals, sometimes linked to practical knowledge of matters of business and trade as has recently been suggested with respect to the celebration of Passover in the Roman port of Ostia, alerting us to the potential intersection between areas of knowledge acquisition in the domestic and workshop settings of Christ groups.[55] This scholarship calls for a reassessment of certain elements of early Christian texts – internal pointers to learning experiences – potentially to allow for some advancement in our understanding of the formulation

and circulation of traditions beyond the limited advances of current conceptions of the Pauline school and making room for rudimentary, yet foundational educational practices.

The references to community members teaching and admonishing one another and signing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs raises practical questions about learning among Christ groups comprised of people with mixed levels of literacy and very limited capacity to duplicate texts and suggesting a requirement for a variety of types of gatherings beyond community gatherings for worship. The composition of Ephesians, however, may offer insight into the requirements for repetition and memorization in a document that also highlights the need for divine knowledge and illumination. The communal appetite for discernment and interpretation is built into the very presentation of the singular authority of Paul, *the* Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul is the interpreter and mediator of revelation to the community. In short, Paul is presented a type of "seer" in Ephesians. His engagement as a type of visionary who illuminates adherents is central both to the distinct presentation of the apostle in this work and to the way his role is tied to the constitution of the community (cf. Eph 1:15-23; 2:1–10; 5:18–19). In Eph 3:9 states that Paul "will make all see (*phōtisai*; literally to shine or give light) what is the plan of the mystery." Given this greater emphasis on mediation, it is remarkable that in contrast to Colossians where no other apostles are mentioned, Ephesians presents Paul as part of a wider group receiving revelations – albeit the most important member of a select group of apostles and prophets receiving the revelation of the mystery of Christ (Eph 3:5). Relatedly, the Paul of Ephesians is very open to visions and experiences of the Spirit (Eph 1:13–14; 1:17-18; 2:18–22; 3:5, 16; 4:3–4, 30; 6:17–18).[56]

The Paul of Ephesians displays greater openness to manifestations of Spirit in the midst of the community in Eph 5:18–19 than in the parallel text of Col 3:16 which makes no explicit

reference to being filled with the Spirit.: "And do not get drunk with wine, in which is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and chanting to the Lord in your heart (Eph 5:18–19)."[57] Despite this greater openness to ecstatic (especially visionary) phenomena, Ephesians reveals more self-conscious awareness for the need to safeguard the passing down of tradition. Like the parallel text of Col 3:16, Ephesians 5:18–19 ties communal opportunities for learning to ritual. But there is a heightened stress upon the role of teachers, foundation, and memory in the work as a whole. Ephesians offers a fascinating glimpse into a transitional stage in Christ groups where we may observe the interplay between charismatic authority and the need to convey reliability and truth. Mystery and powerful experiences of Spirit are associated with a form of knowledge to be conveyed and passed down. Ephesians draws attention to a foundation built upon a group of divinely appointed agents— prophets and apostles—which provides the basis for an *ekklēsia* (Eph 2:20; cf. 3:5; 4:11). Teaching and/or preaching gifts are particularly prized (the evangelists, the pastors, and the teachers) are strikingly presented as "heavenly" gifts from Christ (Eph 4:11).[58] While it is far less detailed than in 1 Corinthians, there is some overlap between the works in the treatment charismatic gifts. Like 1 Corinthians, Ephesians invites consideration of how ecstatic phenomena may be related to the shaping of arguments and in this case the generation of new content related to the production of Deutero-Pauline works, challenging simplistic notions of teaching Pauline tradition by a select group of fellow-workers within a Pauline school.

Boring is mostly correct when he states that "virtually nothing in known about their networks of communication or authority structures" in describing the Pauline school belonging to what he calls the second generation (point 16). But a wider appreciation of a variety of actors

and openness to a greater number of practices, including rituals and oral recitation, may shed light upon how traditions were absorbed in this era. It is valuable to think about the puzzling relationship between Colossians and Ephesians itself along these lines. Although it has remained a subject of debate, most scholars who accept the Deutero-Pauline authorship of Colossians and Ephesians have understood Ephesians to be dependent on Colossians. The almost verbatim agreement between Eph 6:21-22 and Col 4:7-8 has led to the widely held view that the author of Ephesians had access to a written copy of Colossians. But the nature of the interdependence is intriguing. Apart from 6:21-22 there are some striking parallels but no verbatim agreements or long repetition of passages and one gains the impression that words and ideas are being repeated from memory (more than one third of the words found in Colossians are also in Ephesians).[59] The content (which also includes much unique material) and structure of Ephesians seem to point to a hybrid relationship between literary production and mechanisms related to memorization, perhaps rooted in ritual and oral teaching. Ephesians has sometimes seemed like an amalgam of traditions, which include lengthy and disjointed sayings, hymnic fragments and some references to scripture. For example, the long ethical teaching (Eph 4:17–5:17), which precedes the allusion to communal teaching, includes wisdom sayings and recollections of baptism that seem especially appropriate for an oral learning environment involving repetition and memorization.[60] In an important sense, Ephesians might be conceived of as a teaching/socialization manual for Christ-followers – an educational *product*.

A final feature of Ephesians sets the stage for a brief discussion of the significance of family life for evaluating the concept of the Pauline school: teaching as one of the responsibilities of the father of the household (Eph 6:4) who is to bring up children "in the discipline/training (*paideia*) and instruction of the Lord." The education of children and young

people becomes a priority in the Pastoral Epistles being associated with the formation of leaders (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15) and reflected in the criteria for church offices such as in the case of the description of the role of overseer whose identity as an apt teacher is an extension of his authority and responsibilities as a father with duties to oversee his children's education (1 Tim 3:3-5).[61] Such recognition is presented in a more preliminary form in Ephesians, but in both cases, the evidence should not only be read narrowly against the backdrop of responsibility of parents for the education of biological children, but also against the widespread practice of pseudo-parenting in the Roman world related to complex circumstances involving widowhood and divorce and involving the array of actors in the household responsible for childcare, including wet nurses who were often a child's first teacher.[62] Consistent with the insight that household codes are prescriptive and not descriptive, one must acknowledge the possibility of fatherly authority being extended in a variety of ways (even by mothers in some cases) and extending over both free and slave children in the wider context of Christ groups, potentially welcoming some who were orphaned or abandoned and no doubt extending to some children who had one parent as a non-believer.

In dealing with the educational role of fathers we are navigating the familiar tension between the ideal and the real – there is so much we do not know, including how many freeborn fathers were truly part of Christ groups despite their importance as providing the models for cultural ideals. In addition to being broadly responsible for the education of their children, fathers were widely acknowledged as the traditional custodians of religious knowledge (cf. Prov 4:1-4). Imitation and the oral transmission of rites associated ancestors' traditions were prized as a legacy from father to son and central to the public face of the family, with a particular emphasis on a child's memory.[63] Some of these values can shed light on the relationship between

Paul and Timothy and Titus who are taught by Paul as a fictive father to become teachers themselves.[64] In considering practical ways mentoring occurred with parallels to Christ groups, we should bear in mind intriguing evidence that membership of fathers in cultic associations expanded to include sons. For example, the second century C.E. Mithraic membership list from ancient Noricum reveals various sibling and father-son relationships, pointing to a tendency for members to follow their fathers and brothers in joining the group.[65]

In questioning narrow conceptions of the Pauline school, however, it is passages acknowledging that mothers and grandmothers could be influential teachers for children and young women (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15; Titus 2:1-8) which are the most revealing and challenge the easy dismissal of the agency of women in this era. The presentation of the grounding in faith that Timothy received from Lois and Eunice (no husbands/fathers are mentioned) calls to mind references to widows acting as surrogates in the oversight of education of sons with the most famous example being Cornelia, the mother of Gracchi.[66] Conventional notions of the concept of formation shape the related reference to Timothy being familiar with the sacred writings from infancy/early childhood in 2 Tim 3:15 but it also represents an unmistakable valuing of education which occurs in childhood as setting the stage for future.[67] In keeping with the previous observations about sensitivity to the potential wide range of actors, the influence of older people as mentors requires careful consideration. Mona LaFosse has greatly expanded our knowledge of the influence of older women, especially widows as revealed in 1 Timothy, helping us to comprehend with greater nuance the importance of generations of women exercising specific roles.[68] Tit 2:1-8 is fascinating for its cross-generational references, especially as it points to subgroups meeting together for instructional purposes and indicating the need for gatherings which do not necessarily correspond to broader assemblies for worship purposes. But it is the

more detailed exhortation to older women to teach younger women what is good (*kalodidaskalos*) which ties practical learning with a focus on the family with the avoidance of discrediting the word God and thereby links domestic life, ethical comportment, and theological content (Tit 2:3-5). Given the interest in tradition and sacred writings displayed by the Pastoral Epistles, it seems wise to remain open to the possibility that what is being envisioned here is a variety of learning activities which may well have included reading, memorization of scripture, sayings, and songs, copying and other forms of practical learning and discussion related to moral and domestic life (cf. 1 Tim 4:13).

We have no evidence of any separate Christian schools at the end of the first-century CE and there was great flexibility in use of spaces for teaching generally (based on the arrangements of specific teachers). Often spaces could be used for teaching that doubled as meeting places for other purposes or athletic grounds and teachers were sometimes hired to teach the children of a particular household or neighborhood.[69] But despite great uncertainty about the infrastructure and methods of teaching a recent study by Jennifer R. Strawbridge of two Christian papyri, 4th century schooltexts (*P. Oxy.* II 209 and *P. Mich.* 926) with excerpts from the beginning of Romans (first seven verses in Greek and most of the first fifteen verses in Coptic) points to broader educational motives among Christ groups than is often assumed. Most intriguingly, as noted by Strawbridge, *P. Oxy.* II 209 was part of an archive belonging to Leonides, "a literate flax merchant from Oxyrhynchus who was the member of a guild and had connections to a Church reader." [70] While there are many uncertainties about these texts and the role of school exercises, Strawbridge suggests a context which involved a practical exercise to teach students scribal abbreviations for *nomina sacra*. Strawbridge brings her thought-provoking analysis to bear on the question of the school of Paul. Although she highlights the impossibility of proving

the existence of such an institution, she highlights the intersection of various aspects of the world of the early Christians engaged in educational activities while also challenging scholars who have tended to locate many activities within monastic settings. Her work illustrates the overlap between literary education, pious practice, and scriptural study noting that these activities often would not have been separated in many settings.[71] She concludes: "…while the use Scripture in a school exercise may not ultimately offer proof of an early Christian school, of widespread literacy, or even support any claims for a School of Paul, it does offer evidence of Christian education, Christian teachers and pedagogical activity, possibly even literate education, using the words of a Pauline epistle."[72] Strawbridge's conclusions are valuable when seeking to understand the world behind texts such as Tit 2:3-5 or 1 Tim 4:13 because they offer evidence of educational endeavors tied to propagation of traditions which extend beyond worship gatherings despite uncertain and fragmentary evidence.

The Pastoral Epistles stand out among disputed Pauline works as offering both an emphasis on educational themes and exhortations related to educational practices which cannot be discussed fully here.[73] But if a school offers a model for the *ekklēsia* in these works it needs to be expanded to include not only the philosophical or rhetorical school, but also schooling of children and also taking account important research which encourages re-examination of the often-neglected category of "youth" (biological age of 15-25).[74] The Pastorals, in fact, invite exploration of how philosophical circles might intersect with strong motivations to educate children and youth. In keeping with Brookins' work discussed above, philosophical schools provide important comparative evidence, suggesting possible subgroups who both drew upon philosophical content and/or created new content based on philosophical examples. For example, a fascinating collection of works presented as woman-to-woman advice (though the context and

authenticity of the female voice are debated) in the form of Pythagorean treatises provides a good example of the expectation of older women offering advice to younger women and inviting comparison especially to Titus 2:1-8.[75] Reflecting Neopythagorean origins, this collection constitutes a type of "domestic" philosophy where a life of wisdom and virtue is intertwined with the right domestic attitude and practical learning directed especially to young women. Parallels have been drawn between this collection and a lengthy treatise on household management (including a detailed focus on teaching children) which has survived from the Roman world, the little-known text originally written in Greek within Neopythagorean circles but surviving largely in Arabic and attributed to Bryson.[76] This comparative evidence links family life to philosophical interests and points to forms of education which embrace not only learning of religious traditions and narratives, but also techniques of character molding and the teaching of life habits.

Conclusion

In response to Ehrman's statement that the notion of Deutero-Pauline letters as the product of the Pauline school probably needing to be put to rest, I would argue instead that the construct needs to be updated and significantly qualified. Taken together, the Deutero-Pauline writings do offer evidence of an increased focus on teaching Pauline traditions beyond the life of Paul and the theory that the documents emerged in relation to instructional circles still seems to be the best explanation for the development of these materials. But what I have argued here is that the scope of influences and social mechanisms that allowed for the permutations of materials in these documents is wider than is usually assumed. Instead of focusing on a group of named (male) fellow workers debating theological ideas, recent research is calling us to pay closer attention to how ecstatic experiences and ritual may be related to the generation of new content and to be mindful of the complexities of the relationship between oral exchanges and literary

production in a variety of spaces. In assessing the role of teachers and learners, it is helpful to consider the presence of a variety of actors, old and young and including women, slaves, and children.

I have suggested here that it may be helpful to consider the development of Deutero-Pauline documents as educational *products*.[77] The content of these documents is illuminated especially by recent scholarship which has explored the intersection between family life and education, including the transmission of religious knowledge through rites of various kinds. Whether we are considering the presentation of Paul as an apostolic teacher, the nature of reading events during communal gatherings or the presentation of intergenerational learning, we should recall cultural norms of the family as a foundation of learning and, arguably, as a space for molding memory, lineage, and religious practice. This remains the case even if the members of Christ groups are sometimes in tension with elements of the dominant social order such as when fictive fatherhood comes replace traditional lineage within a family with Timothy and Titus, the apprentice children of Paul serving as perhaps the most obvious example.[78] An appreciation of such educational foundations can help one to understand how a movement had the stamina and strategic acumen to live beyond its earliest leadership and communal adherents.

[1] Harold Remus article, "The end of 'paganism'?" *Studies in Religion/Science Religieuses* 33/2 (2004): 191-208 provides a wonderful example of this. The essay was included in a special issue on naming religious groups in the late Roman Empire.

[2] See especially the chapter of my book "The House Church as Home School," in *The Power of Children: The Construction of Christian Families in the Greco-Roman World* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2014), 109-147; "Re-envisioning Ekklesia Space: Evidence of the Flexible Use of Household Space for Religious Instruction and Practice in the Pastoral Epistles", in Markus Őhler and Norbert Zimmerman eds., *Sacra Privata: Domestic Religion in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Early Christianity, Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 18-19 (2017): 91-104. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/arege-2016-0001 Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017; "Education and the Household in the Pastoral Epistles," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 75 (2021): 283-93.

[3] Hans Conzelmann, "Paulus und die Weisheit," *New Testament Studies* 12 (1966): 231-44; "Die Schule des Paulus," *in Theologia crucis, signum crucis: Festschrift für Eich Dinkler zum70. Geburtstage*, Carl Andresen and

Günter Klein eds. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979), 85-96. On the history of the Pauline school and citation of relevant bibliography see Benjamin P. Laird, *The Pauline Corpus in Early Christianity: Its Formation, Publication, and Circulation* (Peabody: Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2023), 261-262; Bart D. Ehrman in *Forgery and Counterforgery: The use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 172-173; Jennifer R. Strawbridge, "A School of Paul? The use of Pauline Texts in Early Christian Schooltext Papyri," *in Ancient Education and Early Christianity,* Matthew Ryan Hauge and Andrew W. Pitts eds. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016),175.

[4] The work of Angela Standhartinger is often cited. See "Colossians and the Pauline School." *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004): 572-93. She discusses the widely scholarly acceptance of Deutero-Pauline literature being the product of the Pauline school. For detailed application of the Pauline school construct see John Reuman, *Variety and Unity in New Testament Thought* (Oxford Bible Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). See especially the following chapters, "The Pauline School: Colossians, Ephesians, and 2 Thessalonians, Paulinists during and after Paul's Lifetime," 105-128; The Pauline School: Three 'Pastoral' Epistles to Further Faith and Order in the Household of God," 129-48.

[5] Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 172. With a different focus, Benjamin P. Laird questions the validity of the concept of the Pauline school specifically with respect to the origins of the Pauline corpus, generally displaying reservations about claims made about the unique content of the disputed Pauline literature and noting the lack of acceptance of the practice of pseudepigraphy highlighted by Ehrman. He writes: "…while the theory of a Pauline school offers an attractive explanation for how the Pauline corpus may have developed and why certain letters were preserved, it ultimately relies on questionable conclusions regarding first-century literary practices and the literary environment in which the letters were written and collected." Laird, *The Pauline Corpus*, 268. Strawbridge evaluates the evidence and expands the discussion of a school of Paul in interesting ways examining papyri citing Pauline texts. See Strawbridge, "A School of Paul," 175-77. See further below.

[6] Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 173.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Important similarities have been highlighted especially in works which reflect a thematic approach to the study of the disputed Paulines. See, for example, Harry O. Maier, *Picturing Paul in Empire: Imperial Image, Text, and Persuasion in Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles*. Edinburgh: Bloomsbury, 2013 and my study, *The Power of Children.*

[9] Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 173. With respect to the existence of philosophical schools among Christ followers in the first century CE, it should be noted that Timothy A. Brookins has recently argued that some of Paul's followers in Corinth understood themselves as a philosophical school in rivalry with others. See Timothy A. Brookins, *Rediscovering the Wisdom of the Corinthians: Paul, Stoicism, and Spiritual Hierarchy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2024).

[10] Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery* 182.

[11] It is interesting to note that while Ehrman admits that Ephesians is not obviously polemical and treats it in less detail than Colossians for that reason, he nevertheless argues that the letter "engages in a far subtler polemic" (citing and article by Martin Hüneburg) essentially against the content of Colossians which is interpreted as having an inadequate view of the history of salvation. Once again, the emphasis is on the literary project of an independent author: "If this view of the author's concerns is right, then Ephesians can be seen as a kind of counterforgery, intending to correct the views of its predecessor—or at least the implications of those views—in the name of the Apostle who in fact did not write either work." Ibid., 190. He cites Hüneburg, "Paulus versus Paulus: Der Epheserbrief als Korrektur des Kolosserbriefes," in J. Frey et. al. eds., *Pseudepigraphie un Verfasserfiktion*, 390.

[12] David L. Balch, *Jesus, Paul, Luke-Acts and 1 Clement: Studies in Class, Ethnicity, Gender and Orientation* (Eugene. Oregon: Cascade Books, Wipf and Stock. 2023), 21

[13] Ibid., 127, 133.

[14] Ibid., 252--53.

[15] See for example, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, "Emancipative Elements in Ephesians 5.21-33: Why Feminist Scholarship Has (Often) Left Them Unmentioned, and Why They Should be Emphasized," in *A Feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles*, Amy Jill Levine ed. with Marianne Blickenstaff (Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 37-58. See also my discussion of Ephesians 5:21-33 in Carolyn Osiek, Margaret Y. MacDonald with Janet H. Tulloch*, A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 118-43.

[16] See M. Eugene Boring, *An Introduction to the New Testament: History, Literature, Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 320-24.

[17] As Smith's 2012 study makes clear especially 1 Corinthians, and of special relevance to this study, 1 Tmothy, 2 Timothy and Titus are replete with a vocabulary of teaching See Claire S. Smith, *Pauline Communities": A Study of the Vocabulary of Teaching in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).
[18] On Paul's metaphorical use of parenting metaphors see Reidar Aasgaard, "Like a Child: Paul's Rhetorical Uses of Childhood," in *The Child in the Bible,* Marcia J. Bunge, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 249-77.
[19]The significance of this fatherly role has recently been analyzed by Yongli Chen in his 2023 doctoral dissertation, St. Paul's University (Ottawa): *A Social-Scientific Study of Honoring Parents in the World of the Apostle Paul and its Theological Implications in 1 Corinthians 4:14-21.*
[20] See Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 269. For discussion of relevant ancient sources see also MacDonald, *The Power of Children*, 131.
[21] For detailed examination of scholarly discussion (with extensive bibliography) of Paul's education and the historical questions about Paul's association with Gamaliel see Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary 15:1-23:35* (Volume 3) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 3206-3222,
[22] See Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.173-74 (trans. Thackeray, LCL): "Starting from the very beginning with the food of which we partake from infancy and private life of the home, he [our legislator] left nothing, however insignificant, to the caprice of the individual." On teaching the law from infancy see also *C. Ap.* 2.178. See MacDonald, *The Power of Children*, 79-87.
[23]Despite the mixed acknowledgement as signs of divine authority which sometimes must be tempered, references to Spirit endowment accompanied by various miraculous acts (e.g., Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12; Gal 3:5), manifestations of the Spirit (e.g., 1 Thess 1:5; 1 Cor 2:4), and various spiritual gifts such as tongues and prophecy (e.g., 1 Cor 14:18, 37; cf. 1 Cor 2:13) point to key experiences and activities in community life. Here insights from the cognitive sciences have much to offer in addition to a wider comparative understanding of the competitive world of religious expertise in the ancient world. On the significance of powerful religious experience see Colleen Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy: The Neurobiology of the Apostle's Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Jennifer Eyl, Signs, *Wonders, and Gifts: Divination in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). On the competitive environment see especially Heidi Wendt, *At the Temple Gates: The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[24] Eyl, *Signs, Wonders, and Gifts*, 101-102. On Paul's textual approach to prophecy, which includes "revealing the meaning of *texts* to gentiles who are unfamiliar with them," see 102-112. See also figure 3.1, A taxonomy of Paul's divinatory practices, p.87.
[25] As rhetorical analysis has demonstrated, there is strong evidence that Paul's developed his ideas in conversation with others. Antoinette Clark Wire's study of the Corinthian women prophets immediately comes to mind, with her work highlighting the influence of women leaders and teachers despite Paul's attempt to silence the argument at the end of the discussion about prophecy, gender, and veiling (1 Cor 11:16). See Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul's Rhetoric* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991).
[26] Eyl, *Signs, Wonders, and Gifts*, 101.
[27] It is worth noting here that scholarly treatments of the Pauline school have virtually neglected the agency of women even though the development of the Pauline school has figured prominently in discussions of the greater restrictions of the lives of women revealed in Deutero-Pauline literature (see reference to Balch above). This is most likely related to the fewer references to individual women in the disputed Pauline literature, but the implications of this feature of the literature may have been overstated. See MacDonald, "Can Nympha Rule this House? The Rhetoric of Domesticity in Colossians" in *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianities*, Willi Braun ed. (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 16; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2005), 99-120.
[28] See Brookins, *Rediscovering the Wisdom of the Corinthians*.
[29] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 82. Wayne Meeks identified the philosophic or rhetorical school as one of the models from the environment for understanding *ekklēsia* drawing attention to both modes of discourse and social practice (drawing attention to earlier work by Conzelmann, Malherbe, and Judge).
[30] See my forthcoming essay, "Law and Culture in 1 Corinthians 7: The Status of the Children," in Edwin K. Broadhead, Paul Foster, and Wolfgang Kraus, eds. *Faith at the Interface of Cultures*. Leiden: Brill.
[31] Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 84.
[32] Ibid.
[33] See MacDonald, The Power of Children, 21-22 building upon the work of Christian Laes who examines the archaeological record in *Children in the Roman Empire: Outsiders Within* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 37.
[34] Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 84.

[35] See for example Teresa Morgan, "Ethos: The Socialization of Children in Education and Beyond," in *A Companion to families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, Beryl Rawson, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 504-520. See further below.
[36] While not focused on the Pauline school, see the detailed attention between space and educational pursuit in Stephen J. Davis, *Christ Child: Cultural Memories of a Young Jesus* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 100-101.
[37] See, for example, David Horrell, "Domestic Space and Christian Meetings at Corinth: Imagining New Contexts and the Buildings East of the Theatre." *New Testament Studies* 50 (2004): 349-69; Jenn Cianca, *Sacred Ritual, Profane Space: The Roman House as Early Christian Meeting Place* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism. Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queens University Press, 2018); Edward Adams, *The Early Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (Revised Edition. London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark), 2016: Richard Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklēsia: Greco-Roman Associations in Comparative Context* (SNTSMS 164: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 164), 43-82.
[38] With a focus on a workshop setting and activities of slaves, see Margaret Y. MacDonald, "The Wet Nurse as a Model for Communal Relationships in 1 Thessalonians," in *The Ties that Bind*: *Negotiation Relationships in Early Jews and Christian Texts, Contexts and Reception History,* Esther Kobel, Jo-Ann A. Brant, Meredith J. C. Warren, eds; LNTS 660; London: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 2023), 106-115. On teaching in a workshop setting in Thessalonica, see also Richard Last and Philip A. Harland, *Group Survival in the Ancient Mediterranean: Rethinking Material Conditions in the Landscapes of Jews and Christians* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 2020), 79-80.
[39] See Philip A Harland, Philip A. *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a place in Ancient Mediterranean Society (*Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); Richard S. Ascough., Philip Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg. *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco, Tex. Baylor University Press, 2012); John S. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019); Bruce W. Longenecker ed., *Greco-Roman Associations, Deities and Early Christianity* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2022).
[40]Benjamin P. Laird, *The Pauline Corpus in Early Christianity: Its Formation, Publication, and Circulation* (Peabody: Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2023), 1. Laird points to Rom 1:9-15; 1 Thess 2:17; Phil 4:1. He cites M. Luther Stirewalt, *Paul the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003) who detects a greater dependency on letter writing in later letters (p.117).
[41]Other activities associated with the Pauline school are complex, highly speculative, and cannot be discussed here (despite their undeniable significance for the Pauline legacy) such as the process leading Paul's letters being circulated as a corpus and the editing of works, which may have included the merging of previously distinct letters such in the case of 2 Corinthians. Pointing to the significance of external witnesses, Laird argues in favor of an early dating for the collection, raising questions about validity of arguments concerning Deutero-Pauline authorship. He also discusses literary practices such as the retaining of duplicate copies by Paul and his associates which figure into his theories of early dating. See *The Pauline Corpus*, 264-79. The use of secretaries by Paul is a related issue which has also figured in theories about the production of Deutero-Pauline literature. See examination of the secretary hypothesis by Ehrman in *Forgery and Counterforgery*, 218-222 where he responds especially to E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 2.42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991). For valuable examination of how the interest in and definition of the Pauline corpus, including the focus on authenticity, reflects the perspective of ancient and modern critics, see the doctoral dissertation by Gregory Peter Fewster, *Forgers and Critics of the corpus Paulinum: Manuscripts and Critical Scholarship from Ancient Alexandria to the Republic of Letters and Beyond*, University of Toronto, 2020.
[42] Acknowledging that scholars continue to question to pseudonymity of documents, many scholars remain convinced that Colossians, Ephesians, the Pastorals and (to a lesser extent) 2 Thessalonians reflect an effort to bring Pauline tradition to bear on new situations. Some have also associated the Pauline school with Acts. It is possible for me here to discuss only a few examples from Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles.
[43] Accepted by some as genuine and often viewed as reflecting circumstances closer to the life of the historical Paul, it has been suggested that Colossians may have been written while Paul was still alive in prison—perhaps by Timothy, who is presented as the co-author of Colossians (Col 1:1)—and that Paul may even have approved of the content in general terms, adding only the briefest of conclusions with his own hand. See James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).
[44] In Col 4:7–18, Paul speaks as one who will never again visit Colossae, Hierapolis, or Laodicea. There is a feeling of departure and aura of legacy. In keeping with this tendency 2 Timothy has aptly been called a testamentary letter.

In addition, new leaders seem to have emerged in last years of Paul's life or even later. Tychicus, who is not mentioned in the undisputed letters, is the only fellow-worker mentioned in Ephesians (6:21), but he appears also in Colossians (4:7–9), Acts (20:4), and the Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim 4:12; Tit 3:12).

[45] The letter from Laodicea is now lost and likely refers to a letter which Paul originally wrote to the Laodiceans. For theories about this letter, see MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 183. One historical puzzle (which has affected theories about dating and provenance) is the extent to which these cities of the Lycus Valley were struck by an earthquake in 60–61 CE. For in depth recent discussion of archaeological, inscriptional, and numismatic sources related to the cities of the Lycus Valley see James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn, eds., *The First Urban Churches 5: Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea*, WGRWSup 16 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2019).

[46] These verses offer the only direct reference to a woman leader of a house church in Paul's letters (cf. Rom 16:1–2; 3–5; Acts 16:14–15, 40). Some ancient manuscripts sought to masculinize Nympha by converting her name to the masculine "Nymphas." On Nympha, see MacDonald, "Can Nympha Rule this House?".

[47] See Osiek and MacDonald*, A Woman's Place*, 161-62. On the relationship to practices during early Christian Greco-Roman symposia, see Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to the Third Centuries* (Supplement to the Vigiliae Christianae; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 62-65.

[48] On historical context and for interpretative possibilities see MacDonald, *The Power of Children*, 42–43. There are many issues relating to dating and imprisonment. See Maryanne Meye Thompson*, Colossians and Philemon*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 5–6. On historical background see also Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Colossians and Ephesians" *in T&T Clark Handbook of the Historical Paul*, Ryan S. Schellenberg and Heidi Wendt eds. (London: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 2022), 392-93.

[49] See excellent discussion of comparative evidence from the School of Epictetus by Jeffrey M. Hubbard, "Let the Reader Understand": Ancient Pedagogy and the Social Setting of Mark," *Novum Testamentum* 65 (2023) 285-305. He also discusses Origen's Commentary on Matthew and the commentaries of Philo, responding to the monograph by R. F. Walsh, *The Origins of Early Christian Literature: Contextualizing the New Testament within Greco-Roman Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 20121). On reading culture, see also Davis, *Christ Child*, 26-34; Osiek and MacDonald, *A Woman's Place*, 161-62.

[50] The work of Nils. A. Dahl was especially influential. See Nils A. Dahl "Addresse un Proömium des Epheserbriefes, ThZ 7 (1951) 241-64. See also John C. Kirby, *Ephesians and Pentecost: An Inquiry into the Structure and Purpose of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: S.P.C.K, 1968). See discussion of this earlier scholarship in Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians* (Sacra Pagina 17; Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press), 1-22.

[51] Jacob L. Mackey, *Belief and Cult: Rethinking Roman Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), 246. Mackey is influenced by the Cognitive Theory of Shared Intentionality. He discusses a range of ancient evidence such at Plautus, *Most.* 135-36 on the agency of children and Cicero *Fin*. 5.42 on children learning by observation of virtuous behavior (p.245). See also his summary of scholarship on children's religious learning (n.7, p.245). On visual representation of children participating in rituals and procession see Janet Tulloch, "Visual Representation of Children and Ritual in the Early Roman Empire," SR 41 (2012): 408-438.

[52] On the significance of the direct address to children see MacDonald, *The Power of Children*, 18-22.

[53] He draws especially on the work of K. Sterelny, *The Evolved Apprentice: How Evolution made Humans Unique* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012). On Timothy and Titus as apprentices, see MacDonald, *The Power of Children*, 111.

[54] On rites as a form of transmission of religious knowledge see Francesca Prescendi, "Children and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge," in *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture*, Véronique Dasen and Thomas Späth eds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 73-93. She examines evidence for children singing at public feasts (esp. 82-83).

[55] H. Sivan, "Passover in the Port of Rome (Ostia c. 175 CE)," in *Jewish Childhood in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 306-327.

[56] In contrast, Colossians refers to the Spirit directly only once (Col 1:8). Comparison to Colossians also recalls the potential backdrop of competition from other visionaries (Col:16-19) and such competition may well have been integral to environment shared by both works. In the case of Ephesians, the interest in visionary phenomena demonstrated by the work has led to the suggestion that Paul in Ephesians is responding to false teachers who employ visionary techniques, but false teachers are mentioned only once in Eph 4:14). Michael D. Goulder has made a valuable contribution, however, in highlighting the importance of visionary phenomena for Ephesians. He points to several visionary texts such as 3 Enoch which mention angels, and which can shed light upon Ephesians. See Michael D Goulder, "The Visionaries of Laodicea," JSNT 43 (1991) 15–39. See detailed response to Goulder in

MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 223–225. On the identity of Paul as a "seer" in Ephesians see also MacDonald, "Colossians and Ephesians," 385-87.

[57] Some have seen here an attempt to distinguish the Spirit-induced ecstasy of the Christ-group from the ecstasies of certain mystery cults. See, for example, Cleon L. Rogers Jr., "The Dionysian Background of Eph 5:18," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (1979): 249–57.

[58] While it has sometimes been suggested that the reference to prophets in Eph 2:20 is to prophets of the Hebrew Bible, Eph 3:5 and 4:11 offer weight to the contention that early church prophets are in view.

[59] See detailed discussion in MacDonald*, Colossians and Ephesians*, 4-6; 352-54.

[60] For more in-depth discussion of the focus on socialization and education in Ephesians see MacDonald, *The Power of Children*, 67–94.

[61] For detailed discussion of teaching as priority linked to family life see MacDonald, *The Power of Children*, 139-43.

[62] For full discussion see MacDonald, *Power of Children*, 67-107. On this topic see also Ann-Cathrin Harders, "Roman Patchwork Families: Surrogate Parenting, Socialization, and the Shaping of Tradition," in *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture,* Véronique Dasen and Thomas Späth, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 49-72).

[63] Francesca Prescendi, "Children," 73–93, She cites especially Ovid, *Fast*. 5.431-2; Ps. Plutarch, *Mor*. 9E [Lib. Ed.]. Extending much beyond physical appearance, socialization and ascription by others manufactured the resemblance which was central to the public face of the family. Epictetus, for example, spoke to the line of family continuity and identity by encouraging sons to treat everything that was their own as belonging to their fathers. Obedience to fathers was a prime indicator of the character of sons who were bound to the very essence of their fathers. On these dynamics see Harders, "Patchwork Families," 52. See Epictetus, *Diatr*. 2.10.7.

[64] For more detailed discussion see MacDonald, *The Power of Children*, 110-114 and MacDonald, "Education and the Household in the Pastoral Epistles."

[65] Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 109.

[66] For relevant ancient texts see M. Joyal, M. I MacDougall and J. C. Yardley, *Greek and Roman Education: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2009), 157-58.

[67] It is important to note the use of the term παιδεία in 2 Tim 3:16–17 which follows immediately after a reference to the education of Timothy in the sacred writings (2 Tim 3:15). Training (παιδεία) in righteousness is at the heart of the purpose of scripture, which involves a combination of teaching and corrective action pointing to a wholistic approach to learning.

[68] See Mona Tokarek LaFosse, *Honouring Age: The Social Dynamics of Age Structure in 1 Timothy* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill Queens Press, 2023).

[69] See Morgan, *Literate Education*, 29-32.

[70] Strawbridge, "A School of Paul," 172.

[71] Ibid., 171-73.

[72] Strawbridge, "A School of Paul," 177. Interestingly, Strawbridge responds to Ehrman's argument against the existence of a Pauline School given the lack of evidence that Paul locates educational activities anywhere outside the context of the Church. She writes "…it is countered in part by school exercises such as *P. Oxy*. II 209 which are found in archives outside the Church, suggesting that education in Scripture is not completely limited to a Church context." (p.176).

[73] See MacDonald, "Education and the Household in the Pastoral Epistles." A strong emphasis on education as a lens for analysis of the 1 Timothy is evident in the recent monograph by Lyn M. Kidston, *Persuading Shipwrecked Men*: *The Rhetorical Strategies of 1 Timothy* (WUZNT 526: Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020).

[74] See Christian Laes and Johan Strubbe, *Youth in the Roman Empire: The Young and the Restless Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[75] See especially, Annette Bourland Huizenga. *Moral Education for Women in the Pastoral and Pythagorean Letters*: *Philosophers of the Household* (NovTSup147. Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[76] Simon Swain, *Economy, Family, and Society from Rome to Islam: A Critical Edition, English Translation, and Study of Bryson's Management of the Estate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); John T. Fitzpatrick, "Early Greek Economic Thought," in *The Extramercantile Economies of Greek and Roman Cities: New Perspectives on the Economic History of Classical Antiquity,* David B. Hollander, Thomas R. Blanton IV, and John T. Fitzgerald, eds (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 29-50. See also my discussion in "Law and Culture in 1 Corinthians 7" (forthcoming).

[77] Here I have been influenced by the theories of Pierre Bourdieu concerning the *habitus* which have been employed across disciples and are particularly useful here for examining the process of socialization and learning. Bourdieu

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describes the *habitus* as consisting of "schemes of perception and appreciation" and has much to offer in illuminating the complex cultural exchanges between the nascent Christ groups and the Roman world taking account of the generative capacity of the *habitus*: "Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning." Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 55. It should be noted that Bourdieu highlights the importance of the education of the child (pp.73-74).

[78] Usurping the traditional educational authority of the *paterfamilias* over his children was a criticism that society leveled against early Christians as reported in second-century criticism of early Christianity. According to Celsus, disreputable practices included the targeting of adolescent boys for allegiance to illegitimate educational assemblies. Origen, Cels. 3.50; cf. 3.55; 3.44.