

# The Traditional and Ecclesiastical Paul of 1 Corinthians

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*Abstract:* This article challenges the use of 1 Corinthians as the starting point of a popular devolutionary narrative whereby the charismatic historical Paul gave way over time to the ecclesiastical “Paul” of the canonical tradition. I draw attention to the numerous ways in which the Paul of 1 Corinthians appeals to tradition and to wider ecclesial practices as a way of constraining the practices and beliefs of the Corinthians, and I argue that this devolutionary narrative is being undergirded not by a close reading of the primary sources, or by a careful application of Max Weber’s nuanced work on authority, but by the theologically tendentious Protestant framework established in Rudolph Sohm’s *Kirchenrecht*.

*Key Words:* 1 Corinthians • Paul • charisma • institution • Max Weber • Rudolph Sohm • social memory

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What do you have that you did not receive? (1 Cor 4:7)

The winning of ecclesiastical history for science by Protestant scholarship has been one of the main tasks of the nineteenth century.

—G. P. Gooch<sup>1</sup>

HIGH ABOVE THE REMAINS of the great theater of ancient Ephesus, cut narrowly into Mount Bülbül, sits the “Grotto of St. Paul.” Closed to the public and a

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<sup>1</sup> G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1913) 534.

bit of a hike away from the main archaeological site, the cave, which appears to have been in continuous use as a site of Christian veneration and worship, both local and pilgrim, from the earliest centuries of Christianity up until the early twentieth century, contains a number of recently uncovered early Christian frescoes, including an important sixth-century depiction of Paul with Thecla and her mother, Theocleia.<sup>2</sup> It is the only material evidence of a Pauline connection with Ephesus and preserves for Christian memory the moment of Paul's preaching on "continence and resurrection" in Iconium, with Thecla looking on in wonder from her house-turned-aedicula and her mother, Theocleia, presumably peering over the scene in concern (cf. *Acts Paul* 3:5-8). I say "presumably" because Theocleia's eyes have been gouged out in iconoclastic fashion (although Paul's and Thecla's have survived). Theocleia is, however, clearly positioned behind Paul and her head is in the same direction as his. She is likely looking past the man who stands between her and her daughter, raising her hand in admonition that Thecla not forsake Thamyris, her betrothed.

This particular set of late ancient frescoes from the Grotto of St. Paul is a good reminder that apostolic memory, whether ancient or modern, always turns on the image. And behind every image stands a narrative. John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan Reed, for instance, mistaking Theocleia for Thecla in this scene, argue that "[a]n earlier image in which Thecla and Paul were equally authoritative apostolic figures has been replaced by one in which the male is apostolic and authoritative and the female is blinded and silenced."<sup>3</sup> What happened to Paul and Thecla in the Grotto over time, in their view, is equivalent to what happened to the "authentic and historical Paul" in the NT canon, whose support for "female authority" has been defaced by "pseudo-Pauline, post-Pauline, and anti-Pauline obliterations" (namely, 1 Timothy).<sup>4</sup> Yet it seems that their rush to find on the hillside of Ephesus a material confirmation of an already preconceived narrative about the "domestication" of Paul in the church runs roughshod over what is actually before

<sup>2</sup> On the discovery and restoration of the frescoes, beginning in the 1990s, see Renate Pillinger, "Wandmalereien und Graffiti als neue Zeugnisse der Paulusverehrung in Ephesus," in *Mit den Augen des Herzens sehen: Der Epheserbrief als Leitfaden für Spiritualität und Kirche* (ed. Michael Theobald; Würzburg: Echter, 2000) 213-26; eadem, "Das frühbyzantinische Ephesos: Ergebnisse der aktuellen Forschungsprojekte. Die sogenannte Paulusgrotte," in *Neue Forschungen zur Religionsgeschichte Kleinasien: Elmar Schwertheim zum 60. Geburtstag gewidmet* (ed. Gudrun Heedemann and Engelbert Winter; Asia Minor Studien 49; Bonn: Habelt, 2003) 158-63 and pls. 20-25; and Pillinger, L. Bratasz, G. Fulgoni, F. Ghizzoni, S. Gianoli, S. Salvatori, K. Sterflinger, and J. Weber, "Die Wandmalereien in der sogenannten Paulusgrotte von Ephesos: Studien zur Ausführungstechnik und Erhaltungsproblematik, Restaurierung und Konservierung," *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien* 143 (2008) 71-116.

<sup>3</sup> John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004) xii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

us: the exact opposite of their conclusion. Thecla's image has been preserved, whereas Theocleia, who represents traditional notions of marriage and procreation, has been defaced.<sup>5</sup>

Pauline Studies, since its inception as a modern academic discipline in the era of Ferdinand Christian Baur, has differed little from early Christian iconography and hagiography. Both are attempts to remember Paul rightly, to construct an image of the apostle that is manageable, useful, and desirable for a variety of theopolitical ends.<sup>6</sup> This article iconoclastically interferes with one of the popular Pauline images in modern scholarship: the "charismatic" Paul of 1 Corinthians, a text that was authored from Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8). My interest in making this assault rests in how this Pauline imaginary serves as the foundation for a Protestant narrative about the general *devolution* of *Urchristentum* into *Katholicismus* and, more pointedly, of the Pauline tradition from a charismatic and revealed authority (in the ministry of the so-called historical or real Paul) into an institutional, traditional, and/or rationalized authority (in the so-called pseudo-Pauline epistles). The theoretical structure for this narrative was provided in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Rudolph Sohm's (1841–1917) distinction between charismatic and legal authority, distancing *Urchristentum* from the latter, and by Max Weber's (1864–1920) classification, dependent in some ways on Sohm, of three types of domination—charismatic, traditional, and legal.<sup>7</sup> The devolutionary narrative is so comfortably fixed in our discipline now that it sets the framework for our introductory textbooks. Take two representative examples:

New Testament scholars have long noted the apparent lack of formal church offices in the communities to which Paul wrote, combined with Paul's emphasis on the Spirit's gifts of prophecy, teaching, and so on, which seem to be viewed as distributed

<sup>5</sup> The team from the Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut responsible for handling the restoration of the frescoes noted, among other things, that the figure to the left, who was facing and listening to Paul, seemed to be in the window of an aedicula, which certainly is suggestive of Thecla, whereas the figure to the right of Paul was wearing the *maphorion*, which would have been typical of upper-class married women in the late-ancient Byzantine period, and was thus suggestive of Theocleia. The inscription next to the figure on the right, "ΘΕΟΚΛΑΙ-" certainly also marks Theocleia, not Thecla. See Norbert Zimmermann, "Die spätantike und Byzantinische Malerei in Ephesos," in *Byzanz – das Römerreich im Mittelalter*, Teil 2.2, *Schauplätze* (ed. F. Daim and J. Drauschke; Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums im Mainz 84; Mainz: Art Stock Books, 2010) 615–62, esp. 642–43.

<sup>6</sup> See Benjamin L. White, *Remembering Paul: Ancient and Modern Contests over the Image of the Apostle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> I will return in due course below to Sohm's development of the category of charisma in his *Kirchenrecht* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1892–1923), which was influential on Weber, whose typologies of authority have been so important in sociological and historical work. Weber's distinction between charismatic, traditional, and rational domination can be found in his *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (2 vols.; ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978; orig., 1922) 1:212–301.

to individual persons without regard for any established position or office they might or might not hold (1 Cor 12–14). Also well documented is the emergence of a somewhat more formal structure of named leadership positions (bishops, presbyters/elders, deacons) in the Pastoral Epistles, which most scholars believe to have been written some decades after Paul’s death. . . . The change has often been expressed in terms of a development (or even a “decline”) from Spirit-led freedom to ecclesiastical order and law.<sup>8</sup>

Paul’s churches were “charismatic” communities, that is, congregations of people who believed that they had been endowed with God’s Spirit and so been given “gifts” (Greek *charismata*) to enable them to minister to one another. . . . There was nobody ultimately in charge, except the apostle (who wasn’t on the scene), because everyone had received an equal endowment of the Spirit, and so no one could lord it over anyone else. At least that is how Paul thought the church ought to be (see 1 Cor 12–14).<sup>9</sup>

In many ways, this contrast between the “real” Paul of 1 Corinthians 12–14 and the pseudo-Paul of the Pastoral Epistles has influenced more generalized statements about the legacy of Paul in the first and early second centuries, as can be found for example in James D. G. Dunn’s introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*: “And so it becomes still more apparent that the Paul retained for Christianity was a domesticated Paul, Paul rendered more comfortable, an ecclesiasticized Paul.”<sup>10</sup> Or, as Crossan, this time with Marcus Borg, characterizes it in their *The First Paul*:

Rather, it is to insist that the post-Pauline, pseudo-Pauline letters are anti-Pauline with regard to major aspects of his theology. They represent . . . a taming of Paul, a domestication of Paul’s passion to the normalcy of the Roman imperial world in which he and his followers lived.<sup>11</sup>

If we listen closely to this narrative tradition, we come to understand that the “real” Paul was neither “domesticated,” “ecclesiastical,” “tame,” nor interested in “law and order.” Whatever these things might mean, they are clearly not good. Thus, they came to characterize the pseudo-Paul of “tradition.”

This is well and good as an ideological narrative, but it should be pointed out that, although 1 Corinthians does develop Paul’s notion of χάρισμα in an extended way, it also contains more “traditioning” language (11 occurrences: παράδοσις, 1x; παραδιδωμι, 7x; παραλαμβάνω, 3x) than the six so-called “pseudo-Pauline”

<sup>8</sup> David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul* (2nd ed.; London: T&T Clark, 2000) 111.

<sup>9</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (5th ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) 416.

<sup>10</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul* (ed. James D. G. Dunn; Cambridge Companions to Religion; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 1–17, here 2.

<sup>11</sup> Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church’s Conservative Icon* (New York: HarperOne, 2009) 15.

letters combined (7 occurrences: 2 Thessalonians, 3x; Ephesians, 3x; 1 Timothy, 1x).<sup>12</sup> The same is true with respect to the use of ἐκκλησία in the Pauline epistles. It is deployed more than twice as often in 1 Corinthians (22 occurrences) as in any other epistle (next most: 2 Corinthians, 9x; Ephesians, 9x). As with the traditioning language, it occurs more frequently here than in the six “pseudo-Paulines” combined (18 occurrences: Ephesians, 9x; Colossians, 4x; 2 Thessalonians, 2x; 1 Timothy, 3x). We might be justified, at least initially then, in contrast to the regnant narrative, in calling the Paul of 1 Corinthians both “traditional” and “ecclesiastical.” A raw comparative vocabulary count, of course, is not an argument, as words mean different things in different contexts. It does, however, begin to raise some important questions about the regnant narrative. In what follows, I explore the use of this language in 1 Corinthians and conclude that there was a complex relationship between charisma and the routinization of charisma from the outset of early Christian social life—after all, Weber himself emphasized that his typologies of authority were rarely pure—and then ask why this complexity is forgotten in the paradigm just described. Ultimately, we are asking about the *ars memoriae* and how Paul becomes an object of knowledge within particular traditions, whether academic or ecclesial (or one disguised as the other). We ask how a text such as 1 Corinthians can, much like the scene on the hillside of Ephesus, be quickly assumed into a framework while at the same time containing within it the very elements that might destroy that framework of knowledge. A short discussion of Sohm’s *Kirchenrecht* at the end of this article will help clarify the matter.

## I. Παράδοσις and ἐκκλησία in 1 Corinthians

Since 1 Corinthians is often the single datum that carries the load for the starting point of the aforementioned devolutionary narrative, we ought to pay close attention to this epistle and its argumentation. As Paul comes to the final third of the letter, after several days of dictation (16:21), spread perhaps across several weeks during which he has learned of a number of problems from a variety of sources (1:11; 7:1; 16:15-17), we can discern a shift in rhetorical emphasis.<sup>13</sup> He increasingly grounds his arguments in tradition and the practices of other ἐκκλησίαι

<sup>12</sup> In NA<sup>27</sup>, the text of 1 Corinthians totals 6,830 words and the six “pseudo-Pauline” letters have a larger combined total of 8,315 words (Bible Works 7).

<sup>13</sup> E. Randolph Richards estimates that it would have taken Paul at least two days to dictate 1 Corinthians (*Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004] 165). Hans Conzelmann allows for “pauses in dictation” and that “the composing of the letter was spread over a certain period of time” (*1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* [trans. James W. Leitch; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975] 3 nn. 20-21). Compare Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SacPag 7; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999) 15; and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 49.

(cf. 1 Cor 11; 14; 15; and 16, to which we will return shortly), a move that he clearly thinks will have weight with many in the Corinthian assembly.<sup>14</sup> This move should not surprise the auditor or reader of 1 Corinthians. As was often his practice, the apostle has already shown his hand in the epistolary prescript:

to the assembly of God which is in Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both their Lord and ours. (1:2)<sup>15</sup>

From the outset, the Corinthians are to envision themselves as one instantiation of a network of messianic ἐκκλησίαι encircling the Mediterranean.<sup>16</sup> This network is a single organism with a common set of traditions and practices. At least that is what the Paul of 1 Corinthians is going to argue.<sup>17</sup> On occasion he will argue from the precedent set in *his* other ἐκκλησίαι:

*On the Imitation of Paul*

For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every assembly. (1 Cor 4:17)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See Anders Eriksson, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof: Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians* (ConBNT 29; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1998). While the term ἐκκλησία may have been another word for what we typically call the Jewish synagogue, as has been claimed by Anders Runesson (Anders Runesson, Donald Binder and Birger Olsson, eds., *The Ancient Synagogue: From Its Origins to 200 C.E.: A Source Book* [Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 72; Leiden: Brill, 2008] 328; and Runesson, “Behind the Gospel of Matthew: Radical Pharisees in Post-War Galilee?,” *CurTM* 37 [2010] 460-71, esp. 463-64, citing Philo [*Spec.* 1.324-25; *Deus* 111; *Virt.* 108]), I am unconvinced that on any occasion in 1 Corinthians Paul has in mind “synagogue” when he uses the term ἐκκλησία. Rather, he has in mind the various assemblies that met in Roman *insulae* or other domestic environments (1 Cor 11:17-34) on the first day of the week (1 Cor 16:2) throughout the Mediterranean world and that likely modeled their gatherings, at least partially, on what happened in the synagogues. Prisca and Aquila established these kinds of house assemblies both in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:9) and in Rome (Rom 16:3-5), and thus also likely in Corinth.

<sup>15</sup> Compare Rom 1:1-7 and Gal 1:1-5.

<sup>16</sup> Compare Frédéric L. Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977; orig., 1889) 45; Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (2nd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914) 3; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 23; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 33; Antionette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 31; and Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 74-75.

<sup>17</sup> See also Collins, *First Corinthians*, 46-47.

<sup>18</sup> C. K. Barrett finds here “a sense of the interdependence and unity of all such local assemblies” (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [BNTC; London: A & C Black, 1968] 117). Compare Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 93 n. 23; and Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 189.

*On Marriage and Sex*

Except to each as the Lord has apportioned, each as the Lord has called, in this manner let one walk. *This is what I command in all the assemblies.* (1 Cor 7:17)<sup>19</sup>

These reminders that what Paul expects from one congregation he also expects of his others—unique to 1 Corinthians—seem at first glance like rare and sporadic throwaway comments rooted in the knee-jerk reactions of a threatened missionary wanderer.

That is, until one gets to the final third of 1 Corinthians, where appeals to ecclesial tradition and precedent appear more frequently and seem increasingly ecumenical in vision, tied not merely to the Pauline assemblies but rather, like the epistolary prescript, to all of the apostolic assemblies.<sup>20</sup> In several of these passages (11:2; 11:23; 15:1-3) Paul uses the semi-technical language of the traditioning process (παράδοσις, παραδίδωμι, παραλαμβάνω):<sup>21</sup>

*On the Veiling of Women Prophets*<sup>22</sup>

Now I praise you because you have remembered me in every way and *hold fast to the traditions that I handed on to you.* . . . but if anyone appears to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the assemblies of God. (1 Cor 11:2, 16)

<sup>19</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 550: “Paul’s final phrase . . . reflects the initial concern of 1:2b.”

<sup>20</sup> Wire discusses 1 Cor 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; and 14:32-34, 36 under the category “Argument from Universal Church Practice” (*Corinthian Women Prophets*, 32). She is rare in highlighting this as a key argumentative strategy in 1 Corinthians.

<sup>21</sup> On the concept of tradition in Paul, see Lucien Cerfaux, “La tradition selon saint Paul,” in *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux: Études d'exégèse et d'histoire religieuse de Monseigneur Cerfaux réunies à l'occasion de son soixante-dixième anniversaire* (2 vols.; BETL 6, 7; Gembloux: Duculot, 1954) 2:253-63; Leonhard Goppelt, “Tradition nach Paulus,” *KD* 4 (1958) 213-33; Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (ASNU 22; Lund: Gleerup, 1961) 288-323; Klaus Wegenast, *Das Verständnis der Tradition bei Paulus und in den Deuteropaulinen* (WMANT 8; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1962); John W. Drane, “Tradition, Law, and Ethics in Pauline Theology,” *NovT* 16 (1974) 167-87; and John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (1975; repr., NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007) 54-113. On 1 Corinthians, in particular, see Robert H. Mounce, “Continuity of the Primitive Tradition: Some Pre-Pauline Elements in 1 Corinthians,” *Int* 13 (1959) 417-24, esp. 418, 421; E. Earle Ellis, “Traditions in 1 Corinthians,” *NTS* 32 (1986) 481-502; Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (CRINT 3.1; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990); and Eriksson, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof*, 73-134. Commentators who note the technical use of traditioning language in 1 Corinthians are too numerous to note here.

<sup>22</sup> See Margaret M. Mitchell, who says, “Once again we see in Paul’s reconciliatory argument the conservative leanings typical of arguments for concord: women are to remain with head covered when prophesying and praying in worship to avoid φιλονεικία in the church, in union with the custom of the church universal” (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investiga-*

*On the Eucharistic Meal*<sup>23</sup>

*For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed . . .* (1 Cor 11:23)

*On Prophetic Orderliness or On Non-Prophetic Speech by Married Women*<sup>24</sup>

*As in all the assemblies of the saints . . . Was it from you that the word of God went out, or did it only come to you?* (1 Cor 14:33b, 36)

*On the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus and His Saints*<sup>25</sup>

Now I make known to you, brothers and sisters, the good news that I announced to you, *which you received*, in which also you have been established, and through which you are saved. . . . *For I passed on to you of first importance what I also received. . . .* So then, *whether I or they*, thus we preach and thus you have believed. (1 Cor 15:1-3, 11)

*tion of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993] 262-63). The “we” in v. 16 is ambiguous. It at least includes Paul but may also include the Corinthian assembly and/or the Ephesian assembly, from which Paul is writing.

<sup>23</sup> Commentators debate whether “from the Lord” means “in a vision” (Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 576-77) or whether it signifies the apostolic tradition, handed down by human authorities but bearing the weight of Jesus’ command at each stage of transmission (Wegenast, “*παράδιδωμι*,” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* [ed. Colin Brown; 4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78] 3:773; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 196; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 436; and Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 548-49).

<sup>24</sup> Commentators and translators debate whether v. 33b, “as in all the assemblies of the saints,” should conclude what precedes—a general discussion of prophetic orderliness—or function as an *inclusio* with v. 36 for the sub-discussion on nonprophetic speech by married women. The former is preferred by the *KJV* and *NKJV* translations and by Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 314; Robertson and Plummer, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 324; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 15; Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 689; and Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 33. Fee (p. 697 n. 49) notes that this is also the understanding of the early Latin manuscripts and that Chrysostom’s homilies 36 and 37 on 1 Corinthians break between vv. 33 and 34. In favor of the former reading is that this kind of language is normally found at the end of sentences in 1 Corinthians (see 4:17; 7:17; and 11:16) and is often at the conclusion of arguments (see 7:17; 11:16). The latter of the two options is preferred by the editors of Nestle-Aland<sup>28</sup>, the *NRSV*, *ESV*, *NIV*, *REB*, and *RSV* translations, and by Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 736; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 241; and Collins, *First Corinthians*, 511. In favor of this reading is that sometimes an argument will both begin and end with an appeal to tradition (cf. 11:2, 16). For my purposes, very little is gained or lost by the placement of this line, for what precedes and succeeds it are tied together by two ideas: silence and learning.

<sup>25</sup> Conzelmann sees 15:11 as a return to the basic argument of 15:1-3 (*1 Corinthians*, 261). Fee claims, “Once more, therefore, he is pressing on them that their current behavior and theology are out of step with those of the other churches (cf. 1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33)” (*First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 736).



*On the Collection for the Saints*

Now concerning the collection for the holy ones: *as I commanded the assemblies of Galatia, thus also you should do.* (1 Cor 16:1)

What interests me about these passages is neither the content of the traditions and customs nor their origin (whether in Jewish, Greek, or Roman customs, Hebrew Scripture, Jesus logia, or the apostolic tradition in Jerusalem and/or Antioch), for these have been discussed at length, but rather the simple and straightforward appeal to tradition and to the wider practices of the various Christ-following assemblies around the Mediterranean as a way of “routinizing,” to use Weberian language, the charisma and individuality of some of the Corinthians. These kinds of explicit reminders and appeals are found in at least eight sections of 1 Corinthians, bringing into full focus the declaration of the epistolary prescript that the Corinthian saints exist alongside “*all* who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ *in every place*.” Most often, these assertions of ecclesial tradition and custom open and close individual argumentative movements, providing a rhetorical frame for them.<sup>26</sup>

The consistent tension between charisma and routine in 1 Corinthians can be explained in a number of ways. The following options presume that problematic data are not being ignored (a strategy to which I will return below). First, if an interpreter cannot conceive of how the “historical” Paul could have ever argued this way, then the discovery of non-Pauline interpolations in 1 Corinthians is necessary. The passages limiting women’s freedom in assembly gatherings (11:2-16; 14:34-35) have been particularly relevant here.<sup>27</sup> The suspicion, however, of one

<sup>26</sup> At least in 1 Cor 11:16 it seems as if Paul is not satisfied that any of his other arguments about women’s head-coverings will prevail. So the appeal to tradition is meant to be the argumentative trump card. See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 191; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (Tenth Anniversary Edition; New York: Crossroad, 1994) 229; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 421; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 395; and Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 848.

<sup>27</sup> On 1 Cor 11:2-16, see William O. Walker Jr., “1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul’s Views Regarding Women,” *JBL* 94 (1975) 94-100; idem, “The Vocabulary of 1 Corinthians 11.3-16: Pauline or Non-Pauline?,” *JSNT* 35 (1989) 75-88; Lamar Cope, “1 Cor 11.2-16: One Step Further,” *JBL* 97 (1978) 435-36; and G.W. Trompf, “On Attitudes toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and Its Context,” *CBQ* 42 (1980) 196-215. Ellis has argued that this passage is an interpolation, but a Pauline interpolation (“Traditions in 1 Corinthians,” 493). On 1 Cor 14:34-35, see Gottfried Fitzer, *Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde: Über den unpaulinischen Charakter der mulier-taceat-Verse in 1. Korinther 14* (Theologische Existenz heute 110; Munich: Kaiser, 1963); Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 246; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Interpolations in 1 Corinthians,” *CBQ* 48 (1986) 81-94; Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 699-708; Philip B. Payne, “Fuldensis, Sigla for Variants in Vaticanus, and 1 Cor 14.34-5,” *NTS* 41 (1995) 240-62; idem, “Ms. 88 as Evidence for a Text without 1 Cor 14:34-35,” *NTS* 44 (1998) 152-58; idem, “The Text-Critical Function of the Umlauts in Vaticanus, with Special Attention to 1 Corinthians 14.34-35: A

or two passages that do not seem to square with an interpreter's preferred image of Paul—an image often buttressed by an overly certain reading of the brief and cryptic language of Gal 3:28—seems all too convenient. Rather, if one wants to exclude these “domesticating” passages from 1 Corinthians, then one ought to go all the way, as did Johannes Weiss. He got rid of all of the “ecumenical” passages in 1 Corinthians (1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 10:29-30; 11:11-12, 16; 14:34-35), arguing that they were added by the “Catholicizing” organizer of the Pauline letter corpus, who put 1 Corinthians at its head.<sup>28</sup> Yet note the circularity here. These texts cannot represent Paul because Paul did not have “Catholicizing” tendencies. Paul did not have “Catholicizing” tendencies because he did not write these portions of the text. Very quickly we suspect that the “historical” Paul is being protected from himself.

A second way of clarifying the tension between charisma and constraint in 1 Corinthians is to imagine that it is Paul himself who has introduced the tension. John Hurd, for instance, argued that the so-called Corinthian slogans that Paul cites and then modifies throughout the epistle (6:12; 7:1; 8:1; 10:23) were actually Pauline in origin. Paul had been more libertine in theology and practice when he had first formed the assembly, but after his delivery of the Jerusalem Council's decision as described in Acts 15 (cf. 1 Cor 5:9) the people had questions for him. The Corinthians quote Paul to himself in their letter (1 Cor 7:1) and 1 Corinthians as a whole represents a more conservative, chastened Paul who is trying to balance charisma and institution.<sup>29</sup> He no longer encourages everyone to speak in tongues, as he had during his first visit. He no longer allows them to eat whatever they want. He no longer encourages women to prophesy with their heads uncovered. Hurd's thesis is compelling inasmuch as it explains tensions exegetically and historically without recourse to interpolations and presents an eminently human Paul—a pragmatic apostle (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23) whose life has not been ossified so as to represent some ideology's preferred image.<sup>30</sup> But in its details, Hurd's thesis is less than convincing. He argues, for instance, that Paul originally “allowed” women (against custom) to prophesy with uncovered heads, citing 1 Cor 11:2.<sup>31</sup> Yet in this passage

Response to J Edward Miller,” *JSNT* 27 (2004) 105-12; and William O. Walker Jr., “Interpolations in the Pauline Letters,” in *The Pauline Canon* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Pauline Studies 1; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 189-235, esp. 228-35.

<sup>28</sup> Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910) 4.

<sup>29</sup> John C. Hurd Jr., *The Origins of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965).

<sup>30</sup> See John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 115: “The megalosaurus you see modeled in a museum, for example, is a static representation. Biographers can't content themselves with this, because biography must not only flesh out bones but animate them. . . . We rerun whole lives, not single moments in them.”

<sup>31</sup> Hurd, *Origins of 1 Corinthians*, 182-86.

Paul commends the Corinthians for “holding fast to the traditions.” The language does not quite square with his depiction of the situation.<sup>32</sup>

A third, and in my view preferable, way of looking at this tension is to suggest that it is a few among the Corinthians who have for whatever reason stepped outside of an early ecclesiastical tradition that was nearly two decades in the making by the time that Paul visited Corinth and established a functioning assembly of the saints there.<sup>33</sup> His emphasis on the need for diachronic (cf. the passages above on tradition) and synchronic (cf. the passages above on ecclesial uniformity) congruity is an attempt to “shame” them back within normative boundaries (1 Cor 11:6; 14:35). Paul’s dependence on tradition as a normative category should only surprise us if we have come to view Paul as a proto-Marcionite or a proto-Reformer and not as a Jew, whose Pharisaism, despite his claims to the contrary (Phil 3:5-9), continued to provide rich epistemological, anthropological, and eschatological resources for his life in Christ.<sup>34</sup> This is the problem, for instance, with Michael Wolter’s proposed paradigm of the development of “Pauline Christianity” from a “religion of conversion” to a “religion of tradition.”<sup>35</sup> In Wolter’s paradigm, Paul is a “Christian,” not an apostolic Jew who is networked with other apostolic Jews to bring gentiles properly into the traditions of Israel now that the Messiah has appeared (cf. the “our ancestors” of 1 Cor 10:1). Wolter reasserts the dominant narrative without addressing any of the data raised here, although Martin Luther and “the ensuing revival of the Reformation” seem to be important for him as claimants to the original genius of Pauline existentialist conversionism, devoid of appeals to tradition.<sup>36</sup>

Peter Tomson, to the contrary, has convincingly shown the halakic background for many of the traditions and exhortations in 1 Corinthians.<sup>37</sup> As Paul

<sup>32</sup> More than likely, Paul is employing the *captatio benevolentiae* here. See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 182; Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 500; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 260; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 394-95; and Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 408.

<sup>33</sup> Compare Gerd Theissen’s important thesis that the economically and socially advantaged few (see 1 Cor 1:26-29) were the cause of many of the headaches in Corinth (“Social Stratification in the Corinthian Community: A Contribution to the Sociology of Early Hellenistic Christianity,” in *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* [ed. and trans. J. H. Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982] 69-119).

<sup>34</sup> See now the important essays in *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle* (ed. Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Michael Wolter, “The Development of Pauline Christianity from a ‘Religion of Conversion’ to a ‘Religion of Tradition,’” in *Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul’s Claim upon Israel’s Legacy in Luke and Acts in the Light of the Pauline Letters* (ed. David P. Moessner, Daniel Marguerat, Mikeal C. Parsons, and Michael Wolter; LNTS; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012) 49-69.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>37</sup> Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*; and *idem*, “La première épître aux Corinthiens comme document de la tradition apostolique de halakha,” in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. Bieringer; BETL 125; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996) 459-70. In the latter (p. 467 n. 43),

participates in and extends the apostolic halakah, he pushes the origin of charisma backward onto Christ crucified (1:18: “for the message about the cross . . . is for us the power of God”). With Christ as the foundation (3:11), Paul positions himself and the other apostles, each of whom had a separate sphere of influence, as successors who help administer the original charisma (4:1: “Consider us [Paul, Apollos, and Cephas] in this way, as servants of Christ and *managers* of the mysteries of God”; cf. 3:4-11) within the newly established temple organization (cf. 3:16-17; 9:13-14). And while Paul sees himself as equal in authority and rights to the other apostolic administrators (cf. chap. 9), he notes his chronological and existential deficit (15:8-9), thereby making his gospel a received one (15:1-3). Even in the fiery Galatians, where Paul is forced to defend an apostolic calling that he claims did not come “from humans” (Gal 1:1), he describes his first trip to Jerusalem after his prophetic calling to Christ as one in which he wanted to “learn from Cephas” (Gal 1:18).<sup>38</sup> One might even say that he never lost his zeal for the “traditions of the [apostolic] fathers” (Gal 1:14).

So perhaps Paul’s apostleship and the assemblies that bore his apostolic DNA were characterized from the beginning by routinized frameworks within which new expressions of the Spirit could be managed for the common good. Bengt Holmberg reminded us thirty-five years ago that Weber, as we sometimes forget, considered the existence of pure types of authority, whether charismatic, traditional, or rational, to be rare.<sup>39</sup> For Weber, new manifestations of charisma were the most unstable, irrational, and disruptive of these authorities, needing to be harnessed and distributed quickly.<sup>40</sup> Holmberg, following Weber, emphasized that “[c]harisma is not merely the victim of routinization but actively seeks institutional manifestation, albeit a radically new one in contrast to existing patterns of authority.”<sup>41</sup> Weber understood this process to have normally already begun within the lifetime of the charismatically endowed person, as his or her gathered associates began the process of *Veralltäglicung*, or routinization, in an attempt to “secure

Tomson points to Samuel Belkin, “The Problem of Paul’s Background,” *JBL* 54 (1935) 41-60, here 42: “If we really want to ascertain to what extent Paul was influenced by Pharisaic doctrines we have to look . . . not so much in Paul’s theology as in his references to customs, practical morality, and in rules which he formulated.”

<sup>38</sup> For this translation of the Greek ἰστορήσαυ, see Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, 298.

<sup>39</sup> Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 138. Among a number of halting passages in Weber, see *The Sociology of Religion* (trans. E. Fischoff; Boston: Beacon, 1991; orig., 1963) 29: “Yet even this distinction [that priests are part of a larger social organization, whereas charismatically endowed individuals are not], which is clear enough conceptually, is fluid in actuality.”

<sup>40</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1:246.

<sup>41</sup> Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 165. Compare Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, 270.

the permanence of his preaching and the congregation's distribution of grace," a process whereby "[t]he disciples or apostles of the prophets . . . become mystagogues, teachers, priests or pastors (or a combination of them all), serving an organization dedicated to exclusively religious purposes, namely a congregation of laymen."<sup>42</sup> Applying these carefully crafted Weberian notions of routinized charisma, Holmberg described the power dynamic between Paul and his assemblies as one of "institutionalized charisma," in which Paul introduces the gospel into new territories within an "ecclesiastical-legal system and space of coordinates" dominated by the traditions and customs of Antioch and, ultimately, Jerusalem.<sup>43</sup> He argued:

When Paul comes to a new town in Asia Minor or Greece he does not simply represent God or Jesus Christ but also the Christian Church which by then is the result of about one generation's institutionalization of the charismatic group that had formed around Jesus. . . . They are given elements in a sacred tradition or order which the apostle plants from the very beginning into the life of the group.<sup>44</sup>

With respect to 1 Corinthians, in particular, Holmberg concluded:

Paul's intervention as such must be considered to give the interplay of pneumatic and non-pneumatic gifts an impulse in the right direction. Paul's letter helps to start the dialectical process whereby a sound institutionalization of local authority will develop.<sup>45</sup>

Holmberg's description becomes more pointed *if* James Hanges is correct, that the enigmatic phrase τὸ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται ("to not go beyond what is written") in 1 Cor 4:6 refers to the transgression of the community's foundational legal documents.<sup>46</sup> Such *leges sacrae* were common in the cultic associations of Mediterranean antiquity and often included warnings, like those of the Andaman mysteries, about what to do with those who ποιῶν παρά τα γεγραμμένα ("act against what is written") and who μη ποιεῖν καθὼς γέγραπται ("do not act as it is written"). The tension between charisma and the ecclesiastical-legal process thus stands at the beginning of our literary evidence for early Christianity and resists the neat and clean schemas of the devolutionary narrative summarized above (and in this way seems to reflect, decades earlier, the same kinds of concerns that we find in both the *Didache* and *1 Clement*). There seems to be very little slippage from Paul to these "early Catholic" texts on these matters.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 60, 62.

<sup>43</sup> Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 50, 73, 154, 180-201.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 199-200.

<sup>46</sup> James C. Hanges, "1 Corinthians 4:6 and the Possibility of Written Bylaws in the Corinthian Church," *JBL* 117 (1998) 275-98.

<sup>47</sup> Compare Drane, "Tradition, Law, and Ethics in Pauline Theology," 177: "The distinction between the 'early catholic' church and the 'apostolic' church is not so marked as is often supposed.

## II. Imagining Paul

Holmberg does not exempt or protect Paul from “routinizing,” “institutionalizing,” “domesticating,” or “ecclesiasticizing” tendencies, as seems the case in the dominant narrative of the devolution of Paul’s communities from 1 Corinthians to 1 Timothy, the latter of which preserves its own remarkably entangled view of charisma and institution:

Do not be neglectful toward the spiritual gift [τοῦ ἐν σοὶ χάρισματος] that was given you through prophecy, accompanied by the laying on of the hands of the council of elders [τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου]. (1 Tim 4:14; cf. 2 Tim 1:6)

In fact, everything that Crossan and Borg say about Paul and the pseudo-Pauline tradition could be said, if one wanted to, about the Corinthians and Paul’s response to them in 1 Corinthians. One only needs to change the referents:

Rather, it is to insist that [the Paul of 1 Corinthians] is anti-[Corinthian] with regard to major aspects of his theology. [The Paul of 1 Corinthians] represents . . . a taming of [the Corinthians], a domestication of [the Corinthians’] passion to the normalcy of the Roman imperial world in which he and his followers lived.<sup>48</sup>

The key is “if one wanted to.” All memory and iconography, and especially of the apostolic sort, are shaped by tradition. And all tradition is formed within ideological constraints. The complex realities of the world are managed into memorable schemas that encode meaning for particular communities. Part of the formation of memory is the necessary forgetting of troublesome artifacts. This is a fourth strategy for dealing with complex data sets. Rather than placing the full breadth of the data on the table and offering a nuanced solution, key parts of it are ignored, as we find in Wolter vis-à-vis tradition. Likewise, in discussions of hierarchy (or the lack thereof) in Pauline congregations, the ἐπίσκοποι (“overseers”) and διάκονοι (“deacons”) in Philippi, one of Paul’s first Macedonian assemblies (Phil 1:1), often get ignored—or are explained, based on a predetermined framework, as being different from the ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι in the Pastorals.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, one is hard-pressed to find commentators who bring together into close conceptual proximity the προϊστάμενοι (“those in charge”) of 1 Thess 5:12 (cf. Rom 12:8) and those of 1 Tim 5:17.

. . . If Paul could hold all these strands together in his own mind, there is no reason to draw a hard and fast line of demarcation between the age of the apostles and what followed it.”

<sup>48</sup> Or, as Schütz notes, “We might say that Weber saw in charismatics what Paul saw in the Corinthians. They were real, but also a nuisance” (*Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, 271).

<sup>49</sup> As an example of the latter, see Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings* (SNTSMS 60; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 217.

Introductory textbooks, admittedly, must be selective in coverage. Selective, however, does not have to mean simplistic. And simplicity is not always consciously pursued. Oftentimes simplistic and tidy narratives are the reduced schemas of long-standing ideological preferences and choices that have themselves become traditions, like the division of the “dialogical,” “charismatic,” and “non-dogmatic” Paul of the “authentic” epistles from the “ecclesiastical,” “domesticated,” and “dogmatic” Paul of the “pseudo-Paulines.” In this schema, 1 Corinthians (one of the so-called *Hauptbriefe*), rather than 1 Thessalonians or Philippians, is chosen to carry the weight of the “real” Paul, at least in matters of ecclesial authority.<sup>50</sup> It is, moreover, a redacted 1 Corinthians in which the developing παραδόσεις (“traditions”) of numerous other ἐκκλησίαι, to which Paul returns over and over again, are explained away or ignored, turning Paul into the very thing against which he argues. By leading with the χάρισμα language of 1 Corinthians and explaining other Pauline texts in passing asides (if treated at all), a simplistic narrative is born whereby Paul is obscured in the generations after his death by “Paul.” But where does the act of occultation occur? In the first and second centuries, or in the nineteenth and twentieth? I would argue the latter. What we find in the prominent devolutionary narrative is nothing more than the politics of memory at work, whereby Paul’s reputational entrepreneurs simultaneously bring forward and assign to oblivion various data from the past so as to construct and pass down a preferred myth of religious origins. Occasionally, the element of preference in this whole enterprise is admitted, as we find in John Howard Schütz’s observation that “[t]he Pastoral letters look at the Paul *they wish* to see, not the Paul *we wish* to see.”<sup>51</sup> More often, however, a little genealogical work is necessary to set into historical relief the conditions that produced the frameworks of knowledge that now seem so obvious as to be self-evident and elementary (and thus often unexamined).

This genealogical work has recently focused its energies on the normative ideological assumptions that undergirded the work of the historicist Ferdinand Christian Baur, the German Lutheran of the Hegelian and “radical” persuasion who, as the first to argue at length for a division between authentic *Hauptbriefe* (Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians) and nine other catholicizing Pauline pseudopigrapha, gave birth to modern Pauline studies.<sup>52</sup> For Baur and many others after him, tendentious scientific appeals to differences in vocabulary and writing style

<sup>50</sup> MacDonald rightly notes, based on 1 Cor 12:28, that “some formalization” of leadership had already been established in Corinth and that “in other communities, leadership roles may have developed more smoothly than in Corinth” (*Pauline Churches*, 57, 59). Corinth, then, was atypical of Paul’s congregations, and his experiences with them may have only solidified his resolve to set up proper formal authorities in his assemblies. See also Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 195.

<sup>51</sup> Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, 264 (emphasis added).

<sup>52</sup> See White, *Remembering Paul*, 20-30.

among the thirteen canonical letters allowed their preferences for texts, which since the Reformation had gained particular authority as quintessentially Pauline (namely, Romans and Galatians), to be obscured. I will only point out here, with respect to Baur, that as he was beginning to work on Paul in the early 1830s, developing a theory of *Gegensatz* between Petrine and Pauline Christianity, he was also in the midst of a public dispute with the Catholic scholar Johann Adam Möhler over the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism.<sup>53</sup> Ideology and history became comingled in his work, as it does for all of us.

### III. The Specter of Sohm

While Baur provided the historical-critical argumentation for the splitting off of Paul from “Paul,” another German Lutheran, the jurist Rudolph Sohm, developed the sociological categories that would become decisive in explaining the rise of ecclesiastical *Katholicismus* out of charismatic *Urchristentum* and that would be influential in Weber’s development of various types of domination.<sup>54</sup> Sohm (1841–1917), whose academic training and teaching posts took him from Rostock to Munich, Göttingen, Freiburg, Strassburg, and finally Leipzig, was a noted scholar of Roman, canon, and German law. He is best known for his “epoch-making” two-volume *Kirchenrecht* (1892, 1923), a massive and influential study in which he claimed that primitive Christianity had no legal foundation or organization but was guided rather by the manifestation of authoritative *χαρίσματα*, or grace-gifts of the Holy Spirit, deploying the Pauline term from 1 Corinthians and Romans.<sup>55</sup> An organized church with an episcopal college appeared only in the mid-second century as a reaction to Gnosticism and did not develop organically from the revealed and authoritative teaching of gifted Christian preachers in primitive Christianity. Rather, it was a decisive rupture in the nature of Christianity. At the end of a lengthy chapter on *Katholicismus*, anticipating the next chapter on the Reformation, Sohm concludes: “Thus, the history of Canon Law was

<sup>53</sup> See F. C. Baur, *Der Gegensatz des Katholicismus und Protestantismus nach den Principien und Hauptdogmen der beiden Lehrbegriffe: Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Herrn Dr. Möhler’s Symbolik* (Tübingen: Fues, 1834). On the dispute with Möhler, see Joseph Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur in Controversy, 1832–38: Romantic-Idealist Assessment of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation* (AAR Studies in Religion 7; Tallahassee, FL: American Academy of Religion, 1974); and Notger Slenczka, “Die Einheit der Kirche und die Wahrheit der Reformation: Theologiegeschichtliche Erinnerungen an die Kontroverse zwischen J. A. Möhler und F. C. Baur angesichts der aktuellen Situation der Ökumene,” *KD* 48 (2002) 172–96.

<sup>54</sup> For the influence of Sohm’s *Kirchenrecht* on Weber, see Peter Haley, “Rudolph Sohm on Charisma,” *JR* 60 (1980) 185–97; and David Norman Smith, “Faith, Reason, and Charisma: Rudolph Sohm, Max Weber, and the Theology of Grace,” *Sociological Inquiry* 68 (1998) 32–60.

<sup>55</sup> “Epoch-making” comes from the early English paraphrase of *Kirchenrecht* by Walter Lowrie (*The Church and Its Organization in Primitive and Catholic Times: An Interpretation of Rudolph Sohm’s Kirchenrecht* [New York: Longmans, Green, 1904] ix).



simultaneously the history of the continuing perversion of Christian truth.”<sup>56</sup> Sohm, then, participated in the widespread trend among Protestant historians of the nineteenth century to reclaim the church’s pristine origins for Protestantism by separating off the apostolic age from the burgeoning Catholicism of successive generations. It was a trend, according to Peter Haley, whereby “denying the continuity of the Roman church with the first community served as an argument against that church’s legitimacy.”<sup>57</sup>

Sohm described the Pauline χάρισμα quite narrowly. While a variety of *χαρίσματα* are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, including gifts of healing, assistance, and, important for our consideration, administration (1 Cor 12:28), Sohm fixed his attention principally on the various manifestations of the gift of teaching (apostles, prophets, and teachers).<sup>58</sup> His emphasis on the task of charismatic teaching by divinely selected individuals countered the prevailing notion of those like Edwin Hatch, Adolf von Harnack, and members of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* who argued that the leadership of primitive Christianity was modeled after the democratically run *collegia* of the Roman Empire.<sup>59</sup> Sohm concluded:

There is neither a democratic government of the gathered community nor a collegiate (aristocratic) government of a gathering of bishops or elders in the sense of the traditional view.<sup>60</sup>

The leadership of Christianity does not rest in a power that comes from the community, but, to the contrary, it rests in a power that is bestowed on the charismatically gifted teacher. . . . The leadership of Christianity is from the outset authoritarian and monarchical in nature, and thus the power of the office of teaching is so significant because it does not represent a legal, disciplinary, community-governing power, but arguably the higher moral power, which demands obedience in the name of God.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, for Sohm, the Roman Catholic notion of apostolic succession through the laying on of hands smacked of human election and bureaucratic appointment. In primitive Christianity, to the contrary, the laying on of hands “was not the cause of charisma, but assumed its presence already. It follows that the laying on of hands for the election to the teaching vocation can only have a strengthening effect.”<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, 458. Translations of Sohm are mine unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>57</sup> Haley, “Rudolph Sohm on Charisma,” 189. For a short history of the nineteenth-century German Protestant attempt “not only to prove that the church of the Medici popes was not the church of the early Christians but also to show how degeneration has taken place,” tying together Baur, Sohm, and others, see Gooch, *History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century*, 534-48.

<sup>58</sup> Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, 28-55.

<sup>59</sup> See James C. Hanges, *Paul, Founder of Churches: A Study in Light of the Evidence for the Role of “Founder Figures” in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (WUNT 292; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 25-46.

<sup>60</sup> Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, 118.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

The significance of a work is often measured by the number of its detractors. For Sohm there were many, even among Protestant scholars. Some of the latter found his interpretive tendency to harmonize the entire corpus of canonical Pauline epistles and Acts problematic.<sup>63</sup> Sohm certainly represented a more conservative form of nineteenth-century German Protestantism than did Baur.<sup>64</sup> Others, like the aforementioned Hatch and Harnack, thought that Sohm had pushed the Protestant distinction between Spirit and Law beyond what the evidence could bear.<sup>65</sup> In addition to Sohm's obvious polemical engagement with Catholicism, David Norman Smith has shown how Sohm, in the years leading up to the publication of *Kirchenrecht*, was increasingly concerned with the rise of Marxist socialism in Germany, fearing that the bourgeoisie would be unable to keep revolution from its doors. Where law would be insufficient to the task, Sohm believed that the force of Christian moral teaching could triumph. He responded not only politically, by helping to found the (Christian) Nationalsoziale Partie, but also literarily, embedding within the argument of his *Kirchengeschichte im Grundriss* (1887), published just five years before *Kirchenrecht*, an appeal to the bourgeoisie to show greater Christian brotherly love for their fellow Germans by sloughing off their selfish materialism, as well as a call to the proletariat to show greater Christian meekness toward the divinely ordained charisma of its authorities.<sup>66</sup> This was the proper religious duty of the latter, for all of life was a calling: "Look where you will, all this labor, performed as a calling ordered by God, is the service of God which is well pleasing to him. The whole world has become holy, and all that was profane is done away with."<sup>67</sup> We hear in these words a classic Lutheran justification of the State and of the various divinely ordained vocational callings to serve it. Given this historical context, Sohm's emphasis in the *Kirchenrecht* on the divine, monarchical rule of the charismatic "apostle king" in *Urchristentum*, to use Haley's language, makes good sense.<sup>68</sup>

Sohm's description of charismatic authority in nascent Christianity would become influential on Weber, who incorporated and modified it for his more generalized social, cultural, and economic theories. Weber, however, was not Sohm,

<sup>63</sup> As an example of the harmonizing tendency, see his discussion of the appointment of bishops in the Pastorals (*Kirchenrecht*, 44 n. 20). For criticisms of his handling of the Pauline materials, see the bibliography in Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 149 n. 56.

<sup>64</sup> Baur's work appears only once in the *Kirchenrecht* (8 n. 6).

<sup>65</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries* (trans. F. L. Pogson; Crown Theological Library 31; London: Williams & Norgate, 1910) 176-258. See also now Hanges, *Paul, Founder of Churches*.

<sup>66</sup> Smith, "Faith, Reason, and Charisma," 38-41.

<sup>67</sup> Rudolf Sohm, *Outlines of Church History* (trans. May Sinclair; ed. H. M. Gwatkin; Boston: Beacon, 1958; orig., 1887) 159.

<sup>68</sup> Haley, "Rudolph Sohm on Charisma," 193.

although many have unknowingly read the former as if he were.<sup>69</sup> Whereas Sohm saw hard and fast categories (charismatic teaching vs. lifeless law), caught as he was in a nineteenth-century tradition of rereading the ancient past as Protestant, Weber saw types that were rarely pure (see above). Whereas Sohm saw personal charisma as an unqualified good, Weber saw it as a potential threat to the community. Personal charisma needed to become quickly institutionalized as office charisma. Whereas Sohm saw charisma as something divinely bestowed, and thus to be received without question by the community, Weber saw it as a projective social force requiring the consent of followers.<sup>70</sup>

#### IV. *Ad Fontes*

The dominant narrative about the devolution of the charismatic Paul into the ecclesiastical “Paul” is being theoretically and historiographically undergirded, then, not by the more cautious Weber (although many suppose this to be the case) but by the more tendentious Sohm.<sup>71</sup> In some ways, this essay has been an attempt to bring Weber’s complex and nuanced frameworks back into focus in our reading of 1 Corinthians. More fundamentally, though, it is an attempt to consider seriously that great Renaissance and Reformation dictum, “Ad Fontes!” We ought always to return to the sources in order to see if they are able to bear the weight of the structures that we build on top of them. Some may find it ironic that here at the end I have invoked a Protestant principle as a means of contesting a Protestant narrative. Yet large traditions, like the Protestant one, are broad and diverse things often made up of parts in tension. They are a variegated canon. And more often than not the resources for criticizing the tradition lie within.<sup>72</sup> Returning to the sources in all of their complexity helps to expose how positivist historiographies and fundamentalist rhetorics about the “real” tend to cover over the ever-present role of the historian’s history in the production of a history of others.

Like painted images of Paul, Thecla, and Theocleia in the cave above Ephesus, Pauline epistles give us something real to observe, study, and poke. Yet we ought to do our best to observe them closely and in their totality and complexity, asking the many pilgrims who come to visit these literary *lieux de mémoire* from a number of different places what they see, lest our particular traditioned frameworks and schemas of knowledge simply assert themselves, destroying what the artifacts may have to tell us about the past.

<sup>69</sup> See Smith, “Faith, Reason, and Charisma,” 35.

<sup>70</sup> See *ibid.*, 46-52.

<sup>71</sup> See Ulrich Brockhaus, *Charisma und Amt: Die paulinische Charismalehre auf dem Hintergrund der frühchristlichen Gemeindefunktionen* (Wissenschaftliche Taschenbücher 8; Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1975) 7-94.

<sup>72</sup> See White, *Remembering Paul*, 77.

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