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The Early Jewish Abraham Tradition as a Primary Source of Theocentric Universalism in Romans: Paul's Argument in Rom 4:2–17a; 8:32, and 15:7–12

Abstract: The Abraham tradition in the Old Testament is considered a source of Pauline universalism. The outstanding contribution made by early Jewish interpretations of Abraham, however, has been largely overlooked to date. Hymnal and liturgical texts of early Judaism provide further background about this character. Therefore, three central aspects of the apostle's theocentric universalism will be discussed: ecclesiological (Rom 4:2–17a), Christological-soteriological (8:32), and eschatological (15:7–12). The role that Gen 22 played in Jewish interpretation not only for Romans 8:32, but also for Romans 4, which has hardly been considered or discussed in detail to date, will be central. The Abraham tradition is also in the background in Rom 15:7–12 and 13, which is sometimes seen as the sum of Romans. Read in this context, a new approach to solving the linguistic problem of 15:8–9, which is often perceived as difficult, also emerges.

Zusammenfassung: Die alttestamentliche Abrahamüberlieferung gilt als eine Quelle des paulinischen Universalismus. Dabei ist bislang jedoch weitgehend der überragende Beitrag übersehen worden, den dazu die frühjüdische Abrahamdeutung leistet. Ein weiterer Hintergrund sind hymnische und liturgische Texte des Frühjudentums. Dies wird hier für die drei zentralen Dimensionen des theozentrischen Universalismus des Apostels entfaltet: ekklesiologisch (Röm 4,2–17a), christologisch-soteriologisch (8,32) und eschatologisch (15,7–12). Dabei tritt die bislang kaum beachtete bzw. kontrovers diskutierte Rolle

hervor, die Gen 22 in jüdischer Auslegung nicht nur für Röm 8,32 spielt, sondern auch für Röm 4. Abrahamtradition steht auch in dem gelegentlich als Summe des Römerbriefs verstandenen Abschnitt Röm 15,7–12.13 im Hintergrund. In diesem Kontext gelesen, drängt sich zudem ein neuer Lösungsansatz für das als schwierig empfundene sprachliche Problem von 15,8–9 auf.

Keywords: faith/-fulness, works, boast, Jews and Gentiles, inheriting, seed, promise, consummation, glorification of God

1 Introduction

In conceptualizing theocentric universalism, Paul to a high degree draws on the Abraham tradition as it took shape in early Jewish thinking. Rooted in a number of biblical passages, including especially Gen 22:16–18, the main features of this tradition are indebted to the history of interpretation. Yet, biblical and early Jewish tradition is not the basis of his universalism, even though Paul very likely was acquainted with these views before his calling to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. At the time, he was an adherent of the Pharisaic movement (cf. Phil 3:5 and perhaps Gal 1:14) and seems to have sympathized with its radical zealous wing, which was openly “anti-gentile”.¹ Rather, Paul’s universalism goes back to his biographical turn brought about by God, who, he says, “was pleased ... to reveal his son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν)” (Gal 1:15–16). With God being the subject of Paul’s calling to apostleship

¹ Cf. Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law. Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (CRINT III/1), Minneapolis 1990, 175.

among the Gentiles, theocentric universalism for him then is a precondition not only for his missionary work but also for the explication of the gospel in his letters. Despite his “anti-gentile” past, Paul explains the universalism imposed on him by God not in opposition to Jewish tradition but along with it – both in contention with it and quite often in surprising consonance.

In Paul’s letters, theocentric universalism manifests itself in three dimensions, which represent the whole of God’s acting in the history of Jesus Christ both in a temporal perspective and regarding content: (1) ecclesiologically, in the conceptualization of the social body of Roman Christianity in terms of a body of Jews and Gentiles,² (2) christologically-soteriologically, in the death of Jesus Christ for the benefit of all, and (3) eschatologically, in the universal praise of God. Since all these aspects in this combination appear in Romans only, the focus of the following discussion is on this letter. The texts corresponding to these topics are Rom 4:2–17a; 8:32, and 15:7–12 and are dealt with below. Explicitly or implicitly, their common biblical background is the Abraham cycle in the book of Genesis.

In New Testament studies, the term “universalism” mostly refers to a complex scholarly construct introduced by F.C. Baur in the 19th century according to which “universality” tends to embrace things Christian, whereas “particularity” indicates things Jewish.³ Dis-

² For details see below fn. 77.

³ For the problem, cf. here and in the following Gudrun Holtz, *Damit Gott sei alles in allem. Studien zum paulinischen und frühjüdischen Universalismus* (BZNW 149), Berlin 2007, 1–9; and eadem, *Universalism*, in: Daniel. M. Gurtner/Loreen T. Stuckenbruck (eds), *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism 2* (2019), 809–812. Recently, the twin theme of “universalism” and “particularism” has come under criticism; for a discussion of the problem, cf. my forthcoming study: *Universalismus und*

proved by the relevant source materials, this construct shows itself to be highly one-sided. For this reason, these categories need to be replaced by value-neutral definitions offered by religious studies. As for the sources discussed in the following, regarding “universalism” two dimensions need to be differentiated: The first one is taken to refer to the willingness to extend the particular religious goods and/or the particularity of one’s own group to others indefinitely and, as the case may be, to accept proselytes or converts. This understanding can also be called “inclusivism” or “universalization”. On the other hand, “particularism” here refers to refusing to extend particularity. The second dimension of “universalism” is “eschatological universalism” in the sense that “human variety will disappear altogether or submit permanently to an all-inclusive structure”,⁴ which in our sources is tantamount to God and his kingdom.⁵

2 Paul’s Universalization of God’s Acting with Humankind in Dialogue with the Biblical Abraham as Interpreted in Early Judaism (Rom 4:2–17a)

In Rom 3:27–4:17a, the universalization of God’s acting with humanity by reaching out to the nations is grounded in Paul’s understanding of God as the one God of Israel’s basic creed (3:29/Deut 6:4). In view of the universal manifestation of God’s righteous-

Partikularismus im antiken Judentum und ihr Niederschlag im frühen Christentum, in: Charlotte Köckert et al. (eds), *Universalismus und Partikularismus in der Antike*, section 2.

⁴ Jon D. Levenson, *The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism*, New York 1985, 145.

⁵ Cf. Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Universalismus und Partikularismus: I. Religionsgeschichtlich*, *2RGG* 5 (1931), 1379–1380, here 1379.

ness in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:21–26), Paul explains this creed independently, concluding that the one God not only is the God of the Jews but also of the nations, since he acts towards both groups in one and the same way: He “will justify circumcision from faith and uncircumcision through faith” (3:30). That God acts with both Jews and Gentiles alike, justifying all through faith, is the decisive identity marker of the new social entity of believers. In Rom 4:1–17a, Paul substantiates this claim with a series of proof texts about Abraham from the “law” (3:31), whose universal implications he attempts to bring out.⁶ This proof from Scripture, however, strongly reflects Paul’s interaction with Jewish interpretations of the biblical tradition on Abraham, with which he was probably familiarized as Pharisaic Jew before his calling. Consequently, both Jewish interpreters and Paul⁷ refer to the very same texts, that is, to Gen 15:1–6; 17:1–14, and 22:16–18. Presumably because Paul does not refer to the latter text by way of citation, scholarship, as a rule, pays less attention to it than to the references mentioned before. In dialogue with Jewish exegesis, Paul brings out three universal dimensions of the story of Abraham: the prefiguration of God’s acting in the eschatological justification of Jews and Gentiles by faith in the history of Abraham (Rom 4:2–5 [2.1]); the universalization of Abraham and his seed by God (4:9–17a [2.2]), and the universalization of the promise of

⁶ Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8.9–16* (WBC 38A.B), Dallas 1988, 1 191. – For the translations, here and in the following, Dunn, *Romans*, was consulted.

⁷ Terminologically, here and in the following I differentiate between “Jewish interpreters and Paul” (or similar wordings), since Paul’s reading of the Abraham cycle in *Romans*, though influenced by Jewish interpretations that he probably acquired as a Pharisee, reflects his understanding of Abraham after he was called to apostleship. As will be seen, it deviates in specific ways from non-Pauline Jewish interpretation of the patriarch. Still, it continues to be a Jewish reading, to be more precise, a Jewish-Christian one. In Jas 2:21–23, a different interpretation of this story is likely found; see below section 2.1.

God (4:13–17a [2.3]). In what follows, first the relevant aspects of the Pauline texts are explained, followed by an analysis of the biblical texts and their Jewish interpretations.

2.1 The Prefiguration of God’s Eschatological Act of Justifying Jews and Gentiles by Faith in the History of Abraham (Rom 4:2–5)

In controversy with his Jewish dialogue partner, the so-called interlocutor, concerning the understanding of Abraham, especially his role in the sacrifice of Isaac,⁸ Paul aims in Rom 4:2–5, 6–8 to clarify that God’s supposedly new act of justifying Jews and Gentiles alike by faith and not by works (3:28), in fact, is nothing but the eschatological reenactment of his dealing with Abraham, the forefather of the Jews according to the flesh (4:1).⁹ Refuting this Jewish voice (4:2, 4) in 4:3 and 5, Paul presents his counter-narrative.¹⁰ Without alluding to Gen 22 directly, in his summary of the interlocutor’s position (4:2) Paul refers to Jewish interpretations of this text.

The contention of Rom 3:27: “Where then is boasting? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, on the contrary, by the law of faith”, in 4:2–3 is illustrated

⁸ At this point, this is an assertion only, which will be explained in more detail in what follows.

⁹ Cf. Michael Wolter, *Der Brief an die Römer (EKK VI/1–2)*, Neukirchen-Vluyn/Ostfildern 2014/2019, 1280: *κατὰ σάρκα* “verweist auf die leibliche Abstammung aller Juden von Abraham”; cf. also Joshua W. Jipp, *Rereading the Story of Abraham, Isaac, and ‘Us’ in Romans 4*, *JSNT* 32 (2009), 217–242, here 219.

¹⁰ Rom 4:4–5 continues the Scripture-based argument about Abraham (4:2–3), at the same time indicating its general dimension. Jipp, *Story* (see n. 9), 222, rightly points out “that in 3.27–28 and its subsequent articulation in 4.2–8, Paul is on hostile territory as his gospel requires him to reinterpret standard readings of the Abraham story”.

by the example of Abraham. “If,” as the interlocutor seems to presume, “Abraham was justified from works (ἐξ ἔργων), he has a boast (καύχημα),¹¹ but”, as Paul retorts, “not towards God”, thereby implying that Abraham has a boast or glory with human beings (4:2). In 4:4, this glory is interpreted in terms of a reward or payment (μισθός) reckoned to him as an obligation because of his works.¹² According to Paul, on the other hand, God’s view of Abraham’s glory is explained by Gen 15:6: “Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness” (Rom 4:3). Although Paul refutes the Jewish understanding of Abraham’s believing, the logic of the argument demands that in his mind, the patriarch has a boast, which is expressed in Gen 15:6b. Abraham’s boast then is his being justified on the basis of faith,¹³ rather than works, since for justification he

¹¹ The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek (GE), Leiden/Boston, ³2013, 1107, renders καύχημα as “glory, boast, pride”; similarly, A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint. 2 Vol. (LEH), Stuttgart 1992/1996, 2 252: “glory, honour” for the LXX. But see, e.g., Dunn, Romans (see n. 6), 1 200 (“has something to boast about”) and Wolter, Brief (see n. 9), 1 281, “Grund zum Rühmen”.

¹² For this rendering of ὀφείλημα, cf. The Cambridge Greek Lexicon. 2 Vol. (CGL), Cambridge 2021, 2 1042. Conspicuously, μισθός is used in Gen 15:1 as well (cf. Matthias Köckert, Abrahams Glaube in Röm 4 und im vorpaulinischen Judentum, in: Cilliers Breytenbach [ed.], Der Römerbrief als Vermächtnis an die Kirche, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2012, 15–47, here 18; and Nicholas T. Wright, Paul and the Patriarch: The Role of Abraham in Romans 4, JSNT 35 [2013], 207–241, here 210), where it gives the topic of the passage in 15:1–6. In 15:1 it is God who promises Abraham “a very great reward”, that is, the promises and their realization; cf. Nahum M. Sarna, The JPS Torah Commentary. Genesis בְּרֵאשִׁית, Philadelphia et al. 1989, 112–113. This interpretation of Gen 15, however, does not have any bearing on the reading of Rom 4:4 in terms of the “New Perspective” as against the “Old Perspective”, as claimed by Wright, Paul, 215–216, but is due to the rhetorical situation of the chapter and the structure of the argument, with 4:2, 4 reflecting the position of the interlocutor.

¹³ By implication, this boast is the reward of Abraham acceptable to Paul; cf. Köckert, Glaube (see n. 12), 18.

depends on grace (as against a payment), which God extends to the ungodly (τὸν ἀσεβῆ; Rom 4:5) due to his complete trust in his power (4:18–22). The term refers back to the “ungodliness” (ἀσεβειῶν) of human beings (Rom 1:18), that is, to Gentiles,¹⁴ which here denotes idolatry. In Rom 4:5 it is used in the same sense, probably referring to Abraham’s past as an idolator.¹⁵ Concerning the overall topic, Abraham’s alleged boasting on the basis of works points to a Jewish option, which in Paul’s mind implies the exclusion of Gentiles while his believing in God correlates with the inclusive, universal side of his concept. Its universal dimension is underlined by Paul’s understanding of Abraham’s initial idolatry, which for him is a general feature of Gentile existence. It is reversed by the believing Abraham, who embodies the counter-history in relation to the history of sin and death.¹⁶

¹⁴ Cf. Edward Adams, *Abraham’s Faith and Gentile Disobedience: Textual Links between Romans 1 and 4*, JSNT 65 (1997), 47–66, here 48–49. In Rom 11:26/Isa 59:20, however, the term is used in relation to Jacob-Israel as well. Referring to both Jews and Gentiles, it assumes a truly universal dimension, which in Rom 4:5 is not yet evident.

¹⁵ Cf. Adams, *Faith* (see n. 14), 48, 55–59; Siegfried Kreuzer, “Der den Gottlosen rechtfertigt” (Röm 4,5). Die frühjüdische Einordnung von Gen 15 als Hintergrund für das Abrahambild und die Rechtfertigungslehre des Paulus, *ThBeitr* 33 (2002), 208–219, here 219; Köckert, *Glaube* (see n. 12), 40–41, 46; and Karl O. Sandnes, *Abraham, the friend of God in Rom 5. A Short Notice*, ZNW 99 (2008), 124–128, here 126.

¹⁶ Cf. Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Abraham als biblische Urgestalt. Theologische Überlegungen zu seiner Deutung bei Paulus, Luther und im Judentum*, in: idem, *Der Gott der Hoffnung. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Theologie des Paulus (SKI.NF 3)*, Leipzig 2014, 478–497; cf. also Adams, *Faith* (see n. 14), 52; and Jon D. Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham. The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, Princeton/Oxford 2012, 157: “One cannot adequately grasp Paul’s theology without reckoning with this simple but momentous fact: for Paul, *the Gentile Christian has abandoned the Adamic identity for the Abrahamic*”. Orrey McFarland, *Whose Abraham, Which Promise? Gen 15.6 in Philo’s De Virtutibus* and

Even though in Rom 4:2–3 Paul alludes to Gen 22 only while quoting Gen 15:6, both passages play an important role in his argument in Rom 4:1–17a as well as in the history of interpretation of Gen 22 in Early Judaism. The texts most relevant to the present study are 1Macc 2:50–52; 4Q225 and Sir 44:19–23 LXX.¹⁷ In agreement with these traditions, Paul is not interested in the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1–14), but exclusively in God’s response to Abraham’s willingness to obey his command to sacrifice his son (22:15, 16–18).¹⁸ Since Gen 22:16–18 is relevant not only in Rom 4:2, but also in other passages dealt with later on, some remarks on the biblical text are necessary.

Gen 22:16–18 has a chiastic structure (a – b – b¹ – a¹). At the center of the passage (b and b¹) is the twofold promise given to Abraham by God. The framing verses a and a¹, forming an inclusion (22:16, 18b), give the rationale for God’s promise to him, with 22:18b being the short version of 22:16. Regarding the contents, the formulation of this promise “features several unusual elements.” Two of them are of particular importance

Romans 4, JSNT 35 (2012), 107–129: 111–112, 115–116, points out that in Virt 214–215 Abraham is understood in a similar way while also marking the difference in terms of Paul’s concept of universal sin (*ibid.*, 117).

¹⁷ Of these texts, the first and the last are mentioned by Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 1 200–201; Jipp, *Story* (see n. 9), 222–223; and Wolter, *Brief*, 1 281 (see n. 9). Another important early Jewish interpretation of Gen 22 is Jub 17:15–18:19, which, however, hardly contributes to the issues discussed in the present paper.

¹⁸ This is evident in 1Macc 2:50–52 and Sir 44:19–23, but in principle is also true of 4Q225 i–ii. This tradition is an example of the genre of *Rewritten Bible*, which rewrites Gen 22 without, however, relating the sacrificial details, rather stressing its own interpretative elements. Interestingly, Philo also separates the two parts of the biblical narrative paraphrasing Gen 22:1–12 in *Abr* 167–176 and takes up Gen 22:16–18 in §273.

in the present context. The first relates to the character of the promise; whereas all the previous blessings Abraham received were “pure acts of divine grace”, here, for the first time, they “are presented as a reward” for Abraham’s obedience to God:¹⁹ “because (οὗ εἵνεκεν [רען אֲשֶׁר]) you have done (ἐποίησας [עָשִׂיתָ]) this word²⁰ and not withheld your son, the beloved one, for my sake” (22:16) or “in return for (ἀνθ’ ὧν²¹ [עַקְבֹּב אֲשֶׁר]) listening to my voice” (22:18b). The second statement concerns the oath by which, for the first time, the promise is introduced.²² Furthermore, God’s promise to Abraham has two groups in view. To Abraham and his seed, numerous offspring and the inheritance (κληρονομήσει [יָרִי]) of the “gates of their foes” are promised (22:17), the latter seemingly being a reformulation of the promise of the land. The recipients of the second part of the promise are “all nations of the earth”, who are said to be blessed in (ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν [to bless themselves by; וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּ]) Abraham’s descendants (22:18).

¹⁹ Sarna, Genesis (see n. 12), 154; for further details see *ibid.*

²⁰ τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο; the expression could also be translated by “this thing”; but see Gen 22:18b.

²¹ Cf. CGL (see n. 12), 1 140, s.v. D; here “exchange” is given as a basic meaning, which is detailed in terms of 1. “in return or exchange for”, 2. “as requital or as penalty for” and 3. “in response to ... as a result or on account of”.

²² The only other instances in which God is described as swearing an oath by his own being are found in the prophets; cf. Sarna, Genesis (see n. 12), 361, n. 15. God’s oath given to Abraham in Gen 22:16, though, is referenced in the Torah a number of times (cf. Benno Jacob, *Das Buch Genesis*. Hg. in *Zusammenarbeit mit dem Leo Baeck Institut*, Stuttgart 2000, [repr. Berlin 1934], 502); of particular importance is Gen 26:3–5, where God retells the promise of Gen 22:16–18 to Isaac: καὶ στήσω τὸν ὄρκον μου, ὃν ὄμοσα (יְשַׁבְּעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי) Ἀβρααμ τῷ πατρὶ σου (26:3).

Regarding Rom 4:2–3, Gen 22:16b and 18b is only relevant in its Jewish interpretation as given in 1Macc 2 and 4Q225 in particular. Interestingly, both these traditions link Gen 22 to Gen 15:6.²³ 1Macc 2:50–52 is an especially close parallel to the understanding of Abraham refuted by Paul.²⁴ The passage is part of the farewell discourse by the Maccabean Mattathias to his sons. He asks them to show zeal for the law and give their lives for the covenant of the fathers. For this purpose, he expects them to “remember the deeds (ἔργα) of the fathers, which they did (ἐποίησαν) in their generations, and you (sc. The sons) will receive great honor (δόξαν) and an everlasting name” (2:50–51). To illustrate the deeds of the ancestors, the author begins with the example of Abraham (2:52): “Was not Abraham found faithful in the testing (ἐν πειρασμῷ ... πιστός), and it was reckoned to him for righteousness (ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην).” His ἔργον, then, was his being faithful when tested by God with the command to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. In the context, the reckoning of this deed to him as righteousness illustrates the honor and the name promised to his sons by Mattathias and, thus, is to be understood as a reward. In 2:52, only Gen 15:6b is literally rendered; interpreting Abraham’s deed, however, as a manifestation of his being πιστός, the text alludes to 15:6a as well: καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ.²⁵ The righteousness reckoned to him here clearly refers to covenant

²³ If Köckert, Glaube (see n. 12), 29, is right, a similar case can be made for Sir 44. He holds that the text not only alludes to Gen 15:6a, that is, πιστός to πιστεύειν (with Sir 44:20d referring to Abraham’s acting as told in Gen 22), but also to 15:6b (δικαιοσύνη; the term is missing in the praise of Abraham proper, but appears in the introduction to the praise of the fathers in Sir 44) (Ⲕⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ [44:13] / δικαιοσύνη [44:10]).

²⁴ It is very likely that Paul was familiar with 1Macc; cf. NA²⁸ mentioning several passages in Paul’s letters alluding to 1Macc, among them Rom 4:3/1Macc 2:52.

²⁵ Similarly, Philo, Abr 262–276, who relates Gen 15:6, “and he believed God”, to virtue. Abraham’s belief is exemplified by his greatest deed (ἔργον; §176.178), the sacrifice of Isaac; cf. §273.

righteousness, including his obedience to the law (1Macc 2:50). Even though Paul attributes the elements shared by Rom 4:2–3 and 1Macc 2 to two antagonistic views of Abraham, it is quite clear that in both traditions Gen 15:6b illustrates the boast or honor of Abraham in relation to his πιστεύειν (15:6a), interpreted, however, by both authors differently. Connecting μισθός with τῶ ... ἐργαζομένῳ in Rom 4:4, Paul introduces a term from the biblical Abraham cycle (15:1), which is reflected conceptually in Gen 22:16, 18 and its history of interpretation as well.²⁶

The interpretation of the offering of Isaac in light of Gen 15:6 as found in 1Macc 2 in particular resonates in the New Testament most clearly in Jas 2:21–23. As in Paul, the exegetical framework in which these traditions are received, however, is the conceptual pair of faith and works.²⁷ In line with non-Jewish-Christian Jewish interpretations of Gen 22, however, the author uses the materials from Genesis to negate a potential antithesis between both concepts. Like 1Macc 2 and Philo, for him Abraham's offering of Isaac is an ἔργον (Jas 2:21) being rewarded by God. He distinguishes between two divine responses to Abraham's work, with both having parallels in other interpretations of Gen 22 as well: Abraham's work is reckoned to him as righteousness (2:23; cf. 1Macc 2:51–52) and he is called a friend (φίλος) of God. In the history of tradition, the

²⁶ Cf. 1Macc 2:51; further cf. Philo, Abr 176–177 (God repays [ἀντιτιμήσαντος] Abraham for his supreme ἔργον, the offering of Isaac [τὴν σφαγὴν ἐργάσασθαι]); §273 (God repays [ἀντιδίδωσιν] Abraham's πίστις with his own πίστις). Continuing the argument of Rom 4:2, v. 4, therefore, is much closer to Paul's discourse on Abraham than what its well-known interpretation suggests in terms of an analogy from the business world (cf. Hans Wolfgang Heidland, λογίζομαι, λογισμός, TDNT [1967] 4:284–293, here 284).

²⁷ The relation between Jas 2:14–26 and Paul is a matter of controversy; cf. Matthias Konradt, Der Jakobusbrief, in: Martin Ebner/Stefan Schreiber (eds), Einleitung in das Neue Testament, Stuttgart 2013, 502–516, here 506–507 (with further literature).

latter notion is first found in Isa 41:8, where, however, it is not linked with Abraham's offering of Isaac. Nevertheless, a connection of both traditions is found in Jewish interpretations of Gen 22 in both Hebrew and Greek materials.²⁸ Without the potential antithesis of πίστις and ἔργα being of interest in Jewish interpretation of Gen 22, it is quite clear that Jas 2:21–23 interprets Abraham's ἔργον against this background. For the author, Gen 15:6a thus proves that “faith was active along with (συνήργει) works, and faith was brought to completion (ἐτελειώθη) by the works” (Jas 2:22), that is, by Abraham's supreme work. In Jas 2, then, the specific way in which faith and works are interconnected presupposes Jewish traditions, for which Abraham's faith/-fulness, that is, his being πιστός / אֱמִינִי or, as the case may be, his πίστις, manifested in the offering of Isaac.²⁹

In a lengthy interpretation of the biblical story of Abraham, 4Q225, an example of the genre of Rewritten Bible, also combines Gen 15 and 22. Its narrative interest is to demonstrate that Abraham's trust or belief in the faithfulness of God to the promise, endangered by his very command to sacrifice the promised son, was fully justified. The

²⁸ As to Isa 41:8, the MT punctuates the radicals (אָהַב) in the active voice (Abraham as lover of God), whereas the LXX uses the passive (God as the one who loves Abraham); similarly 2Chr 20:7. In the history of interpretation of Gen 22, Jewish authors understand the notion either way; cf. Gudrun Holtz, Abraham als Archetyp der Gottesliebe: Die Opferung Isaaks in Philos biographischem Enkomium “Das Leben des Weisen” (*De Abrahamo* 167–208a), in: Roger D. Aus (ed.), *Haggadah in Early Judaism and the New Testament* (WUNT 461), Tübingen 2021, 67–94, here 84–90.

²⁹ For πιστός / אֱמִינִי cf. 1Macc 2:52; 4Q225 2 ii,8; Jub 17:15–18; 18:16; for πίστις cf. e.g. Philo, Abr 273. Yet, different shades of meaning of Abraham's faith/-fulness are to be observed in the details both within the group of texts just mentioned and between these texts and Jas 2. It might be noted that God's testing of Abraham (Gen 22:1), which widely figures in the history of interpretation of the text, is missing in Jas 2, although temptation is discussed in the letter (cf. esp. 1:12–15). The reason is evident: According to Jas 1:13 God himself tempts no one.

text fills the lacuna found in 1Macc 2:52 where the relationship between πιστεύειν and πιστός is left unspecified, only to be guessed at. 4Q225 starts with rewriting Gen 15:1–6, culminating in the citation of 15:6: וַיֵּאמֶן אַבְרָהָם בַּאֱלֹהִים וַתַּחֲשֹׁב לוֹ לְצַדִּיקָה (2 I,7–8).³⁰ Abraham’s trust or belief in God refers to the promise of offspring. After being fulfilled in Isaac’s birth, Mastema immediately accuses Abraham before God “because of Isaac”, resulting in God commanding him to sacrifice Isaac. Mastema’s angels are delighted by the course of the events and start to reason about Abraham’s predicament: If he withholds his son, he will be found to be a liar; if, however, he is found “faithful” (נֶאֱמָן) to God, his son will perish (2 ii,6–8). It is this faithfulness that constitutes his singular glory predicated by God to all (2 ii,9–10).³¹

Thus, in 4Q225 the Hebrew root נֶאֱמָן has two aspects, that is, trust in God’s promise, which is lived out in faithfulness to his command.³² Two dimensions of trust or faith (נֶאֱמָן) that are fully compatible in 4Q225 and 1Macc are interpreted in Rom 4, however, in terms of an antithesis between faith as human response to God’s promise (Rom 4:17b–22/Gen 15:1–6) and faithfulness to the law, which for Paul amounts to works resulting in boasting.³³ This antithesis has no basis whatsoever in the biblical Abraham

³⁰ For textual issues concerning the reception of Gen 15:6 in 4Q225, cf. e.g. Köckert, Glaube (see n. 12), 32; and Benjamin Schließer, *Abraham’s Faith in Romans 4. Paul’s Concept of Faith in Light of the History of Reception of Gen 15:6* (WUNT 2 224), Tübingen 2007, 185–188.

³¹ Similarly, in Sir 44:19–20 Abraham’s δόξα results from his being πιστός when tested; cf. also Philo, Abr 262.

³² By interpreting the verb πιστεύειν (Gen 15:6) in the polemical passage Gal 3:6–9 in terms of Abraham being πιστός, Paul shows himself to be fully aware of this exegetical tradition.

³³ Summarizing the Jewish evidence in terms of faithfulness detached from trust as opposed to Paul’s concept of faith, Schließer, *Faith* (see n. 30), 341 (following J.D.G. Dunn), overlooks 4Q225, thus

story and its Jewish interpretations, but is an exegetical innovation resulting from Paul's universal understanding of God's acting in Jesus Christ, manifesting itself in the justification of Jews and Gentiles alike by faith and not by works of the law. By implication, representing works' righteousness by obeying the divine command at mount Moria, the Jewish Abraham in Rom 4:2–3 becomes the symbol of exclusivism, which in no way is corroborated by Gen 22:16–18 or its Jewish interpretation. Still, Paul's specific theological language expressing his universalism is indebted to his interaction with those strands of early Jewish exegesis of Gen 22:16–18, which link this passage to Gen 15:6. It is, in other words, the foil against which he unfolds his universal language.

2.2 The Universalization of Abraham and His Seed by God (Rom 4:9–17a)

In Rom 4:9–17a, Paul argues that Abraham, “our forefather according to the flesh”, is the father of Gentiles also, resulting in his seed consisting of both Jews and Gentiles. To make this point, Paul starts by clarifying the time when Abraham's belief was reckoned to him as righteousness, that is, before or after his circumcision. The chronological argument he uses is based on Gen 17:1–14, which he links with Gen 15:6. He concludes that this reckoning occurred when Abraham was uncircumcised, which makes him “father of all who believe through uncircumcision” (πατέρα πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων δι' ἀκροβυστίας). The function of the sign of circumcision he reinterprets in terms of a seal of the righteousness of faith only (Rom 4:11). At the same time, Abraham is “father of circumcision” (πατέρα περιτομῆς), that is, of those who not only are circumcised, but

presenting a one-sided picture of Abraham's trust in Early Judaism; but see Schließer's interpretation of 4Q225 (ibid., 192–193).

also believe in the way he did (4:12).³⁴ Both groups, of whom he is father, Paul summarizes under the term “seed” (σπέρμα; 4:13). Its non-genealogical understanding is made explicit in 4:16a, where παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι refers to both him who is of the law and him who is of Abraham’s faith. Concluding this topic, Paul once again returns to the patriarch’s fatherhood, whom he summarily calls “father of us all” (πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν; 4:16b), that is, of Jews and Gentiles. This statement is undergirded by the proof text from Gen 17:5: “I”, God, “have made you father of many nations” (πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν τέθεικά σε; Rom 4:17a). In Gen 17, the term ἔθνη refers to the Gentile nations only whereas in Rom 4:16–17 Paul seemingly takes it to include the Jewish people as well.³⁵

³⁴ The main thrust of Paul’s argument in 4:12 is that Abraham is the father of Jewish Christians being characterized as those “who are not only men of circumcision but who” and at the same time “also follow in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham”. It is beyond the scope of this paper to argue this point in detail; cf. Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 1 292–294. By way of contrast, following the argumentation of Maria Neubrand, *Abraham Vater von Juden und Nichtjuden. Eine exegetische Studie zu Röm 4* (fzb 85), Würzburg 1997, 234–242; Robert Jewett, *Romans (Hermeneia)*, Minneapolis 2007, 320–321, opts “for the two-group interpretation”, that is, Jewish Christians and nonbelieving Jews. Jewett, however, goes on to argue that “the reference to the definitive footprints ... of Abraham might have been intended to turn the attention of Jewish Christians away from the primacy of circumcision ... and toward the primacy of faith”. The latter is because faith is constitutive of “the new ‘in-group identity’” of Jews and Gentiles. This interpretation, just as Wolter’s, corresponds to the rhetorical situation of Rom 4:2–17a, where Paul argues for the inclusion of the Gentiles in the group of the believing children of Abraham. As to the Jewish children of Abraham, this implies that in Rom 4 Paul primarily has Jewish Christians in mind – this, however, not to the exclusion of nonbelieving Jews, as Rom 4:1; 9:5; 9:7; and 15:8 (see below) clearly show; Paul’s emphasis in 4:12 is not on them. Similar problems are posed in 4:16. Again, Paul’s wording is not unequivocal. The solution is similar to that proposed for 4:12; cf. Jewett, *ibid.*, 330–331; and Wolter, *ibid.*, 301–302.

³⁵ See also Rom 4:18, where Paul underpins Abraham’s being *πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν* with Gen 15:5 LXX, in the context of Gen 15 obviously referring to his physical offspring only.

Finally, with God being both the speaker of this promise and the agent, this universalizing discourse ends on a theocentric note.

The universalization of Abraham is rooted in Genesis. It is a recurring motif that through him and his offspring the families or nations of the earth will be blessed,³⁶ which is referred to in Gal 3:8 explicitly and only hinted at it in Rom 4. Here, for the universalization of Abraham, Gen 17:4–6 is the main text, which in Early Judaism was taken up most prominently in Sir 44. In Gen 17:1–14, the one covenant given to the patriarch by God (17:2) is manifested in two sub-covenants, with the first one being given to the patriarch regarding the whole of humankind (17:4–6) and the second one regarding his offspring (σπέρμα), that is, to Israel.³⁷ The covenant for humankind is defined as follows (17:4b–5): “You shall be the father of a multitude of nations (πατήρ πλήθους ἐθνῶν). No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you father of many nations (πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν τέθεικά σε)”. The multitude of nations refers to both the genealogical offspring of Abraham, the Ishmaelites, and the Midianites, for example, as well as to the spiritual one.³⁸ This covenant materializes in its exceeding multiplication (17:6). On the other hand, the covenant with Abraham and his offspring in Isaac is defined as an eternal covenant with its promise being the land. Its sign (σημεῖον) is the circumcision of the flesh of the foreskin (περιτμηθήσεσθε τὴν σάρκα τῆς ἀκροβυστίας ὑμῶν; 17:11).

³⁶ Cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.

³⁷ Cf. Jacob, Genesis (see n. 22), 419.

³⁸ Cf. Jacob, Genesis (see n. 22), 417; and Sarna, Genesis (see n. 12), 124. For Abraham’s bodily offspring, cf. Gen 25:1–6, 12–18. In an extra-biblical tradition about Abraham, the Jewish-Hellenistic author Cleodemus Malchus renders more details about the descendants of Abraham with Ketura; cf. Josephus, Ant 1.239–241.

Even though Paul avoids the biblical core term “covenant”, he takes up central features of both of the biblical sub-covenants. He follows Gen 17 in that he integrates features of both of them into his portrayal of Abraham, that is, his fatherhood of the nations and the understanding of circumcision as a sign, which, however, he reinterprets. In Rom 4 then, the two sub-covenants with Abraham that coexist in Gen 17 are, as it were, merged in Abraham, who becomes the father of both Jews and Gentiles in just about the same way.³⁹ This is also reflected in Paul’s usage of the term σπέρμα, which, contrary to the biblical language, he extends to include both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul’s reading of Gen 17 is clearly influenced by Sir 44. Like Paul, Sirach in his interpretation of Abraham combines Gen 17 and 22. Quoting Gen 17:4, he places his version of the story of Abraham (Sir 44:19–23 LXX) under the heading: “Abraham was the great father of a multitude of nations (πατήρ πλήθους ἐθνῶν)”. His universal dimension, then, for Sirach is the key aspect of Abraham’s identity. For the promise of the nations given to him to come to fruition in his seed (44:21b/Gen 22:18), Abraham’s covenant righteousness is instrumental: “He entered into covenant with him and certified the covenant in his flesh” (Sir 44:20b–c/Gen 17:7–13). By the same token he kept the law (44:20a),⁴⁰ ultimately manifesting his faithfulness when tested (ἐν πειρασμῷ ... πιστός; 44:20d/Gen 22).⁴¹ “On these grounds” (διὰ τοῦτο), especially because of his faithfulness in testing,

³⁹ In Gen 17, Abraham is not called “father” with respect to his offspring; similarly, Sir 44 following Gen 17. In the Jewish Bible, however, the term is used regarding Abraham in Isa 51:2 (further cf. Isa 63:16). In Early Judaism, on the other hand, it is commonly used in this sense.

⁴⁰ The verb συντηρεῖν (44:20) reminds of διατηρεῖν in Gen 17:10, which, however, is linked with διαθήκη.

⁴¹ Sir 44:20 forms a chiasmus a - b - b¹ - a¹, with b and b¹ both using the term διαθήκη. Abraham’s being faithful (a¹) explains his obedience to the law (a) of God in terms of his command to offer Isaac.

God “assured him with an oath” (ἐν ὄρκῳ ἔστησεν αὐτῷ; 44:21/Gen 22:16).⁴² It refers to the promise to the nations and for Abraham’s seed. In accordance with the heading (44:19) and the sequence of the covenants in Gen 17, but contrary to Gen 22:17–18, Sirach first rewrites the promise to the nations (Sir 44:21). The same sequence reappears in 44:22–23, where he specifies the offspring of Abraham in whom the promises will materialize: in Isaac “the blessing of all human beings” (εὐλογίαν πάντων ἀνθρώπων; 44:23),⁴³ in Jacob the covenant, the blessings, and the inheritance, all of which are to be given to the twelve tribes (44:23).⁴⁴

Sir 44 clearly manifests universal tendencies because the spiritual goods of the blessings promised by God to Abraham are extended beyond his physical offspring to include the nations or all of humankind. In this, Sirach primarily follows the biblical narratives of Gen 17 and 22. Alluding to both narratives, however, the universal dimension inherent in them is emphasized. Alongside Gen 17 he applies the idea of Abraham’s fatherhood to

⁴² To be precise, Sir 44:21 is a reformulation of Gen 22:16 (κατ’ ἐμαυτοῦ ὄμοσα) on the basis of Gen 22:16.

⁴³ See also LAB 32:3.

⁴⁴ There are several reasons to question the commonly held subdivision of Sir 44:22–23 and to link εὐλογίαν πάντων ἀνθρώπων with 44:22, that is, with Isaac. Apart from philological reasons, content-related themes support linking the expression with Isaac. The first argument is taken from the history of tradition. In the biblical narrative, it is Isaac who not only fathered Jacob but also Esau, through whom he is linked to a multitude of nations (cf. Gen 36), while Jacob is the father of the twelve tribes (Gen 29:31–30:24; 35:16, 22b–26). This story is reflected in the proposed reading of Sir 44:22–23. Furthermore, referring to the sacrifice of Isaac (44:20d), Abraham’s σπέρμα mentioned in connection with the nations being blessed (44:21b) makes the reader immediately think of Isaac being the one in (ἐν) whom this will happen.

the nations only,⁴⁵ not to his physical offspring. As in Genesis, ἔθνη and σπέρμα for him as well are two separate social entities whose sole commonality is their participation in the blessings given to Abraham.

Comparing Sir 44 and Rom 4:9–17a, there are both similarities and differences. The fundamental commonality is that both texts combine Gen 17 and 22.⁴⁶ To bring out the universal importance of Abraham, the idea derived from Gen 17:4–5 that Abraham is the father of a multitude of nations is central. In both traditions, it is in him that Jews as well as Gentiles have access to the blessings given to him by God,⁴⁷ with both Sirach and Paul emphasizing his importance for the nations over against Genesis. Since in Early Judaism the universalizing interpretation of Abraham is not a consensus view, these similarities between both authors are relevant to our topic.

Apart from Paul reading Gen 17 through the lens of Gen 15, two more differences are noteworthy in particular. Even though Sir 44 does not reflect the notion of the two sub-covenants of the one covenant between God and Abraham emerging from Gen 17, Sirach seems to think along these lines. In both these traditions, ἔθνη and σπέρμα are only related in Abraham, but remain separate social entities. This understanding is also implied in Gen 22:17–18. In contrast, Paul takes σπέρμα to include both Jews and Gentiles, whom he perceives as one social entity. This, however, is not to say that Paul in conceiving of both groups as one social organism embraces a concept unknown in Judaism before him. Philo of Alexandria also conceptualizes a commonwealth (πολιτεία) of

⁴⁵ In Sir 44:22, πατήρ is used of Isaac as well, who, however, is linked with “all human beings”. Since πατήρ is also used in Gen 22:7, this could be another reference to this text; cf. also Gen 26:3, 5.

⁴⁶ For further details, see below (section 2.3) on Rom 4:13, 16. As seen in connection with Rom 4:2–3, Gen 22 in its Jewish interpretation is present right from the beginning of the chapter.

⁴⁷ For Paul, see below on Rom 4:13.

Jews and Gentiles, which, however, is based on the law of Moses.⁴⁸ The second difference concerns the preconditions for the universal promises given to Abraham to materialize. Sir 44:19–21 perceives Abraham’s entering into the covenant, certified by circumcision, and his law-keeping, which is ultimately documented in his faithfulness when tested, as the conditions for the universalization of the blessing. Being exclusively connected with the Jewish people, for Paul these prerequisites qualify as works which prevent God’s outreach to the Gentiles. This clearly shows that regarding universalism no entity can be defined as being universal or particular of itself. All depends on the framework in which it appears. For Paul, faith qualifies as universal and works as particular, whereas for Sirach, Abraham’s Jewish credentials cause the universalization of the promise.⁴⁹

2.3 The Universalization of the Promise of God (Rom 4:13-17a)

In Rom 4:13, Paul introduces a new topic, God’s promise,⁵⁰ unfolding this in 4:13–17a.⁵¹ Continuing the previous argument, he discusses the requirements for the promise to come to its addressees. Developing this topic, he draws on Gen 22:16–18 and Sir 44:19–21 especially. Although other traditions are adduced in scholarship as well,

⁴⁸ Cf. Holtz, Gott (see n. 3), 461–473.

⁴⁹ As Philo shows, even circumcision can be a universal category; cf. Holtz, Gott (see n. 3), 408–411.

⁵⁰ In Rom 4:20 Paul uses the term *ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ θεοῦ* expressly; further, cf. the divine passive *ἐπήγγελλται* in 4:21.

⁵¹ Rom 4:13 and 4:16 are of particular interest to our discussion. In 4:14–15 the consequences of the position refuted by Paul are discussed.

these two passages are now in focus because they run through the chapter from Rom 4:2 onwards.

The section under discussion is opened by the thesis in 4:13: “For not through the law did the promise (come) to Abraham or his seed, that he should be heir of the world (τὸ κληρονόμιον αὐτὸν εἶναι κόσμου), but through the righteousness of faith”. In this statement, several universalizing aspects are present. With Abraham being the father of Jews and Gentiles, the recipients of the promise given to him are, as mentioned, both groups. The contents of the promised inheritance are the world or universe (κόσμος) corresponding to the universal dimension of God’s outreach to all of humankind. That Paul at this point of the discussion with the interlocutor should exclusively dwell on the “a-territorial” dimension of the promise, representing the position of Jewish interpretation of Abraham, is far from clear.⁵² Yet, Paul’s main point here is the mode in which the promise is received: Corresponding to God’s acting eschatologically to justify Jews and Gentiles in one and the same way (3:30), the promise comes to the whole seed in the very same mode, that is, through righteousness of faith and not through the law. With the law in Rom 4 being linked to Jews only, faith ensures universal access to the promise. In 4:16, Paul expands on the relationship between ἐκ πίστεως and ἐπαγγελία. Pondering the

⁵² Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 1 213; and Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 1 296; both referring to W.D. Davies. Davies argues with fulfillment “in Christ”, which here, however, is not in view; similarly, J.F. Harris, *Christ-Faith and Abraham in Galatians 3–4. Paul’s Tale of Two Siblings* (BIS 214), Leiden/Boston 2023, 244–249 (but see below on Rom 8:32). Against the background of the biblical promises to Abraham and their interpretation in Sir 44 with both traditions evidently being present in Rom 4, it is likely that Paul and his readers would assume κόσμος as used in Rom 4:13 to at least include a spatial dimension. Otherwise, Paul would disconnect himself from Gen 15:6, which he frequently refers to through Rom 4. Wolter, *ibid.*, arguing with Philo, *Somn* 1:175, claims that the equivalent of “wisdom”, which in Philo’s allegorical interpretation of Gen 28:14 is the deeper meaning of κόσμος, in Rom 4 is “belief”. For Paul, however, “belief” hardly is the promised inheritance, but the mode to access it. For further details, see below.

question about how belief affirms the promise extending to the whole of Abraham's offspring (εἰς τὸ εἶναι βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι), Paul concludes that the steadfastness of the promise is not guaranteed by human faith itself, but by God's response to it, that is, by his grace (κατὰ χάριν) being his essential nature (3:24).⁵³ Thus, it is God alone who guarantees the universal participation in the promise, though on the basis of faith.

In the light of early Jewish tradition in Rom 4:13, 16, especially of Sir 44:19–23, Paul evidently refers to Gen 22:16–18. Linguistic and thematic links to both traditions abound. As for the linguistic evidence, the term κληρονόμος is the clearest one: As in Genesis it is used for the first time in Gen 22 directly and expressly regarding Abraham's offspring,⁵⁴ in this Sir 44 follows Gen 22. Like "seed", in both these traditions it is reserved for his physical offspring, with the nations also being mentioned in both contexts. As to thematic links, here and there the inheritance is defined in territorial-geographic

⁵³ In 4:16, κατὰ χάριν via 4:4 refers to 3:24. Rom 3:24 seemingly alludes to Exod 34:5–6, but sees grace eschatologically revealed in God's righteousness effecting redemption in Jesus Christ.

⁵⁴ There are several instances of the term κληρονομεῖν in Gen 15 where in the affirmative it is directly connected only with Abraham, who is said to inherit the land (15:7; but cf. 15:3–4). By contrast, the verb κληρονομεῖν is not expressly linked with the term seed (σπέρμα), although the idea of the σπέρμα being heirs is present. The entity supposed to be the heir is called "(the one) who will come forth from you" (ὃς ἐξελεύσεται ἐκ σέ; 15:4), which only at the end of 15:5 is identified with the seed who in the wider context is Isaac in whom offspring will be named for Abraham (21:12); Isaac, being the one who (ὃς) will come forth from Abraham, in Rom 4:13 is clearly not in view. The nations being the focus of Rom 4 are not even mentioned in Gen 15. The other terms found in both Rom 4:13 and Gen 22:16–18 are "Abraham" and "seed". Apart from Gen 22:17, only in Gen 28:4 do all three terms appear; yet, regarding the content, this text, unlike Gen 22, is not of any obvious relevance to Rom 4. Furthermore, similar to Rom 4:13, both notions, promise and law, are already implied in Gen 22:16–18 (cf. n. 56); by contrast, in Gen 15 only the promise is present.

terms. Already in Genesis, the “land” (γῆ) promised to Abraham from the start (Gen 12:1) is defined in ever increasing terms, reaching out in the cardinal directions (13:14; 28:14) and encompassing the territories (τὴν γῆν ταύτην) “from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates” (15:18).⁵⁵ Building on this tradition and Ps 71:8 LXX, Sir 44:21 expands the inheritance granted to the physical seed in terms of an area reaching “from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth (ἕως ἄρκου τῆς γῆς)”. This geographic scope comes close to Paul’s κόσμος as inheritance, which, however, is the inheritance of Jews and Gentiles alike.

Interpreting Gen 22:16, 18b as the expression of Abraham’s complete obedience to the law (συνετήρησεν νόμον; Sir 44:20), Sirach adds an aspect to his understanding of Abraham grounded in Gen 22, but not elaborated in it.⁵⁶ To describe his law-keeping in testing, the term πιστός is used. Both terms are reflected in Rom 4:13, νόμος at the beginning of the verse ([ο]ὐ ... διὰ νόμου) and πιστός at the end of it: ἀλλὰ διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως; very probably πιστός is also an interpretation of Abraham’s πιστεύειν (Gen 15:6) in Early Judaism. By inserting his universalizing interpretation of the promise, derived from Gen 22 in the reading of Sir 44, into what he perceives to be an antithesis of νόμος (law) and πίστις (faith), Paul refutes a concept,⁵⁷ which even in being negated is

⁵⁵ This promise specifies the promise in Gen 15:7: τὴν γῆν ταύτην. In Gen 22:17, the territory Abraham’s seed is to inherit is not demarcated; rather it is said to “inherit the gate of their enemies”. This promise is instrumental in ensuring the continuance of the history of promise.

⁵⁶ But cf. Gen 26:3–5 (God renewing the promise to Isaac, which he had given to Abraham), where Abraham’s listening to the voice of God at Mount Moriah is further explicated by the term מְשַׁמְרֵתִי / προστάγματα and afterwards generalized by מְצוֹתַי הַקְּוִיִּים וְתוֹרֹתַי / τὰς ἐντολάς μου καὶ τὰ δικαιώματά μου καὶ τὰ νόμιά μου. Thus, already in Genesis Abraham’s obedience to God is interpreted in nomistic terms.

⁵⁷ Cf. esp. Rom 4:14, which can be read as a direct refutation of Sir 44:19–20.

indebted to his interaction with Sirach and similar Jewish readings of Gen 22, such as 1Macc 2:50–52 and 4Q225. In Sir 44, to be sure, Abraham’s keeping of the law as manifested in his faithfulness (πιστός) in testing is the precondition for the promise not only for Israel but also primarily for the nations to materialize. Contrary to Paul’s “not through the law”, for Sirach it is exactly Abraham’s observance of the law that results in the realization of the universal promise.

Finally, the motif of the steadfastness of the promise to all of Abraham’s seed is common in Gen 22 and Sir 44. In giving the oath of promise to Abraham as a reward for his obedience to the divine command to sacrifice Isaac, God affirms his earlier promises endangered by this very command. The assumption of a traditio-historical linkage with Rom 4:16 is ensured by Philo’s interpretation of Gen 22:16–18. According to Abr 273, God repaid with his own πίστις (“assurance”⁵⁸) Abraham’s πίστις (“faithfulness”) to him, which he had demonstrated with his unsurpassable ἔργον (§176, 178), his readiness to offer Isaac. Abraham’s πίστις results in God “guaranteeing by oath the gifts which he had promised (τὴν δι’ ὄρκου βεβαίωσιν ὧν ὑπέσχετο δωρεῶν)”. In Gen 22 and the Jewish texts, then, the steadfastness of the promise is based on God’s oath given to Abraham. Given his familiarity with Gen 22 and its history of interpretation, it can be assumed that Paul’s assertion that the promise is certain for “all the seed”, that is, for “us all”, is taken from this tradition too, even though for Paul, Abraham is only the model for God’s acting towards those who believe. His clarification that the promise is guaranteed by πίστις (“belief / trust”) effecting God’s grace – and not by πίστις (“faithfulness”), resulting in God giving him an oath as a reward – is just another example of how he inter-

⁵⁸ Cf. Franz Passow, *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*. Zwei Bände in vier Teilbänden, ⁵1841 (Sonderausgabe 2004), II/1 929, s.v. πίστις 2, “... Zusicherung, Versprechen”; GE (see n. 11), 1671, s.v. C, “that which inspires faith, guarantee, assurance”; and CGL (see n. 12), 1135, s.v. 6, “guarantee of good faith, pledge, assurance”.

prets a common conviction. Yet, this explanation does not in any way obscure the common conviction that it is Abraham's πίστις, however it might be understood, – and in Paul's case that of the seed as well – which makes God respond either with an oath or with grace,⁵⁹ assuring the promise for all, Jews and Gentiles alike. The differences mentioned do not in any way affect the common dimension of Sirach's and Paul's theocentric universalism based on Gen 22:16, that it is God who guarantees the promise for both Jews and Gentiles.

3 The Beginning of God's Universal Acting in the Death of Jesus Christ for Jews and Gentiles and Its Consequences (Rom 8:32)

In Paul's letters, Rom 8:32, which says that God “indeed did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how shall he not also with him grant us all things”, is the passage in which Paul most evidently interprets the foundational narrative of Christianity, the death of Jesus, as figure of his theocentric universalism. This explanation of his death is also based on Gen 22 in its Jewish interpretation. Rom 8:32 is the opening part of the section 8:31–39, “God is for (ὑπέρ) us”. This verse is a reformulation of one of the fundamental concepts in Romans, namely that God being “for us” in the death of Jesus Christ is the irreversible pledge of his all-encompassing nature of being “for us” (5:6–10; 8:17). It guarantees not only his presence in the current sufferings of the we-group, but also his soteriological acting in justification etc. culminating in the transformation of all things eschatologically. In 8:32, this is expressed through the phrase: God will “grant us with him all things”.

⁵⁹ Cf. Rom 4:4 with a generalizing evaluation of the preceding discussion on Abraham.

In 8:32aβ, Paul explains God’s being for us in christological-soteriological terms, formulating that he gave up (παρέδωκεν) his son “for us all” (ὕπερ ἡμῶν πάντων). This is not a universalistic wording in the strict sense of the term,⁶⁰ but a universalizing statement as it refers to believers only. The literary function of 8:32aα, on the other hand, is to introduce the two main characters, God and his son. Apart from all traditio-historical considerations describing God’s acting by not sparing his son, Paul aims to extol the greatness of his deed.⁶¹ God could have spared him but motivated by his love “for us all” (5:8; 8:39) did not do it. Introduced by πῶς οὐχί,⁶² in 8:32b Paul deduces from God’s giving up his son that in the future he doubtlessly will (graciously) grant (χαρίσεται)⁶³ “us all”, Jews and Gentiles alike, with the son (σὺν αὐτῷ) “all” there is (πάντα) = “all things” – thus realizing eschatological consummation. In the present context, the meaning of πάντα is “all things”, particularly pointing to the eschatological goods mentioned in Rom 8, culminating in the glorification of “us all” with Christ.⁶⁴

⁶⁰But cf. Jörg Frey, *Die Deutung des Todes Jesu als Stellvertretung. Neutestamentliche Perspektiven*, in: ders., *Kleine Schriften. 2. Von Jesus zur neutestamentlichen Theologie*, ed. by Benjamin Schließer (WUNT 368), Tübingen 2016, 225–261, here 236.

⁶¹Cf. Victor P. Furnish, “He Gave Himself [Was Given] Up...”: Paul’s Use of a Christological Assertion, in: Abraham J. Malherbe/Wayne A. Meeks (eds.), *The Future of Christology* (FS Leander E. Keck), Minneapolis 1993, 109–121, here 120.

⁶²Similarly, Rom 5:6–10 (πολλῷ μᾶλλον); cf. Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 1 502.

⁶³The meaning of the grammatical future tense of χαρίσεται is still debated. Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKK VI/2–3), Zürich et al. ²1987/1989, here 2 173; Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 1 502; and Jewett, *Romans* (see n. 34), 539, e.g., opt for a genuine future, whereas Ernst Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8a), Tübingen ⁴1980, 239; and Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 1 543, assume a logical or gnomic future tense. The latter, though, concedes that in its context a reference to the future cannot be denied (*ibid.*).

⁶⁴ But see Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 1 502, e.g., opting for the meaning “‘the all’ = creation”. If Paul had thought specifically of it, he could have used κόσμος as he did in Rom 4:13; cf. CGL (see n. 12), 826–827,

Both the beginning and the end of God's acting in Jesus Christ then, that is, his death ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων and the gifting of τὰ πάντα to "us all", account for the universal dimension of Rom 8:32, with its theocentric side being evident.

In order to clarify the Jewish profile of Paul's christological interpretation of Jewish universalism in Rom 8:32, the intra-textual references need to be looked at first. 8:32b is related to 8:17 via the motif of receiving something with (σύν) Christ. The term used in 8:17 is συγκληρονόμοι ... Χριστοῦ, which in turn refers to 4:13–14.⁶⁵ This is a first indication of the interrelatedness of Rom 4 and 8:32. There are further clues about their connection. Despite assertions to the contrary,⁶⁶ the phrase τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο, clearly reflects Gen 22:16. This verse is part of the narrative of Gen 22 alluded to in Rom 4, where, as was seen, in his interaction with its Jewish interpretations Paul shows a particular interest in Gen 22:16–18. There are, however, further possible references. Concerning Rom 8:17, the statement: τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίζεται (8:32), resonates with the promise given to Abraham and his seed: τὸ κληρονόμον αὐτὸν εἶναι κόσμου (4:13/Gen 22:17). With τὰ πάντα probably being an interpretation of κόσμου, the territorial-spatial dimension of the latter term is transcended. In this context, the verb χαρίζεται with God as subject seems to specifically resonate with God's χάρις (Rom 4:16), assuring the reliability (βεβαίαν) of the promise. Furthermore, there is an equivalent to ἡμῶν πάντων

s.v. κόσμος 20: "universe, cosmos ...; firmament, sky, heavens" and s.v. 21: "(gener.) world (sts.ref. to earth, opp. heaven) NT.; (ref. to mankind) whole world NT."; for further details see below.

⁶⁵ Apart from 4:13–14, Rom 8:17 is the only use of the term (συγ-)κληρονομεῖν in Romans. Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 1 455, also connects these two passages.

⁶⁶ For more recent publications, cf. e.g. Peter Lampe, *Human Sacrifice and Pauline Christology*, in: Karin Finsterbusch et al. (eds.), *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (SHR 112), Leiden/Boston 2007, 191–209, here 198; Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 1 541–542; and Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer. Kapitel 6–16* (HTA), Witten/Gießen 2016, 268.

(Rom 8:32) in 4:16, though in reverse order;⁶⁷ in both contexts it is related – directly or indirectly – to Paul’s reception of the story of Abraham. Finally, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν (8:32) connects with the phrase παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν (4:25), mostly understood as alluding to Isa 53:6, 12. With God being the agent in these verses, their theocentric perspective is evident. In Isa 53, just as in Rom 8:32, the message combines with a potentially universal perspective.⁶⁸ Since Rom 8:31–39 is a “rounding off conclusion”⁶⁹ of the explanation of the gospel (3:21–8:30), it does not come as a surprise that in its final crescendo Paul should come back to Rom 4.

These intra-textual references suggest that the christological interpretation of theocentric universalism in 8:32 is linked to Jewish readings of Gen 22 as well. The motif of the son’s being given up by God, probably referring to Isa 53, is no objection. Although the term (παρα-)διδόναι κτλ. is not used in Gen 22 itself, it is found in the Jewish history of interpretation of the text in two 1st century sources. The most important evidence is LAB 32:3, where Isaac is blended with Isaiah’s servant.⁷⁰ This Isaac is told by Abraham *te traho*, most likely the equivalent of παραδίδομι σε. Furthermore, the purpose of Isaac’s

⁶⁷ Since these two verses are the single proof texts for “we all” in Romans, in the present discussion importance is to be given to this correspondence. In the introduction and the final part of Romans though, πάντων ὑμῶν is found (1:8; 15:33; 16:24).

⁶⁸ For παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, cf. Isa 53:6, for παρεδόθη with διὰ ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν as the purpose of the servant’s being given up, cf. Isa 53:12. Furthermore, in 53:12 τῶν πολλῶν is linked with ἁμαρτίας. Current OT scholarship explains עַבְדִּי / πολλῶν mostly as referring to Israel only, which, however, is not necessarily Paul’s understanding of this word.

⁶⁹ The term is borrowed from Dunn, Romans (see n. 6), 1 502.

⁷⁰ I will argue this point in a forthcoming publication. In agreement with the majority of current scholarship, I assume that LAB dates to the 1st century CE. Traces of this interpretation go back to the 2nd century BCE.

sacrifice is given as *pro iniquitatibus hominum*, an expression relating it to Isa 53:6, 12 and stressing its universal dimension.⁷¹ In a different framework, Philo recounts that Abraham gave his only beloved son (**μόνον ... ἀγαπητόν ... διδούς**; Abr 196). The motif of being given up, therefore, is not foreign to the exegesis of Gen 22.

The arguments put forward thus far for connecting the universal dimension of Rom 8:32 with Gen 22 and its Jewish interpretations are only indirect in nature. They are substantiated, however, by the textual evidence of 8:32 reflecting the line of argumentation found in Gen 22:16–18 and echoed in Jewish sources, esp. Sir 44:21–22. Here, not sparing the son makes God affirm the promise to Abraham’s offspring *and* the nations.⁷² Conspicuously, Sir 44:20–22, in principle following Gen 22, links the renewal of the promise to the nations directly with God’s acting in Isaac, that is, in Abraham’s son. Similarly in Rom 8:32, it is God’s acting in his son, that is, the precondition for the materialization of the universal promise.⁷³ The universalization of the promise to include τὰ πάντα reflects, as was seen, a development starting in Genesis and continuing in Jewish sources. Finally, alongside Gen 22 and Jewish tradition, Paul emphasizes the steadfastness of the promise by grounding it in God and his response to the surrender of the respective son. Reworded by Philo and similarly in Rom 4:16 in terms of the βεβαίωσις of the promise, God’s oath in Rom 8:32, affirming the realization of the promise in the Abraham tradition,⁷⁴ seems

⁷¹ In Rom 8:32, the giving up of Jesus Christ for sin is not emphasized, although in connection with 4:25 especially it is intratextually present.

⁷² Additionally, cf. LAB 32:3.

⁷³ Sir 44 shows no specific interest in not sparing the son, which for him is an aspect of what he subsumes under ἐν πειρασμῷ; but cf. Jub 18:15 and 4Q225 2 ii,7 where 𐤇𐤒𐤏 most likely figured in the original text. Also in 4Q225, too, Isaac is the recipient of the blessing, materializing, however, in his physical offspring.

⁷⁴ Cf. Gen 22:16; Sir 44:21; and Philo, Abr 273, and see above section 2.3.

to be reflected in the expression $\pi\omega\delta\varsigma\ \o\upsilon\chi\acute{\iota}$. It identifies God's surrendering his son as the irrevocable pledge assuring the fulfillment of his universal promise.

As much as 8:32 shows the presence of Gen 22:16–18 and its Jewish interpretation, there are major differences as well, with the most important being the understanding of the promise.⁷⁵ Whereas Isaac's surrender by Abraham leads to the renewal of the promise, which is the condition for the history of his offspring to continue, the giving up of Jesus Christ by God eschatologically results in its comprehensive fulfillment for "us all", both Jews and Gentiles. In Rom 8, this proves to be the innovative side of Paul's interpretation of Gen 22 and Jewish readings building upon his reasoning in Rom 4:2–17a, but at the same time going beyond it. Whereas in Rom 4 he discusses the mode of the participation of Jews and Gentiles in the promise, in 8:32 he clarifies the details of its fulfillment.

To summarize: In the foundational narratives of both Judaism and Christianity, not sparing the son is a constitutive aspect aiming from the very beginning at the inclusion of both Abraham's physical offspring and the nations in God's dealing with humankind. Conceptualizing Rom 8:32 against the background of Gen 22:16–18 and its understanding in Judaism especially, the theocentric universalism articulated by these traditions are also reflected in the Pauline text. Thus, according to Paul, it is not theocentric universalism that is specific, but its unfolding in a new context.

⁷⁵ Another important difference is the fact that, in contrast to Jesus, Isaac did not die. This, however, is due to the story of Gen 22 on the one hand and the biography of Jesus on the other. Both Isaac and Jesus were saved by God, each one, however, at a different point of his (hi-)story. Paul certainly was aware of this difference but is not interested in it, as his focus is on Gen 22:16–18. As a rule, reception of tradition is selective since it is used to interpret a new story.

4 The Eschatological Praise of God by Jews and Gentiles as Ultimate Expression of Pauline Universalism (Rom 15:7, 8–12)

The corpus of Romans (1:16–15:13) culminates in the envisioning of the eschatological praise of God by Jews and Gentiles (15:7, 8–12).⁷⁶ In this passage, major threads of the argument of the letter converge.⁷⁷ In view of the overall topic of the present paper – Pauline universalism – two aspects are of special importance. One is the meaning of the Christ event for believers, to which Paul gives a new expression by differentiating its consequences for both Jews and Gentiles (15:8–9a). The other is ecclesiological and concerns the mutual acceptance, particularly of Jews and Gentiles, within the wider realm of “all of the members of the separated house and tenement churches in Rome” (15:7).⁷⁸ It is the precondition for the joint praise or glorification of God by both groups

⁷⁶ Alongside most current commentators, Rom 15:7 is understood to be part of the unit 15:7–13 (but see Wolter, *Brief* [see n. 9], 2 395); for arguments, cf. e.g. Käsemann, *Römer* (see n. 63), 371; Wilckens, *Brief* (see n. 63), 3 104–105; Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 2 844–845; and Jewett, *Romans* (see n. 34), 887–888.

⁷⁷ Cf. the following title by Gerhard Saß: “Röm 15,7–13 – als Summe des Römerbriefs gelesen” (*EvTh* 53 [1993], 510–527; the title is explained *ibid.*, 512–514). – For an overview of the different scholarly approaches to the problem, cf. Berndt Schaller, *Christus, “der Diener der Beschneidung ..., auf ihn werden die Völker hoffen”*. Zu Charakter und Funktion der Schriftzitate in Röm 15,7–13, in: Dieter Sänger/Matthias Konradt (eds.), *Das Gesetz im frühen Judentum und im Neuen Testament*. FS Christoph Burchard (NTOA 57), Göttingen/Fribourg 2006, 261–285, here 261–262.

⁷⁸ Jewett, *Romans* (see n. 34), 321; his representative reconstruction of Roman Christianity I presuppose in the following (cf. *ibid.*, 46–59, 59–74). The need for mutual acceptance or welcome of Jewish and Gentile Christians within Roman Christianity is related to its ethnic diversity, which is one of the major concerns of Romans. However, in this letter mutual acceptance is a wider issue involving all that is related to the opposition of weak and strong, that is, “economic, social, and political status” and religious difference (*ibid.*, 834). The issues debated in Rom 14 to a high degree involve matters of differences in lifestyle related to the differences between Jews and Gentiles (cf. *ibid.*, 70–72; and Gudrun Holtz, *Zwischen Halacha und Stoa. Der subjektive Faktor in Römer 14:14 und seine soziale Funktion*, in: Ute E.

(15:9b–11),⁷⁹ first and foremost, however, by Gentiles.⁸⁰ The topic reaches back to the very beginning of the corpus of Romans, where Paul criticizes the non-Jewish part of humankind for its refusal to glorify God and thereby acknowledge his power and deity (1:19–23).⁸¹ Reversing this earlier paradigm eschatologically, the praise of God is the final response to be given by Gentiles to his acting in Jesus Christ, with Paul’s ultimate purpose, however, being their joining in Israel’s praise (15:9–12). Addressing Gentiles primarily, Paul continues his critique of the Gentile part of Roman believers.⁸² The joint praise of God by both groups in the eschatological presence, at the same time, is meant to anticipate the glorification of God by the whole of humankind as part of creation in the eschatological future.

Eisen/Heidrun E. Mader [eds.], *Talking God in Society. Multidisciplinary [Re]constructions of Ancient [Con]texts*. FS Peter Lampe. Vol. 1. Theories and Applications [NTOA /StUNT 120/1], Göttingen 2020, 387–404). Therefore, the strong and the weak addressed in Rom 15:1–6, 7 are understood as associated with Gentile Christians on the one hand and Jewish Christians on the other, notwithstanding the fact that these identifications “are meant to be homomorphic and descriptive formulations that encompass a fairly wide range of ethnic and theological diversity” (Jewett, *ibid.*, 71). Still, in view of 15:8–12, where Paul expressly differentiates between Jews/the people of Israel (περιτομή) and Gentiles/the nations (ἔθνη), it is quite clear that the mutual acceptance or welcome demanded in 15:7 in the first place refers to these two groups as represented by Jewish and Gentile Christians.

⁷⁹ For details concerning the relationship between 15:7 and 15:8–12, see below.

⁸⁰ This is not to say that the present writer now suddenly assumes an exclusively Gentile audience; cf. e.g. Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles*, New Haven 1994; and A. Andrew Das, ‘Praise the Lord, All you Gentiles’: The Encoded Audience of Romans 15.7–13, *JSNT* 34 (2011), 90–110. For details see below.

⁸¹ Cf. Rom 1:21 (δοξάζειν) and 1:23 (δόξα), with both terms figuring in Rom 15:7, 9a.

⁸² Cf. Rom 11:13–24; 14:1–15:6, 7; and Holtz, Gott (see n. 3), 75; in contrast, in Rom 3:27–4:25 Paul argues with his Jewish counterparts.

Paul's eschatological universalism manifesting itself in the praise of God (15:9b–11) presupposes the mutual acceptance of Jews and Gentiles in the Roman churches as based on the model of Christ. This ethical conduct aims at the glory of God (εις δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ; 15:7). As the reasoning for his appeal to mutually accept one another shows (15:8–12), it is directed first and foremost to the Gentiles. Introduced by γάρ, Paul's theological argument is God's acting in Jesus Christ (15:8–9a), the second part of which is underpinned by proof from Scripture (15:9b–12).⁸³ While in the context of his ethical instruction he otherwise argues christologically-soteriologically, referring to the death of

⁸³ Most current commentators separate 15:1–13 into two distinct units (15:1–6, 7–13); for a summary of the arguments, cf. Jewett, *Romans* (see n. 34), 887. Rom 15:7 begins with the “inferential conjunction διό ... that draws together the argument commencing in 14:1” (ibid., 888). The exhortation προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους refers back to 14:1, opening the section on the weak and the strong within Roman Christianity (14:1–15:6); both these groups are transparent for Jews and Gentiles (cf. n. 78). Thus, 15:7 continues to address the Roman situation directly. In 15:8–12, however, there is a shift in terminology along with a shift in focus. Paul no longer deals with the weak and strong in the first place, but with “circumcision” referring to the Jewish people in general (cf. Rom 2:25–4:12) and the ἔθνη. The argument then moves from the local to the global or universal dimension. Linked by λέγω γάρ, 15:8 provides the “doctrinal basis” of Paul's “ethic of mutual welcome” (15:7; Jewett, ibid., 890; and similarly Wilckens, *Brief* [see n. 63], 3 105), which is based on Christ's acceptance (15:7) of all those in Rome called by him. At the same time, λέγω γάρ links the theo-logical dimension of 15:7, that is, the δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ-theme, with the related motif of glorifying God (δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν), required of the Gentiles (15:9a; cf. 15:6), and its explication in 15:9b–11. Whereas in 15:7 this theme is part of an ethical argument, in 15:9–11 it is part of what could be called Paul's ἔθνη-theology. The interconnectedness of 15:7 and 15:9–11 implies that the ethical imperative to mutually accept one another to the glory of God (15:7) is the precondition for the joint glorification of God by both groups (15:10–11); cf. 15:5–6.

Christ,⁸⁴ here his reasoning is theo-logical. It refers to God's acting in Jesus Christ in salvation history and corresponds to the model "Jew first and then also Greek".⁸⁵

Philologically, 15:8–9a – λέγω γὰρ Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων, 9 τὰ δὲ ἔθνη ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν – is considered difficult. In my opinion, the problems observed by scholars can be resolved if the prime target group of the argument is also taken into account. In agreement with the majority of scholarship, both elements of 15:8–9a are best understood as directly dependent on λέγω δέ (15:8a).⁸⁶ The incongruence observed for 15:8b, 9a with Christ as grammatical subject of 15:8b and the Gentiles of 15:9a as well as the syntactic incongruence of περιτομῆς and ἔθνη⁸⁷ seems to be intended, thus reflecting the line of argumentation challenging the Gentile part of Roman Christianity.

This very intention transpires in the whole of Paul's reasoning for the mutual acceptance of both groups, with the Gentiles being the first addressees. They are reminded that according to God's purpose, Christ has become servant (διάκονος) of the circumcised for the sake of God's truth, which is "more or less equivalent to 'God's covenant faithful-

⁸⁴ Cf. e.g. Rom 14:15; 15:1–3.

⁸⁵ Changing Dunn's phrase based on Rom 1:16: "Jew first, but Also Gentile" (Romans [see n. 6], 2 844).

⁸⁶ For the grammatical structure of 15:8–9a, cf. e.g. Dunn, Romans (see n. 6), 2 847–848; Holtz, Gott (see n. 3), 76–77, n. 295; and Wolter, Brief (see n. 9), 2 405–406.

⁸⁷ Cf. Wolter, Brief (see n. 9), 2 406: "die jeweiligen Subjekte, Christus und die Heiden, (können) *semantisch* nicht auf ein und derselben Ebene stehen". Furthermore, he observes, that περιτομῆς and ἔθνη are not on the same syntactic level; he calls this a "Widerspruch", which, however, is incorrect (see below).

ness”⁸⁸ manifesting in his faithfulness to the promises.⁸⁹ The role of Christ for the Jews, both nonbelieving Israel and Jewish Christians,⁹⁰ fundamentally differs from his role for the nations attributed to him (15:12/Isa 11:10 LXX): the promised shoot of Jesse is said to arise to rule (ἄρχειν) the Gentiles. Again, being a message for his Gentile readers, the purpose of Christ becoming servant of the Jews is to “confirm the promises of the fathers” (εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων). This phrase evidently refers back to Rom 4:16. Thus, also in 15:8, Paul especially seems to have in mind the promises given to Abraham, including – alongside the promises for his offspring – those for the nations.⁹¹ In view of 15:9b, 12, however, there is good reason to subsume the other promises given to Israel under the term τὰς ἐπαγγελίας (v. 8) as well.⁹² As Rom 15:12/Isa 11:12 as well as the promises given to Abraham according to Rom 4 – such as

⁸⁸ Cf. Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 2 847, following E. Käsemann and C.E.B. Cranfield. Jewett, *Romans* (see n. 34), 891–892, argues against this reading, because “Paul’s view of God’s truth extends beyond the ethnic boundaries of Abraham and his descendants”. This is certainly true, but 15:8b affirms the lasting validity of the promises to the fathers. In the context of *Romans* there can be no doubt that they include God’s promises to Israel, part of which concern the Gentiles as well (see below).

⁸⁹ Cf. Schaller, *Christus* (see n. 77), 269: “entsprechend dem hebräischen אמת im Sinne von ‘Beständigkeit, Treue’” gegenüber den “den Vätern Israels gegebenen messianischen Verheißungen”.

⁹⁰ Cf. e.g. Käsemann, *Römer* (see n. 63), 374; Dunn, *Romans* (see n. 6), 2 845; Jewett, *Romans* (see n. 34), 890; and Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 2 408.

⁹¹ Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 2 409, interprets the promises of 15:8 to refer only to the “Land-, Sohnes- und Mehrungsverheißungen”. Therefore, he opines that Paul in 15:8 “hinter das zurückfällt, was er in Röm 4:13–17a geschrieben hatte” (ibid., 407). This explanation contradicts the number of promises received by Abraham especially, but also by Isaac and once even by Jacob, which include promises to the nations (cf. Gen 12:3; 17:4–6; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:3). To be sure, these promises are echoed in Rom 4 and Gal 3 – in Rom 4, as has been seen, the verses just mentioned are drawn from Gen 17; 18 and 22.

⁹² Similarly, Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 2 409, referring to Rom 9:4; cf. also 2Cor 1:19–20.

Gen 17:1–14; 22:17–18 rewritten in Sir 44:19–23 – demonstrate, the promises concerning the nations are very compatible with Christ’s servanthood to the Jews, by which the promises of the fathers are confirmed. The reason is that all of them imply the overcoming of divisions separating Israel and the nations. Thus, the promises to the nations turn out to be promises to Israel as well, substantiating their universal character.

In 15:9a, the role the Gentiles are to assume as consequence of God’s acting in Jesus Christ is defined in terms of glorifying God (δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν) for his mercy (ὕπερ ἐλέους). The statement refers back to Rom 11:30, where Paul in criticizing Gentile pretensions reminds the ἔθνη that they received God’s mercy when still disobedient. Accordingly, their role in salvation history is not defined in terms of Christ’s care for them, as is the case with the Jews, but in terms of the response they are expected to give. In the wider context of Romans, glorifying God reverses their disobedience before the proclamation of the gospel, manifesting itself in their refusal to glorify God (οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν) despite their knowledge of him (1:21). Doing so finally makes them true offspring of Abraham, who gave glory to God (δοὺς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ; 4:20). In this way, they recapitulate Abraham’s history, who, being an idolator, participated in the ungodliness of humankind before being justified by God on the basis of faith in the promise, thereby giving God what he is due – glory. Though less evident than in Rom 4:1–17a and 8:32, Abraham tradition is present in 15:8b and 9a as well, implying that the Abrahamic dimension of Paul’s universalism runs through the corpus of the letter up to its final section. In contrast to Rom 4 and 8, in 15:8–9a the differences between Jews and Gentiles are emphasized thus preserving the particularity of the Jewish people as part of Paul’s universalist overall conception.⁹³

⁹³ This connects Rom 15:8–9a with Rom 1:18–3:20, with the latter being the negative foil of Rom 15.

These differences in roles are also reflected in the unfolding of the specific form that eschatological universalism takes in 15:9b–12. Adducing four biblical passages introduced by καθὼς γέγραπται,⁹⁴ Paul is set to prove that Gentile praise of God is what Scripture intended. The first three quotations address the issue explicitly, while the last one gives the reason for Gentile praise of God. Two of the quotations are worded in the future tense (15:9b, 12), implying that Paul understands them as promises aiming first at the eschatological present but foreseeing eschatological consummation.⁹⁵ The others (15:10, 11) are imperatives, asking the addressees to praise God now and, by implication, in the future.

Contrary to what might be expected, the grammatical subject of the first quotation (15:9b/Ps 17:50 LXX par) speaking in the 1st pers. sg. is not a Gentile “I” but a Jewish one: “for this reason I shall in joyful praise confess⁹⁶ you among the Gentiles (ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν) and sing praise (ψαλῶ) to your name”. In Ps 17 the speaker is David, who pledges to praise God among the nations because God subdued them under him and delivered him from them (17:48–49). The identity of the Jewish “I”, appropriating David’s voice in Rom 15:9b, is unclear. In the present context, most likely

⁹⁴ As they are taken from all three parts of Scripture, Paul seems to make the point that they are representative of Scripture as a whole.

⁹⁵ With Jewett, *Romans* (see n. 34), 890; and Schnabel (see n. 66), *Brief*, 791; arguing against Scott J. Hafeman’s reading of the text privileging the eschatological future over the eschatological present (*idem*, *Eschatology and Ethics. The Future of Israel and the Nations in Romans 15:1–13*, *TynB* 51 [2000], 161–192, here 179–180).

⁹⁶ For the meaning of the verb, cf. LEH (see n. 11), 1 162, listing among others “to confess” and “to sing praises”; and CGL (see n. 12), 1 521–522, s.v. 1 and 2.

it represents a Jewish Christian “I”, with Paul being one possibility.⁹⁷ In the present context, the citation shows that Gentile praise of God is grounded in the Jewish one,⁹⁸ once again reflecting the paradigm “Jew first and then also Gentile”. Gentile glorification of God, in other words, can only occur in unison with a Jewish one.

This point is made explicit in 15:10 / Deut 32:43 LXX: “Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people (μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ).” Gentile destiny, accordingly, is connected with the Jewish people. The citation is taken from a context in which the nations, particularly their leaders, are the enemies of Israel on whom God will take vengeance and avenge the blood of his children. Liberated from their leaders, the nations are thought to have reason to rejoice with God’s people. Both 15:9b / Ps 17 and v. 10 / Deut 32 thus resonate with Isaiah’s prophecy (15:12), proclaiming the rule of the shoot of Jesse over the nations, which will be characterized by righteousness and cosmic peace. Against this background, it is reasonable to assume that the context of these proof texts for Gentile praise of God is present in Rom 15 as well. This would imply that in Paul’s mind, the reconciliation of the relationship of Jews and Gentiles brought about by Isaiah’s messianic ruler (15:12), being the servant of the circumcised at the same time (15:8), is the necessary condition for the universal praise of God in the eschatological future anticipated in the present by the joint praise of him by both groups of believers in Rome.

⁹⁷ Cf. Holtz, *Gott*, 77 (see n. 3), n. 298; similarly, Jewett, *Romans* (see n. 34), 894. Substantiating this explanation, Saß, *Summe* (see n. 77), 524, refers to Rom 15:16. Others think of Christ (cf. e.g. Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs. Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism*, Oxford 2012, 153–156), Schaller, *Christus* (see n. 77), 273, of eschatological Israel. Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 2 401, opts for Scripture.

⁹⁸ If, as postulated, Rom 15:9a refers back to 1:21, it is quite clear that Jews do not form part of those refusing the praise of God, although they form part of fallen humanity for other reasons (cf. Rom 2).

Finally, quoting Ps 117:1 – “Praise the Lord, all the nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη), and let all peoples (πάντες οἱ λαοί) praise him” – Paul calls upon both groups to praise God in unison (Rom 15:11). The term ἔθνη refers to the non-Jewish nations, λαοί includes the Jewish people.⁹⁹ Interestingly, the reasoning given in Ps 117:2 for the universal call to the glorification of God are his ἔλεος and his ἀλήθεια, with both these essential features of the divinity being named by Paul as reason for Christ to become the servant of the Jews and for the Gentiles to praise God (Rom 15:8–9a).

Likewise, Paul’s last proof text for Gentile glorification of God, Rom 15:12/Isa 11:10 LXX, refers back to Rom 15:8b–9a. In giving the ultimate rationale for the glorification of God by Gentiles, Paul applies Isa 11:10 to Christ. As a shoot of Jesse having Davidic descent (cf. Rom 1:3), in his resurrection (ἀνιστάμενος) he is to rule the nations (ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν) and as such is their hope as well. Accordingly, his rule is in no way threatening. Still, in the Pauline context he is messianic ruler of the nations and servant of the Jewish people. This purpose of Christ resonates with the context of Isa 11:10, dealing with the eschatological salvation of Israel.¹⁰⁰ Rom 15:12 then fills the lacuna left in 15:8b and 9a, where Christ’s relationship with the Gentiles is not specified. The motif of the messianic rule of the shoot of Jesse combines with Christ’s lordship over both the dead and living (14:9), thus indicating the cosmic dimension of it, which is apparent in the context of Isa 11:10.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Cf. 15:10; for a more detailed discussion, cf. Schaller, *Christus* (see n. 77), 277–278; Schnabel, *Brief* (see n. 66), 793; and Wolter, *Brief* (see n. 9), 2 412.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Schaller, *Christus* (see n. 77), 279. *Ibid*, 280, he points out that the passage culminates in Israel’s praise of God for his glorious deeds (Isa 12:4–6), thus underlining the thrust of the preceding argument.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Holtz, *Gott* (see n. 3), 79.

In God's eschatological acting in Christ, both servant of circumcision and ruler of the nations, the fundamental division of humanity into the Jewish people and the nations is overcome, allowing for their joint glorification of God. Foreseen by Scripture, this is God's ultimate purpose for both groups. In Paul's present, though, the tensions even within the Roman churches continue to persist. When praising God in unison, however, they anticipate God's purpose for all of humankind, namely, that present realities are thoroughly reversed because human impiety and unrighteousness suppressing God's truth (Rom 1:18) have ended and given way to the universal acknowledgment of God, culminating in his glorification (1:19–24/15:9–11). In 15:8–12, Paul adds to this imagery of eschatological transformation the promises of the fathers, guaranteed in Christ's servanthood, and all that it entails, that is, the unity of Jews and the nations and peace among them. The kind of eschatological universalism transpiring at the very end of the corpus of Romans, then, has two poles: God having brought about the consummation of creation, on the one hand, and humankind glorifying him for that reason, on the other. In Paul's understanding, neither of them is fully manifested yet. Given the unity of its separated churches, Roman Christianity would live up to its purpose, thus anticipating the eschatological future.

Even though in Rom 15:9b–12 Paul grounds his imperative to praise God with proof texts from Scripture, they hardly are the only source of the full-fledged eschatological universalism, but rather a secondary reflection of a concept well-rooted in Early Judaism. In the following, this will be exemplified by an early tradition from the Rabbinic liturgy of Rosh ha-shana, which is especially close to Paul's understanding. To be sure, Rabbinic liturgy is preceded by the hymnic tradition of Qumran, which also shows evidence that the nations and especially creation as a whole eschatologically join the community in the

acknowledgment of the glory of God.¹⁰² Paul then participates in a tradition well-established in the 1st century CE. The text discussed in the following is the *Alenu*.¹⁰³ In this prayer, God is praised for separating Israel from the nations of (other) lands

¹⁰² For the inclusion of the nations esp., cf. 1QH 14:13–16. “For your glory (לְכַבּוֹדְכָה) and for your sake (וּלְמַעַנְכָה) have [you] done (it), to make the law great and to allot glory (כְּבוֹד) to 14 the men of your council amongst the sons of Adam (בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי אָדָם), to recount to everlasting generations (לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם) your wonders, that they [may cont]emplate [your] mighty deeds 15 unceasingly. And all the nations (גוֹיִם) may know (וַיִּדְעוּ) your truth (אֱמֶת) and all the peoples (לְאוֹמִים) your glory (כְּבוֹדְכָה). For you have brought your secret 16 to all men of your council and in the lot, together with the angels of the face” (line specification according to DJD 40 and Elisha Qimron, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. The Hebrew Writings*, Vol. 1, Jerusalem 2010; for the translation, based on the reconstruction of the text by Qimron, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, ed. Florentino Garcia Martinez/Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, was consulted [here 1QH 14:10-13]). Further evidence is discussed in Holtz, Gott (see n. 3), 109–137. For creation, see the evidence in n. 105.

¹⁰³ The *Alenu* (עֲלֵינוּ [“It is our duty”]) is a two-partite prayer whose second part is called “Therefore we hope” (עַל־כֵּן נִקְוָה). The prayer dates back to the tannaitic period or perhaps even to an earlier time; cf. Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy. A Comprehensive History*, Philadelphia etc. 1993, 120; for a more detailed study of the *Alenu*, cf. Holtz, Gott (see n. 3), 184–185. Evidently, the exact wording of the *Alenu* is later than both Rom 15 and Phil 2 (see below). With a view to using traditions from the Rabbinic period for the study of the New Testament, a number of criteria have been elaborated. One of them is the congruence of Tannaitic tradition with Qumran materials. The verbal and motivic correspondences between 1QH 14 (n. 102) and 1QH 19 (cf. n. 105) on the one hand and the *Alenu* on the other are evident. Since New Testament traditions having close parallels in Tannaitic sources serve as a means for dating such materials as well (cf. Gudrun Holtz, *Rabbinische Literatur und Neues Testament. Alte Schwierigkeiten und neue Möglichkeiten*, ZNW 100 [2009], 173–198, here 180–186), in our case, with Paul bridging the time between Qumran and Tannaitic Judaism, it can be taken for granted that the tradition of universal eschatological glorification of God was well-known by the 1st century CE, particularly by someone like Paul, who was a professed Pharisee. The *Alenu* is closer to the Pauline materials discussed in this paper than the Qumran texts adduced and therefore is a relevant source for understanding Paul historically. From the perspective of history of religions, an adequate model to account for such similarities (and differences)

(גויי הארצות) and from the families of the earth (משפחות האדמה). Its separateness or particularity, though, is attributed a specific purpose: the praise of God, articulating their submission to God: “And we bend our knees, and bow down, and give thanks, before the Ruler, the Ruler of Rulers” and creator of the universe. Acknowledging God and glorifying him already in the present time, in the second part of the Alenu Israel articulates her hope for the eschatological manifestation of God’s power, which will make the whole of humankind praise him. Revealing his power, the praying community hopes to “soon see the glory of your strength” to unearth idolatry and “to repair the world (לתקן) (עולם) under the kingdom” of God. To this fundamental transformation of the present realities, then, there will be a universal response:

And all flesh (כל־בני בשר) will call your name for all the wicked of the earth (כל־רשעי ארץ) to turn (להפנות) to you. All the world’s inhabitants (כל־יושבי תבל) will recognize and know (יכירו וידעו) that to you every knee will bend (תכרע כל־ברך) and every tongue will swear (תשבע כל־לשון). Before you, Adonai, our God, they will bend and prostrate. And to the glory of your precious name they will give honor. And they all will take upon themselves the yoke of your kingdom. And you will reign over them speedily, forever and ever. For the kingdom is yours, and forever and ever you will rule in glory (תמלוך בכבוד). As it is written in your Torah: “Adonai will reign forever and ever”.¹⁰⁴

is the model of “cultural codes”. It explains phenomena that are not adequately explained by the traditional models of genealogy and analogy; cf. *ibid.*, 186–191.

¹⁰⁴ For the Hebrew text, cf. Selig Bamberger, *Gebetbuch für das Neujahrsfest*, ed. by. Wolf Heidenheim, Basel 1995, 93–94 (with a German translation). The English translation is mine, with Jewish Virtual Library. A Project of American-Israeli Cooperation Enterprise (AICE), 1998–2023, being consulted (10.6.2023).

When the two parts of the Alenu are read together, it is evident that at Rosh ha-shana the praying community anticipates what the nations, or, as the case may be, the inhabitants of the world, will do in the eschatological future, after God's glory has emerged, because all evil will be eradicated and the world repaired.¹⁰⁵ Then, all people will prostrate themselves before God, Israel in continuing its present practice, the non-Jewish world joining Israel in prostration before God, thereby acknowledging his rule and his power as Israel has done all along. By doing so, "all" creatures "will form one union (אגדה אחת) to do your will".¹⁰⁶ In the Alenu, the motif of prostration is expanded by an allusion to Isa 45:23.

This prayer, then, spells out what is implied in Rom 15, with the details differing, of course. Common to both traditions is the self-positioning of the praying community in time and in relationship to those outside. Praising God, it anticipates the universal acknowledgment and glorification of God in the eschatological future in which both

¹⁰⁵ This notion is found similarly in 1QH 19:25–30 par 4Q428: "I have sighed on the harp of lament for every sorrow of anguish, with bitter wailing, until iniquity (עולה) be destroyed, and [there be no more suffering], and there be no more ravaging diseases. Then 26 will I sing with the harp of salvation ... 27 In the mouth of them all (בפי כולם; sc. God's creatures [מעשיכה]) is 28 your name praised for ever and ever. And they will bless you ..., and with all ends of the world they proclaim together (יחד) 29 with a joyous voice. And there will be neither anguish nor sighing, and injustice (עולה) will n[ot be found anymo]re. But your truth (אמתכה) will be displayed 30 for endless glory (לכבוד עד) and eternal peace (שלום עולם);" regarding the technical details of both text and translation cf. n. 102 (in: The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition 1QH 19:22–27).

¹⁰⁶ This is brought out by the prayer called ובכך תן פחדך. It is part of the third benediction of the Amida of Rosh ha-shana, the "Sanctification of the Name"; for further details, cf. Elbogen, Liturgy (see n. 103), 118. The motif of union or togetherness is also found in 1QH 19 par 4QH 428; see above n. 105.

groups, the respective community and the rest of humankind, will unite present divisions. Furthermore, in this future both traditions jointly envisage the all-embracing rule of God or his Messiah over the nations. The Alenu, in particular, conceives the universal praise of God as consequence of the complete transformation of present realities. In Rom 15 it is in the background only, implied in the citations on the one hand and the overall context of the letter on the other. Additionally, in both traditions God and his glory are the aim of human praise. Missing in Rom 15, there a number of correspondences between the christological hymn in Phil 2 and the Alenu. As in Phil 2:10, in a similar context the Alenu references Isa 45:23. Furthermore, the second part of the hymn (Phil 2:9–11) and the Rabbinic prayer share the idea of the universal acknowledgment of the complete reign of God or Christ on the one hand and creation being its agent on the other. Despite the christological accentuation of the hymn, its theocentric character is retained, as Christ accomplished all this εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς. Thus, for both traditions eschatological universalism has two dimensions, including not only the manifestation of God's glory but also its acknowledgment by the whole of humankind, with the nations and all creatures joining the respective community in praising God. In the eschatological end, then, all hostile divisions in humankind and creation will end, demonstrating the union of everything created, submitting to the one God, the creator of all, in praising him. This is the ultimate form of Pauline and Jewish theocentric universalism.

5 Summary

Among the Pauline texts that have been discussed, Rom 8:32, which is part of the conclusion of Paul's basic unfolding of the gospel in Romans, turns out to be a condensation of the elements essential for the clarification of the Jewish contours of theocentric universalism conceptualized in this letter. Paul develops God's acting in Jesus Christ against

the background of Gen 22:16–18 in its Jewish reading. In analogy to it, for Paul as well, not sparing the son, but giving him up for Jews and Gentiles alike is the precondition for both groups to receive the promised inheritance explained by Paul in terms of being gifted all things with Christ. Against Gen 22 and the majority of Jewish interpretations of it, but along with LAB 32:3, Paul not only universalizes the promise, but adds the soteriological understanding of the son’s being given up “for us all”. Complying with his specific eschatological schema, Paul explains the promise in terms of its fulfillment.

This condensation of God’s acting in Jesus Christ, paralleling in its basic contours the giving up of Isaac by Abraham as demanded by God, presupposes the universalizing interpretation of the story of Abraham in Rom 4. Along with Jewish exegesis of Gen 22:16–18, Paul connects his reading of this passage with Gen 15:6 and 17:1–14. Here, Sir 44:19–23 is of special importance, as Sirach not only combines Gen 17 and 22, thus emphasizing the universal relevance of Abraham, but also connects it with faith/-fulness and law, as Paul does as well. The evidence from Sirach especially shows that law and circumcision do not necessarily stand in the way of the universalization of the promise, as is often claimed. In Paul’s understanding, the particularization of the law and the universalization of the promise are due to his specific antithetical conceptualization of law and faith. Furthermore, Paul’s universalism as seen in Rom 4 is not primarily based on the biblical Abraham narrative, as is sometimes suggested,¹⁰⁷ but emerges from his interaction with Jewish interpretations of this narrative.

Rom 15 is a fitting conclusion to the corpus of Romans as a whole. Consequently, Paul’s Abrahamic line of argumentation, as documented in Rom 4 and reflected in Rom 8, re-

¹⁰⁷ Cf. James D.G. Dunn, Was Judaism Particularist or Universalist? in: Jacob Neusner/Alan J. Avery-Peck (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Part Three: Where We Stand: Issues and Debates in Ancient Judaism* (HdO 41). Vol. 2, Leiden etc. 1999, 57–73, here 68–70, who identifies “Judaism’s own universalistic impulse” with the biblical tradition while contrasting it with the particularistic view Paul is said to have entertained before his conversion, that is, (Jewish) covenantal nomism. Dunn’s textual basis is Gen 12–17 only while ignoring Gen 22.

appears. Paul's focus here, however, is on the human response to God's acting with "us all", that is, with Jews and Gentiles. He expects Gentiles to glorify God, thus anticipating the truly universal praise of God by humankind at large being sung at the eschatological consummation. Though he argues for the praise of God on the basis of Scripture, his concept is clearly indebted to early Jewish hymnic and liturgical traditions, manifesting the praise of God by Israel and the nations amongst creation as a whole due to the eschatological transformation and the healing of the world, including humankind. Thus, the end of historical time will see the emergence of God's glory, on the one hand, and humankind unified in glorifying him, on the other, thereby acknowledging his divinity. This full-fledged theocentric eschatological universalism in Romans, similar in both traditions, is preceded by various forms of universalization.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ An earlier version of this paper was presented at SNTS 2023 in Vienna in the seminar "Reading Paul's Letters in Context: Theological and Social-Scientific Approaches", convened by William Campbell and Judith Gundry. I wish to thank them for the invitation and the participants of the seminar and the reviewers of the paper for their helpful remarks.