

**Paul and Hellenistic Education: Assessing Early Literary,
Rhetorical and Philosophical Influences**

by

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SUMMARY PAGE

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Paul and Hellenistic Education: Assessing Early Literary and Rhetorical Influences

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This thesis explores two bodies of evidence that are relevant to the question of Paul's Hellenistic education: historical and literary. Part One attempts to engage the historical dimension by exploring evidence that contributes to the reconstruction of the socio-historical situation for Paul's upbringing and exposure to education in the Greco-Roman world. The literary evidence for Paul's Hellenistic education is taken up in Part Two. This portion of the thesis assesses Paul's use of Greek language, letter writing, literature, rhetoric and philosophy. The methodological relation of the two major parts of this thesis is framed by a 'hypothesis-verification' historical method. Historical data is gathered and explained by the formation of a hypothesis regarding Paul's relationship to Hellenistic education in Part One. Part Two then seeks verification for this hypothesis through a literary analysis of Pauline literature.

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INTRODUCTION

Paul was a man of two worlds. He was a native of Tarsus, a Roman citizen and an author of Greek letters, but was born into a Jewish family, trained under a Jewish rabbi and pursued a career in pharisaic Judaism. It is not surprising that little consensus has been reached in scholarship regarding the degree and level of influence these two worlds had upon the apostle. The issues related to the discussion are diverse and complex, with broad and far-reaching implications. There is, of course, the biographical issue, but the determination one makes at this stage of the discussion may in large part govern how Paul's literary achievements are (or at least should be) read. In his discussion of the 'Tarsus or Jerusalem' debate, E. Randolph Richards incisively observes:

The question of Paul's heritage is more than an issue of biographical interest. It is frequently a foundation stone for an argument as to whether Paul should be examined exclusively within a Greco-Roman framework.... Although a difficult problem, unless some attempt is made to determine the degree to which Paul participated in the distinctive elements of the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures, his background and training in letter writing remain somewhat in question.¹

This thesis takes on precisely this project. It endeavors to make a contribution to the continually growing corpus of research that attempts to situate Paul within his appropriate social and literary context. No issue could be more pivotal to this discussion than Paul's relationship to Hellenistic education. For those who place some integrity in Acts, the level of Paul's Jewish education can be affirmed with some level of confidence (Acts 22:3). His Hellenistic education as a conduit for his experience of Greek culture, however, remains vague. Pauline scholars often make claims that set Paul in some relation to the Greco-Roman education that was available in the first century: the issue is often addressed in sections of commentaries, biographies and chronologies of Paul and a few articles devoted to the topic, often resulting in treatments that are superficial, perfunctory and predictable, but there remains no thesis- or book-length analysis of the issue—

¹ E.R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 2.42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), p. 144.

perhaps because of its complexity and the assumption that much of the evidence is circumstantial.

I will be the first to confess that the nature of the discussion cannot be framed in certainties or absolutes. We must be content here with probabilities and inferences, but such is the nature of much biblical scholarship, especially background studies. No single piece of evidence is definitive. All factors must be brought into conversation with one another, considered, and weighed in light of a more comprehensive historical and literary picture. This is the aim of the present analysis. The portrait of Paul that this thesis attempts to paint draws from an accumulation of evidence. The debate will not be solved by the exegesis of Acts 22:3 or by setting 2 Cor 11:6 in its proper rhetorical context or by recourse to some other historical underpinning or detail of exegesis, but it is my contention that the cumulative force of the evidence points in the same general direction: Paul lived in Tarsus until he departed for Jerusalem to study with Gamaliel and while in Tarsus he probably attained training under a grammaticus who taught him Greek literacy (I address the social conflation of the first two levels of the education system below) and provided him with some basic exposure to the poets and certain compositional exercises. Before reviewing the methodology that will be used for establishing thesis, however, a few preliminary remarks need to be made regarding the use of sources for Paul's life that will provide the basis for constructing an account of Paul's education in this thesis.

1. Sources for a Pauline Educational Chronology: Paul and Luke

The reliability of both sources, Luke-Acts and Paul's letters, that provide us with data for a chronology of Paul have been called into question. While a detailed study of the validity of the

thirteen canonical letters transmitted under Paul's name and Luke-Acts as credible sources for attaining accurate information about the historical Paul is far beyond the modest scope of this introduction, I will make some attempt here to give support to the assumptions present throughout this thesis regarding my use and integration of these sources. I will also seek to address issues of particular relevance or importance regarding my use of sources as they arise within the body of the thesis.

a. *Establishing the Pauline Corpus*

In ascertaining historical information about Paul, scholars have tended to give Paul's letters priority over Luke. More will be said shortly about the primacy of the respective sources, but even if Paul's letters are weighted more heavily, the legitimate number of letters must still be decided. This is of special importance in a study of Paul's education since Pauline letters function as a guide to his education in a number of ways including especially the expression of his linguistic abilities, the use of the Hellenistic letter form, evidence of exposure to Greek literature, rhetoric and philosophy. For example, the most lengthy and explicit citation of a Greek author in Paul is found in Titus, which most scholars believe to be inauthentic. This raises the question as to whether this citation should be counted as evidence for Paul's exposure to the Greek poets or whether it should be attributed to a latter Paulinist. In order to address this and related questions, I briefly summarize the primary arguments typically advanced in favor of excluding any number of the canonical thirteen epistles of Paul and suggest that these arguments are methodologically flawed in starting with a *prima facie* privileged corpus of Pauline writings and have failed to take into consideration important issues of register variation and the impact of Greco-Roman secretaries upon style in their evaluations of authorship attribution.

Scholars who have questioned the validity of certain canonical Pauline letters have typically done so on the basis of differences in style, diction and theology from an assumed canon of 'legitimate' Pauline letters. Under the influence of F.C. Baur, some scholars have started with the *Hauptbriefe* or main letters of Paul: Romans, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians. Others have opted for the 'undisputed' seven: in addition to the *Hauptbriefe*, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, Colossians (or 2 Thes instead of Col). Still others may favor including undisputed 7 as well as Phlm, but choosing to exclude the Eph and the Pastorals or just the Pastorals. Once an 'authentic' collection has been established, this corpus then provides theoretical-historical basis for ruling out other letters, such as the Pastorals, which do not seem to fit the chronology provided by the predetermined canon of authentic letters.

The major arguments for excluding particular letters all involve perceived differences or development beyond a supposed authentic canon, which in many ways begs the question in the first place since the letters one begins with naturally predispose the others to be inauthentic *a priori*. One must begin with the entire corpus that has come down in Paul's name and weigh the data unilaterally without *prima facie* privileging some data as authentic over other data. As Kenny has noted, this skews the evidence for stylistic comparison since there could theoretically be coherence among the unauthentic epistles with themselves or with all but one letter and a predetermined authentic corpus would not allow for such phenomena to be evaluated as evidence in the discussion of authorship. He suggests, therefore, that "The better method is surely to start with the Pauline writings handed on by tradition, and ask whether that within that corpus there is any Epistle, or group of Epistles, which is marked out as different from the body as a whole."² Kenny successfully illustrates this point in his computational analysis of Pauline style. While avoiding problematic discussions of *hapax legomena*, Kenny selects 95 features by which to

² A. Kenny, *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), p. 95.

gage the level of stylistic continuity/discontinuity within the Pauline corpus. All but Titus (which could be due to length) seem to exhibit a great deal of continuity with one another. As traditional studies have shown, 1 and 2 Timothy group most closely together as do Colossians and Ephesians, but a great deal of coherence in the use of grammatical features can be attested across twelve of the thirteen canonical letters received in Paul's name. And when the theoretical basis for beginning with an authentic Pauline corpus is questioned, the historical argument for excluding the pastoral epistles based upon the perception that they do not fit with the chronology implied by the 'authentic' letters also seems to be considerably weakened.

Another issue overlooked in nearly all treatments of Pauline authorship attribution is the impact of register variation upon style and selections from the lexicogrammatical system available to the author. Among other places in sociolinguistics, register has emerged as an important concept in the work of M.A.K. Halliday and the systemic functional tradition of linguistics. For Halliday, register has to do with the impact that the use of language in society has had upon its evolution. "The social functions of language clearly determine the pattern of language varieties, or 'registers;' the register range, or linguistic repertoire, of a community or of an individual, is derived from the range of uses that language is put to in that particular culture or sub-culture."³ This socio-functional component of language operates in tandem with the lexicogrammatical system of the speaker/writer in order to provide the available linguistic options that can be accessed within a particular social situation or register: "The semiotic structure of a given situation type, its particular pattern, tenor and mode, can be thought of as resonating in the semantic system and so activating particular networks of semantic options,

³ M.A.K. Halliday, *Explorations in the Function of Language* (New York: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 14.

typically options from within the corresponding semantic components.”⁴ It is this process, in Halliday’s view, that specifies a range of meaning potential or, in other words, register: “the semantic configuration that is typically associated with the situation type in question.”⁵ Thus, as registers or social contexts for linguistic activity change, the repertoire of available linguistic options also change. This naturally results in the selection of different lexicogrammatical choices from one situation to the next.

O’Donnell points to an interesting example of a study in register and authorship variation that is helpful in firming up this point. He summarizes a recent study by Baayen, Van Halteren and Tweedie where “The authors of the study tested a group of works from different registers (crime fiction, literary criticism, popular scientific, scientific, drama and tennis reports, and included two works by the same author in different registers (one was a crime novel and the other was a work on literary criticism).”⁶ When methods from corpus linguistics for detecting linguistic grouping were applied to this body of literature, the two texts written by the same author grouped linguistically by register, not by author (i.e. with crime fiction and literary criticism respectively). Surprisingly, O’Donnell does not go on to plot out some of the implications that this fascinating study might have for the grouping of Pauline epistles.

It is outside of the modest scope of this introduction to argue extensively for register based grouping among the Pauline epistles, but a more simple (tentative) explanation—assuming with most the validity of simplicity as an explanatory virtue—than positing an additional pseudonymous author to account for groupings among the Pauline letters is found in the suggestion that they group according to register variation rather than authorship variation in a

⁴ M.A.K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (Baltimore: University Park Press, 1978), p. 123.

⁵ Halliday, *Language*, p. 123.

⁶ M.B. O’Donnell, *Corpus Linguistics and the Greek of the New Testament* (NTM 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005), p. 100.

way similar to the illustration provided by O'Donnell. The prison letters (esp. Col and Eph), with the exception of Philemon, seem to group most closely due to their emergence out of similar registers. Philemon, of course, is a private letter addressed to an individual, attempting to establish a much more personal social relation and so it is not surprising that we find stylistic variation here. The pastorals group together as well, all emerging from a personal context with similar social relations established between the author (Paul as apostle) and the recipients (Timothy and Titus as pastors). Some variation among the pastorals is to be expected, however, since the registers are not exactly parallel. Paul seems to have written 2 Tim at the end of his life as a farewell address to his companion whereas 1 Tim is much more concerned with the ecclesiological workings of the church at Ephesus. And Titus is addressed to a different individual, a pastor at Crete, and is attempting to give instruction on issues concerning doctrine that have arisen. While some have sought to note differences between 1 and 2 Thes, especially concerning eschatological development and emphases, these epistles are sometimes grouped together as missionary letters and have parallel registers at the level of authorship/recipient relations (they are both addressed to the same group of people and claim to be written by Paul). Romans and Galatians clearly have some theological similarities, but are distinct in numerous ways. Kenny's study indicated that there is no stylistic grounds for maintaining a *Hauptbriefe*.⁷ Again, differences may be accounted for through register variation. Whereas Paul was intimately acquainted with the church at Galatia and sought to correct heresy that had emerged within the church involving Jewish exclusivism, Romans is written to an audience that Paul had not yet met and addresses more general theological themes. Like the Thessalonian correspondence, the two canonical letters addressed to the Corinthians have the same author/recipient relations, but variation can be explained through temporal development of the register both on the side of the

⁷ Kenny, *Stylometric Study*, pp. 80-100.

author and the recipients—it is evident from 2 Corinthians that a number of events had transpired since Paul had written the Corinthians the first time. I realize that these groupings are attended by a number of historical assumptions that cannot to be defended here, but they are only meant as a tentative suggestion of how register variation might result in grouping within the Pauline corpus. As the social environments for Paul's linguistic activity changed throughout his writing ministry, the semantic components available within each register also changed. This resulted in unique lexicogrammatical selections that seem to be able to account for some amount of grouping among the epistles. The point that should be taken aware here is not that the groups proposed are in some way definitive (they are only intended to be suggestive), but that studies in register variation seem to indicate that an author's vocabulary, thematic content and style may differ according to variation among the registers out of which the author's discourses are produced. It is naïve, in other words, to require that an author must use the same vocabulary, diction, themes and style to address diverse situations in distinct genres that emerge and motive writing throughout over long periods of time. Studies in register as the one referred to by O'Donnell above show that unique linguistic components are selected according to distinct registers and that a single author's work may exhibit defining characteristics in one register that do not carry over to all other registers in which that author writes. When this point is combined with the evolution of language in an individual author's mental lexicon over time, where the author continues to create new semantic relations, expansions and changes in his or her lexical stock due to varying social contexts for linguistic activity, it becomes exceedingly difficult to restrict an author to a particular set of vocabulary or a particular style that can be applied univocally across all time periods, registers and genres in which the author composes discourse.

A third and final issue that needs to be taken into consideration when considering stylistic differences in the thirteen canonical Pauline epistles is the issue of the Greco-Roman secretary. Secretaries in the Greco-Roman world could range in role anywhere from a copyist, recording what was dictated and making subtle editorial corrections, to something like a co-author, contributing significantly to the content of a letter. It was often the case that ancient secretaries influenced the style of the letters in significant ways. Richards notes that the influences of a secretary often impacted the length of the letter (the secretary usually made it shorter), the flow of the letter, addition of various details, grammatical precision (they often made corrections) and the style of a letter.⁸ And these are precisely the types of features that Morton and McLeman, for example, single out in part two of their study of Pauline authorship, ultimately leading to the conclusion that Romans, Galatians and the Corinthian correspondence were written by the same author as well as perhaps Philemon.⁹ They never even consider the possible impact that a secretary may have had upon the distinct stylistic features that they draw attention to. The use of different secretaries or a team of secretaries could have resulted in differences in style, diction and vocabulary among particular Pauline letters. Therefore, Murphy-O'Connor rightly insists on making a distinction between letters attributed to Paul and those from Paul and his secretary.¹⁰

A numbers of conclusions should be drawn here to tie the threads of this brief analysis together. First, historical arguments based upon conflicting chronology with the authentic letters for excluding the Pastorals are derivative and based upon inadequate methodology that predisposes particular letters to inauthenticity before ever being subjected to analysis. The

⁸ E.R. Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003), pp. 148-55.

⁹ A.Q. Morton and J. McLeman, *Paul, the Man and the Myth: A Study in the Authorship of Greek Prose* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 41-97.

¹⁰ J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (GNS 41; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995), p. 16.

thirteen canonical letters that have been transmitted in Paul's name must be studied as a collection in order to make judgments about which letters group together and why. Kenny's analysis has shown that stylistic features at least favor viewing twelve of the thirteen letters transmitted in Paul's name as being by the same author. More importantly, however, is the explanatory power of register variation and Paul's use of secretaries to account for variances among the thirteen canonical letters. The support for these explanations over against an appeal to multiple authors is not only found in their simplicity, but also in the fact that they are more well founded in the observable data than *ad hoc* recourse to an additional author(s). We know that there was variation among the registers in which the letters were composed and we know that the author of at least five of the thirteen canonical Pauline letters claims to have used a secretary (Gal 6:11; 1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; Philm 19; 2 Thess 3:17).¹¹ As argued above, these considerations are more than sufficient to support the level of variation that we find among the (canonical) Pauline corpus and have the virtue of not requiring an explanation that is external to the available data. The entire canonical Pauline corpus, therefore, is used in this study as a legitimate source for acquiring information connected with the historical Paul.

The letters of Paul provide information regarding his education in three important ways. First, there is some (though not much) information in Paul's letters regarding his upbringing. The relevant passages are Phil 3:4-6, Gal 1:13-14 and 2 Cor 11:22. Second, Paul's letters provide a window into his linguistic, literary and rhetorical abilities, which are all important factors that weigh into the level of Hellenistic education that he may have received. Third, his letters provide a source for ascertaining his knowledge of Greek literature, which was also a critical component of Hellenistic education.

¹¹ On indications that a secretary may have been employed in other letters as well, see Richards, *Secretary*, pp. 189-94.

b. *Luke as a Source for the Historical Paul*

Many critical scholars writing today follow the Tübingen school in their suggestions of a late date for the book of Acts (120-130 AD), which places the author at a pretty good distance from the figures he writes about. Hemer, however, has offered a cogent defense of the traditional early date. His is probably the best analysis of the evidence, but only a summary of his seventeen arguments can be provided here.¹² First, Acts fails to mention the fall of Jerusalem (70 AD). Second, there is no mention of the Jewish War (66 AD) or evidence of the resultant tensions in Roman and Jewish social relations. Third, Acts does not seem to show any awareness of the deterioration between Christianity and Rome under the Neronian persecution in the late 60s. Fourth, the author does not seem to have any awareness of Paul's letters. These would have been an important source for his historical account had they been available. Fifth, the author does not mention the death of James at the hands of the Sanhedrin in 62 AD, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 20.9.1.200). Sixth, Gallio's judgment in Acts 18:14-17 may be understood as an attempt to legitimize Christian teaching through promoting tolerance to Judaism. Seventh, the prominence and authority of the Sadducees in Acts belongs to the pre-70 AD era, before the collapse of their political cooperation with Rome. Eighth, the author of Acts seems to have a more positive attitude toward the Pharisees than what would be expected after the council of Jamnia (90 AD) that resulted in a conflict between Christianity and the Pharisees. Ninth, the language of the book of Acts seems to suggest that Peter, John and Paul were still alive and that Peter was planning to come to Rome.¹³ Tenth, the presence of God-fearers in the synagogues in Acts appears to suggest a pre-Jewish War situation. Eleventh, although some details of culture are difficult to

¹² C.J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (ed. C.H. Gempf; WUNT 49; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), pp. 376-89.

¹³ Filson has argued this position convincingly in F.V. Filson, "The Journey Motif in Luke-Acts," in W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin (eds.), *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), pp. 68-77, here pp. 76-77.

situate with precision, a number of factors suggest the cultural milieu of the Julio-Claudian Roman era. Twelfth, points of controversy in Acts seem to presuppose the second temple period.¹⁴ Thirteenth, Adolf Harnack has argued convincingly that the prophecy attributed to Paul in Acts 20:25 (cf. 20:38) may have been disconfirmed through later events.¹⁵ This would suggest that the prophecy was written down prior to the events. Fourteenth, primitive Christian terminology used in the book seems early. Hemer relies upon Harnack again, who demonstrates the use of primitive Christological designations.¹⁶ Fifteenth, Hemer points to the work of Rackham, who emphasizes the optimistic tone of Acts, which would be unlikely given a date after either the destruction of the temple or the Jewish war.¹⁷ Sixteenth, the open-ended nature of the end of the book of Acts appears to suggest that the author had recorded up until his own present time, with the events leaving off at Paul's trial and the author himself waiting to see what would happen. Seventeenth, there is the "immediacy" of Acts 27-28. Hemer states, "The vivid 'immediacy' of this passage in particular may be strongly contrasted with the 'indirectness' of the earlier part of Acts, where we assume that Luke relied on sources or the reminiscences of others, and could not control the context of his narrative."¹⁸

These arguments seem to situate the author of Luke-Acts as a contemporary of Paul who would have probably been in a good position to ascertain historical details about the apostle from his sources. Although the traditional view that the 'we' passages indicate that Luke was a traveling companion of Paul (which would place him in a great position to communicate reliable information about Paul), it is more likely that these passages are the result of the use of a 'we'

¹⁴ For example, Hemer notes: "The whole Stephen episode, and the violent reaction to him, and the trouble over Paul's supposed introduction of a Gentile into the Temple precinct are cases in point." Hemer, *Acts*, p. 381.

¹⁵ A. Harnack, *The Date of Acts and the Synoptic Gospels* (trans. J.R. Wilkinson; New York: Putnam, 1911), p. 103.

¹⁶ Harnack, *Date*, 107-10.

¹⁷ R.B. Rackham, "The Acts of the Apostles II. A Plea for an Early Date," *JTS* 1 (1900), pp. 76-87, here pp. 80-81.

¹⁸ Hemer, *Acts*, p. 389.

source, an independent document that was utilized in Luke's reconstruction of Paul's life, especially his travels.¹⁹ Porter has recently defended this view, showing that the "we" source may have been the result of a first-hand witness and suggests that it was, at least in view of the author, a source that was thought to be a reliable account of Paul. Porter concludes that, "it cannot be substantiated on the basis of what is found in Acts whether the writer of the 'we' source was himself an eyewitness or first-hand witness to the events narrated, although on the basis of the use of the first-person narrative convention in other writers it is plausible, and in fact likely, to think that such was the case."²⁰ And, "The apparently unmotivated utilization of the source at various places, as well as the freedom allowed the source in discussing travel when Paul was not present (e.g. Acts 20:13-14), perhaps pushes the balance toward, at the least, a source that the author of Luke-Acts considered reliable, providing a suitable framework for much of the detail of these several episodes, especially as they relate to Paul."²¹ Most of Luke's other sources were probably oral or based upon Luke's notes as he conducted his investigations.²²

Since the publication of Jewett's chronology of Paul, it has become common to emphasize the priority of data from Paul's letters over material concerning Paul from Acts and to dismiss material that does not accord with the Pauline tradition conveyed in Paul's letters.²³ There are two reasons for rejecting this disjunction, however. First, the author of Luke-Acts'

¹⁹ There a number of views on the function of the 'we' passages in Acts and my presentation here assumes the source critical view, most recently argued for by Porter, that 'the "we" passages were a previously written source used by the author of Acts, probably not originating with him.' S.E. Porter, *Paul in Acts: Essays in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, and Theology* (WUNT 115; Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), p. 11.

²⁰ Porter, *Paul*, p. 40.

²¹ Porter, *Paul*, p. 41.

²² Various quests for other written sources such as an Harnack's 'Antiochene source' (to mention the most influential), which is disconfirmed by Luke's scarce reference to events surrounding Antioch, seem to be a dead end. See A. Harnack, *The Acts of the Apostles* (trans. J. R. Wilkinson; London: Williams & Norgate, 1909), pp. 162-202.

²³ R. Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

intentions seem to be historical (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1) (however that is defined)²⁴ whereas Paul's purposes in his letters are often Polemic. Therefore, besides perhaps the Galatians sequence (1:11-2:14) and maybe the hardships catalogue (2 Cor 6:4-10; 11:21-33; 12:1-10), we find little direct evidence or help in the Pauline letters that contribute to a chronology and what we do find is not usually in the interest of cataloguing historical details as much as it is used in support of some larger point or agenda. I treat this point in more detail in Chapter 2 as I discuss individual passages from Paul's letters pertaining to his pre-Christian life. Second, although the question of genre does not solve the issue of historicity as some have supposed,²⁵ when details of history can be confirmed in extra-biblical sources Luke-Acts' record usually tends to be reliable, which Sherwin-White has gone to great lengths to show.²⁶ Additionally, there are only two significant areas of conflict (Acts 18:11-12 and 2 Cor 11:32-33; Acts 15 and Gal 2) and neither of these tensions have bearing upon what this thesis is attempting to show. Therefore, I see no reason to exclude material or minimize evidence from Acts for Paul's life. Undoubtedly, this data is organized in a way that reflects Luke's agenda in writing, but such is the task of history. Similarly, Paul conveys events in his letters in accord with his purposes in writing churches and individuals. Fortunately, however, the relevant material concerning Paul's upbringing and education in Acts (22:3) and material used to assess his exposure to Greek authors (17:28; 21:39; 26:14) is not in conflict with data that can be gained from Paul's letters, besides perhaps the

²⁴ For a detailed review of recent research on the genre of Acts see T.E. Phillips, "The Genre of Acts: Moving Toward a Consensus?," *CBR* 4 (2006), pp. 367-96. Phillips concludes his survey by noting (p. 385) that "In the eyes of most recent scholars, [Acts] is history—but not the kind of history that precludes fiction." In other words, while a consensus seems to be emerging among scholars that Acts is some form of history, it is now generally agreed that an understanding of the genre of Acts does not aid in the question of its historicity—although the picture is probably somewhat less monolithic than Phillips suggests.

²⁵ E.g. B. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 88.

²⁶ A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963).

Lukan emphasis upon Paul's Roman citizenship that is lacking Paul's letters. This issue is addressed in more detail in Chapter 2 in the discussion of Paul's background in his letters.

2. Methodology and Structure

Two forms of evidence emerge from these sources that are relevant to the question of Paul's Hellenistic education: historical and literary. Part One of this thesis attempts to engage the historical dimension by exploring evidence that contributes to the reconstruction of the socio-historical situation for Paul's upbringing and exposure to education in the Greco-Roman world. Chapter 1 provides an account of the various forms of Hellenistic education available in the first century and argues that a two-phase approach better accounts for social variation than the traditional three-tiered system. Chapter 2 begins an attempt to set Paul in historical relation to this system of education by exploring the role of Acts 22:3 in the discussion of Paul's upbringing and education. Here I argue that the syntax and lexis of the passage are not as restrictive as many have assumed. The less stringent reading that I propose allows for Paul to spend at least part of his formative adolescent years in Tarsus. This prepares the discussions in Chapters 3 and 4, which seek to address the educational milieu of first-century Tarsus (Chapter 3) and Jerusalem (Chapter 4) and what educational opportunities Paul might have taken advantage of within the respective cities. The literary evidence for Paul's Hellenistic education is taken up in Part Two. The logic of these chapters broadly follows the natural progression through the Hellenistic educational system (although a few elements that would have come later are best addressed in the context of the earlier chapters of Part Two, e.g. Paul's exposure to the *progymnasmata* would have come later in education, but is addressed Chapter 5). Chapter 5 begins the literary analysis by examining Paul's use of language and questions of literacy. Chapter 6 considers his use of the Hellenistic letter form and the implications that this might have for his education. Paul's

exposure to and use of Greek literature is examined in Chapter 7. And the possibility of advanced education based upon Pauline epistolary literature is treated in Chapter 8.

The methodological relation of the two major parts of this thesis can be understood in terms of a 'hypothesis-verification' historical method.²⁷ Historical data is gathered and explained by the formation of a hypothesis regarding Paul's relationship to Hellenistic education in Part One. Part Two then seeks verification for the hypothesis through a literary analysis of Pauline literature.

²⁷ On this model, see N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God vol. 1; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992), pp. 98-109.

Part One: Historical Analysis (Hypothesis)

Analysis of the historical data offers an important (though often neglected) preliminary step and should help guide our expectations in the evaluation of the text. After examining the available historical evidence, this part of thesis puts forward a hypothesis concerning Paul's relationship to the Hellenistic education of the first century that can be verified in Part Two through literary analysis.

Chapter 1

Hellenistic Education: Traditional and Contemporary Models

Recent interests and advances in classical scholarship on Hellenistic education make this an opportune time for a study of Paul in relation to this element of classical society. These advances include a shift away from the traditional three-phase approach to education, a better grasp of the fluidity of the curriculum and stages of education that were in place and the emphasis on the importance of papyrological evidence from Greco-Roman Egypt in assessing educational conditions throughout the Mediterranean world.

1. *The Traditional One-Track Model*

Traditionally the educational system has been understood as a unified one-track system in which all social classes move through the same three stages, each involving a separate school or teacher: primary education, secondary education and tertiary education.¹ In primary schools the student learned reading and writing² from a *grammatistes* (γραμματιστής), a teacher of elementary letters.³ Once a student could read and write efficiently they were qualified to move on to a secondary school, taught by a *grammaticus* (γραμματικός). The *grammaticus* was responsible for teaching Greek literature, particularly Homer, Euripides and other poets. Only a

¹ This is the framework used, for example, in the standard work on the subject, H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (trans. George Lamb; London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), pp. 132-216. See also A. Gwynn, *Roman Education: From Cicero to Quintilian* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1926), pp. 153-59; S.F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 34-75; D.L. Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (Morningside Heights, NY: Columbia University Press, 1957), p. 60.

² This level of schooling has been investigated extensively. See esp. R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (ASP 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), esp. pp. 130-46.

³ On the use of this term, see R.A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 447-52. Kaster notes that γραμματιστής can also be used in the same way as γραμματικός, a “teacher of liberal letters” or “teacher of literature.”

privileged few made it to the final stage, which involved instruction from a *rhetor* or *sophistes* (ῥήτωρ, σοφιστής) and focused on oral composition and public speaking. Some have assumed on the basis of this taxonomy that a fixed curriculum was in place and that there was a uniformity in the materials used⁴ but this is hardly the case.⁵ Morgan has suggested that the now out-dated “curriculum” model be replaced by the “core and periphery model” according to which every child learned the Greek alphabet, an assortment of gnomic sayings and selected passages from Homer.⁶ Beyond this, teaching materials were very fluid and what was taught was primarily at the discretion of the teacher. It would also be a mistaken impression to suppose as some have done that Greco-Roman education was systematic in nature;⁷ although this was true for some regions, typically each phase was independent and many who received elementary education had no intention in moving on to more advanced schooling.⁸ The rigid understanding of the three phases, still followed by many scholars,⁹ should also be rejected. Issues of social status should be considered first. Slaves, women and the poor of society were often exposed to basic literacy training, but grammatical and advanced education was restricted to elite social classes.

2. *A Two-Track Model of Hellenistic Education: Booth and Kaster*

Kaster’s socially segmented two-track proposal is helpful in articulating a nuanced position that takes into consideration issues of social status as well as the testimony of literary

⁴ E.g. D.F. Watson, “Education: Greco-Roman and Jewish,” in C.A. Evans and S.E. Porter (eds.), *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000), pp. 308-13. For the suggestion of a fixed curriculum on basis of literary sources, see Bonner, *Education*, pp. 165-88; Marrou, *History*, pp. 142-205. These suggestions are probably best accounted for according to provincial trends in education.

⁵ For an assemblage of papyrological evidence, see T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (CCS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 67-73.

⁶ Morgan, *Literate Education*, p. 72.

⁷ Marrou, *History*, p. 194.

⁸ See A. D. Booth, “Elementary and Secondary Education in the Roman Empire,” *Florilegium* 1 (1979), pp. 1-14; A.D. Booth, “The Schooling of Slaves in First-century Rome,” *TAPA* 109 (1979), pp. 11-19.

⁹ Hock, for example, although noting recent advances in classics has chosen to continue with the traditional model. R.F. Hock, “The Educational Curriculum in Chariton’s *Callihore*,” in J.A. Brant, C.W. Hedrick and C. Shea (eds.), *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative* (SBLSymS 32; Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 15-36.

sources.¹⁰ Following Booth,¹¹ he distinguishes between a track that involved lower literacy training reserved for children of lower class families and slaves and another track, “liberal school” (*scholae liberales*), which was available to “the more privileged part of the population” and (when necessary) involved training in basic literacy and what has traditionally been labeled the grammatical school. Tertiary or higher education, the second phase, was reserved for the elite and was only available to those who had initiated their education in the liberal school. Kaster begins by noting sources that make a distinction between “primary” and “secondary” schools.¹² He insists that mention of these two levels does not imply sequentially or separate schools/teachers associated with each level.¹³ He then demonstrates that early literary sources suggest “that the boundaries between ‘primary’ teacher and the *grammaticus* were blurred and that the teachers’ function overlapped, or which presents the grammarian as the student’s first teacher...”¹⁴ He then demonstrates that early literary sources suggest “that the boundaries between ‘primary’ teacher and the *grammaticus* were blurred and that the teachers’ function overlapped, or which presents the grammarian as the student’s first teacher...”¹⁵ According to Kaster, the lower classes had access to basic literacy training while these phases were typically combined for the elite and subelite, and the elite had the opportunity to pursue advanced rhetorical (and to a much more limited degree philosophical) education as well. All social classes did not move through the same three-tiered system. Yet Kaster rightly insists that Booth’s original framing of the two-track educational system was too rigid. It is not the “typical” or “generalized” form of education throughout the Greco-Roman world since these observations do

¹⁰ R.A. Kaster, “Notes on ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ Schools in Late Antiquity,” *TAPA* 113 (1983), pp. 323-46; see also P.J.J. Botha, “Greco-Roman Literacy as Setting for New Testament Writings,” *Neot* 26 (1992), pp. 195-215.

¹¹ Booth, “Elementary and Secondary Education,” pp. 1-14.

¹² Kaster, “Notes,” pp. 225-28.

¹³ Kaster, “Notes,” pp. 328-29.

¹⁴ Kaster, “Notes,” pp. 328-29.

¹⁵ Kaster, “Notes,” pp. 328-29.

not seem to be applicable across geographical boundaries given that the evidence we have for a socially segmented view of Hellenistic education is associated with major metropolitan centers.¹⁶ As I show below, recent investigation of schooltext papyri indicate that advanced education was restricted to these centers so that not only social factors, but also geographical considerations, have an impact upon how Hellenistic education was manifested in various parts of the Greco-Roman world. There is no one “Greco-Roman educational system.”

3. *The Geographical Distribution of Schooltext Papyri*

The largest body of evidence for Hellenistic schools¹⁷ comes from Greco-Roman Egypt. At one point, scholars were hesitant to view Egypt as representative of the conditions of Greco-Roman society as a whole and were therefore skeptical of exploiting its abundant documentation to describe the situation in the rest of the Mediterranean world. Recent research, however, has demonstrated that far from being a unique social and political entity, Roman Egypt was actually quite typical of the Hellenistic world.¹⁸ Further, a large collection of papyrological evidence assembled from the Near East illustrates that Greco-Roman Egyptian writing practices were not isolated.¹⁹ The findings in Egypt that are relevant to education also align nicely with the tradition communicated by (mainly) literary sources. As Cribiore observes:

¹⁶ Kaster, “Notes,” p. 341.

¹⁷ On the structure of Hellenistic schools, see L. Alexander, “Paul and the Hellenistic Schools: The Evidence from Galen,” in T. Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul in his Hellenistic Context* (SNTW; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 60-83.

¹⁸ See R. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 6-8; N. Lewis, “The Romanity of Roman Egypt: A Growing Consensus,” *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Naples: Napoli, 1984), pp. 1077-84; D.W. Rathbone, “The Ancient Economy and Graeco-Roman Egypt,” in L. Crisculolo and G. Geraci (eds.), *Egitto e storia antica: Dall’ellenismo all’eta araba* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1989), pp. 159-76; R.S. Bagnall, *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 11-13.

¹⁹ H.M. Cotton, W.E.H. Cockle and F.G.B. Millar, “Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey,” *JRS* 85 (1995), pp. 214-35; A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *The Vindolanda Writing Tablets* (London: British Museum, 2003); cf. Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, p. 6.

For what concerns Greek educational practices, Egypt was in close touch with the rest of the Mediterranean. The evidence of the papyri remarkably agrees with the information transmitted by writers such as Plutarch, a Greek biographer and philosopher of the first to second century C.E. who lived in Greece, Libanius, a Greek rhetor who practiced in Syria in the fourth century C.E., and Quintilian, a Roman rhetor who had a famous school in Rome in the first century C.E. The contributions of these and other writers to our understanding of ancient education are fundamental because they describe a taxonomy of learning that was alive in their time and of which they themselves were successful products. And yet, not only do their accounts focus primarily on the most prominent aspects of education and overlook the details, but they reflect a highly idealized view that was less concerned with reality than with improving current standards. In order to come closer to authentic educational practices and methods, it is essential to correlate the information transmitted by the literary sources and the anecdotal tradition with the wealth of educational material from Greco-Roman Egypt.²⁰

When one examines the literary sources in conjunction with the schooltext papyri, it becomes clear that literacy was actually quite widespread throughout all social classes and most geographic regions in the Hellenistic world. Harris provides a helpful survey showing that the general consensus among classicists assumes a very high level of Greek literacy regarding Athens, Greece and the Roman empire more generally.²¹ According to Harris, the percentage of males who had some level of literacy in the Roman empire ranged from 20-30% while the percentage of literate women was lower than 10% resulting in about a 15% literacy rating overall.²² A weakness of these figures, however, is found in Harris's failure to include Palestine within his investigation since, as Hezser has shown, literacy was much higher in Palestine due to Torah study among Jews.²³ Grammatical and rhetorical levels of education were not as common, however, due to the socioeconomic and vocational constraints associated with more advanced levels of schooling.

²⁰ Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, pp. 6-7. Apart from the many more general works that have yielded to this growing consensus, the three most recent works on Greco-Roman education (Cribiore, *Teachers; Gymnastics*; and Morgan, *Literate Education*) argue for the legitimacy of this framework in evaluating the level of Greco-Roman education in Hellenistic cities and it is assumed here as well. Hengel employs this method when evaluating the existence of elementary schools in Palestine. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1974), pp. 65-66.

²¹ Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, pp. 8-9.

²² Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, pp. 266-67.

²³ C. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). For comparisons of Palestinian literacy with levels of literacy in the rest of the Greco-Roman world see pp. 496-501.

Elementary schooltext papyri²⁴ are found throughout Egypt, both in Greek cultural centers and in smaller, less significant towns—although apart from Fayum, very few villages are represented.²⁵ This is probably indicative of the level of penetration of Greek literacy in Egypt, and, therefore, much of the Greco-Roman world. The provincial distribution of grammatical and rhetorical exercises is not as evenly represented indicating that “the number of places where rhetoric [and to a lesser degree grammar] was taught, was restricted.”²⁶ Morgan catalogues the geographical distribution of particular schooltext types from known regions²⁷ and concludes based on this evidence that “it is possible to build up a picture of teaching of the elements of literacy and reading of literature. The next stages of education—grammar and rhetoric—went on in far fewer places.”²⁸ Both on the basis of the isolation of rhetorical and grammatical schooltexts to Greek cultural centers and the scarcity of them even there, she insists that “from the beginning the teaching of basic literacy appears to have been far more widespread than more advanced elements of *enkyklios paideia*, which were practiced in relatively few cultural centres.”²⁹ As Criboire explains, “As a rule, only one grammarian could be found in these centers

²⁴ These include letters/alphabets, syllabaries, word lists, gnomic texts, authors/scholia. For a catalogue of these exercises and the papyri on which they are found (though the above list is adapted from Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 288-89) see Criboire, *Writing*, pp. 173-287. Criboire’s list assembles 412 papyri classified according to letters of the alphabet; alphabets; syllabaries; lists of words; writing exercises; short passages; long passages; scholia minora; compositions, paragraphs and summaries; grammars; notebooks. Criboire, *Writing*, p. 174.

²⁵ See Morgan, *Literate Education*, p. 56.

²⁶ Morgan, *Literate Education*, p. 57; cf. also C. Poster, “The Economy of Letter Writing in Graeco-Roman Antiquity,” in A. Eriksson, T.H. Olbricht, and W. Übelacker (eds.), *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (ESEC; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press, 2002), pp. 112-24.

²⁷ She notes that: “Letters and alphabets are widely scattered, being found, between them, in almost all the towns and villages where schooltexts are found at all. Syllabaries are rather less widely distributed (only in large towns, cities or the Arsinoite nome, and nowhere south of Hermopolis), but wordlists come from all over the country. So does literature of all kinds, which is more widely distributed than anything else, as well as occurring in the largest numbers [probably because more time was devoted to this in the education process]. Scholia come only from the Arsinoite nome, Oxyrhynchus and Panopolis, and rhetorical exercises come only from the Arsinoite, Oxyrhynchus, Hermopolis and Thebes. The distribution of grammatical schooltexts is similar to that of rhetorical exercises, coming from the Arsinoite, Oxyrhynchus, Hermopolis and Antinoopolis.” Morgan, *Literate Education*, p. 56.

²⁸ Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 56-57; cf. Marrou, *History*, p. 144.

²⁹ Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 62-63.

at a time.... Teachers of rhetoric are even more confined to large centers: small towns could not supply a steady stream of pupils and could not fund a chair."³⁰

This paradigm is suggestive of the conditions we might expect in the rest of the Mediterranean world, depending on the degree of Hellenization. Elementary levels of literacy were geographically widespread while rhetorical and grammatical training was only practiced in a few major centers of Greek culture. These would include cities (in addition to the Egyptian provinces mentioned above) like Athens, Rhodes,³¹ Antioch, Rome, Pergamon and Tarsus.³² But even on the most radical portrayal of Hellenization in Judaea during the first-century, Jerusalem was still far from becoming one of the major centers for Greek culture in the Greco-Roman world.³³ This makes the possibility of Paul attaining a rhetorical education there unlikely.

Vocational and trade interests in a particular city should also be weighed.³⁴ Rhetorical schools were designed mainly for training politicians and those involved at some level in Greek government, according to various literary sources. Quintilian,³⁵ for example, intends for his pupil to go on to a career in which he "can govern communities by his counsels, settle them by means of laws, and improve them by judicial enactments..." (Quintilian, *Inst. Pr.* 10).³⁶ Although legal affairs may occupy his pupils secondarily, Quintilian insists that their talents are to be used primarily "when the counsels of the senate are to be directed and the people are to be guided

³⁰ Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, pp. 40-41.

³¹ For a treatment of rhetoric at Rhodes in contrast to the classical rhetoric found in Athens see R.L. Enos, "The Art of Rhetoric at Rhodes: An Eastern Rival to the Athenian Representation of Classical Rhetoric," in C. Lipson and R.A. Binkley (eds.), *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2004), pp. 183-96.

³² For a treatment of the major centers of Greek education, see L.Y. Daly, "Roman Study Abroad," *AJP* 71 (1950), pp. 40-58; cf. also H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 1: *History, Culture and Religion of the Hellenistic Age* (2nd ed.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), p. 97.

³³ Cf. M. Hengel, *The "Hellenization" of Judaea in the First-century after Christ* (trans. J. Bowden; London: Trinity, 1989), pp. 3-4.

³⁴ On the economic conditions and industries of Hellenistic Jerusalem, see J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (3rd ed.; trans. F.H. and C.H. Cave; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), pp. 3-85.

³⁵ Quintilian is dependent on Cicero at this point. Cf. Gwyn, *Roman Education*, pp. 186-87.

³⁶ Cf. Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, p. 57.

from error into rectitude.” (Quintilian, *Inst.* 12.1.26).³⁷ As Morgan notes, “The vocation of Quintilian’s orator is above all to rule, and his rule is described in absolutist terms. This is no negotiation among equals, no wooing of the crowd.”³⁸ Poster echoes these remarks when she speaks of Greco-Roman rhetorical schooling more broadly: “Rhetorical education served as preparation for elite administrative and chancery positions (the office of *ab epistulis*, especially), but was not particularly relevant at lower levels of employment.”³⁹ So it is not surprising that rhetorical schools only seemed to emerge in major cultural capitals with larger governments where political employment was most available and where promotion within administrative ranks was most likely. These cities also provided a much larger pool of elite social classes which meant employment for the rhetor. Members of a smaller city who wanted to be involved in politics, therefore, would have to travel to one of the larger educational centers in order to receive their training.⁴⁰ This point can be illustrated by the fact that both of Herod’s sons, Archelaus and Antipas, as well as Phillip, were sent out of Judea to pursue their political and rhetorical education in Rome under Pollio (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.342-43; 16.6).

4. Conclusions

Significant advances in classics have been made in the last twenty years concerning our understanding of Hellenistic education, making a study of Paul and Hellenistic education both timely and relevant. It is now realized that the educational system was far more flexible, geographically diverse, and socially nuanced than was once believed. The remainder of this thesis seeks to set Paul in proper relation to this element of his social context.

³⁷ I owe these two references from Quintilian to Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 231-32.

³⁸ Morgan, *Literate Education*, p. 231.

³⁹ Poster, “Economy,” p. 121.

⁴⁰ See Daly, “Roman Study Abroad,” pp. 40-58. Even those who lived in centers would travel abroad (see Strabo, *Geog.* 14.5.15).

CHAPTER 2

The City of Paul's Youth: Acts 22:3 and Related Material in Acts and Pauline Letters

The first chapter of this thesis sought to provide an account of the various forms of Hellenistic education available in the first century. The present chapter initiates the major project of this thesis, which is to establish Paul's relationship to this system of education. As a preliminary step in this investigation, it is important to locate the city of Paul's youth since, as I argued in Chapter 1, opportunities for Hellenistic education varied according to geographical region. The Hellenistic educational milieu of first-century Tarsus (see Chapter 3) was much different from that of first-century Jerusalem (see Chapter 4). It is also important, therefore, to consider how long Paul might have been in Tarsus before leaving for Jerusalem in order to assess how much or what phases of the educational system Paul would have been exposed to in the respective cities. The weight of the discussion of Paul's youth has traditionally fallen upon Acts 22:3. This passage is treated in considerable detail in this chapter, followed by a brief analysis of related material throughout the rest of Acts and three relevant passages from Paul's letters.

1. *Acts 22:3*

The most direct New Testament evidence on the question of Paul's youth is Acts 22:3: Ἐγώ εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας, ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ πατρῷου νόμου, ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον. While many scholars are reluctant to connect material on Paul in Acts with the historical Paul (see Introduction), Harrison has convincingly argued that at least the information conveyed by Acts 22:3 provides a reliable

window into the (historical) pre-Christian Paul.¹ Prior to van Unnik's seminal work,² commentators and interpreters almost univocally preferred Tarsus as the city where Paul spent his formative adolescent years. Van Unnik sums up the state of the question at the time when he wrote:

There is indeed no other point that one can mention about which, among scholars of divergent confessions and schools, such unanimity prevails as the one now before us. With few exceptions, all commentators and biographers, writers of articles in encyclopedias and of monographs, prefer Tarsus.³

Almost all contemporary scholars follow van Unnik's reading of the passage, which requires Paul to have received the entirety of his education in Jerusalem.⁴ Van Unnik contends that the three participles in Acts 22:3 constitute a tripartite biographical formula (γεννημένος, ἀνατεθραμμένος, πεπαιδευμένος) that was common in Greek literature, expressing a person's birth, rearing within the home and formal education. His thesis depends upon the assertion that (ἀνα)τροφή is "that portion of a child's development which takes place in the sphere of the home, and which ought to instill into him a knowledge of the elementary laws of conduct in life and attitude to it."⁵ The meaning of ἀνατεθραμμένος and the syntax of this passage, however, turn out to be far less restrictive than many have assumed. There are two issues: (1) the function of δὲ

¹ He also suggests that this reliability is representative of the reliability of Acts as a whole. E.H. Harrison, "Acts 22:3—A Test Case for Luke's Reliability," in R.N. Longenecker and M.C. Tenney (eds.), *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1974), pp. 251-60.

² W.C. van Unnik, *Tarsus or Jerusalem: The City of Paul's Youth* (trans. G. Ogg; London: Epworth, 1962).

³ Van Unnik, *Tarsus*, p. 5.

⁴ Van Unnik, *Tarsus*. Commentators and interpreters who have followed van Unnik include for example, W.F. Albright, "Paul's Education," in J. Munk, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 309-12; E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), pp. 624-25; Harrison, "Acts 22:3," pp. 251-60; I.H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (TNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 353-54; H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), p. 186; F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* (rev.; NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 415; B. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 668-69; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1998), pp. 704-05; C.K. Barrett, *Acts* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 1034-36; Richards, *Secretary*, pp. 144-48. Johnson takes van Unnik's view, but does not cite him: L.T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 387-88.

⁵ Van Unnik, *Tarsus*, p. 67.

with the demonstrative phrase and (2) the relationship of *παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ* to its surrounding context.

Harrison, a recent supporter of van Unnik's proposal, claims that if Luke's intention was to convey Tarsus as the city of his youth he should have just said "and was brought up there" in order to eliminate ambiguity.⁶ Δέ, however, can have a simple coordinating function (similar to but distinct from *καί*) and the near demonstrative may easily serve the purpose of resuming the spatial referent (Tarsus) without the implementation of a spatial marker (e.g. *ἐκεῖ*). The demonstrative is in fact much more linguistically suited (and common) for these purposes. For example, in Acts 16:12 we have a very similar construction to what is found in Acts 22:3: *κάκειθεν εἰς Φιλίππους, ἥτις ἐστὶν πρώτης μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, κολωνία. ἡμεν δὲ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει διατρίβοντες ἡμέρας τινάς.* Almost exactly the same demonstrative phrase that is employed in Acts 22:3 is used here with *δὲ* functioning to mark not a new city, but a new set of circumstances in the city (*διατρίβοντες*) that had already been mentioned (*Φιλίππους*). The conjunction here is taken universally by translators to denote the idea of continuation instead of contrast—it is translated as "and" or it is left untranslated (NRSV, NIV, NET, NASB, KJV, ESV, ISV, HCSB)—and the near demonstrative is used unambiguously to refer back to *Φιλίππους*. This example also disconfirms Harrison's claim that Paul would have used the far demonstrative instead of the near demonstrative if he had meant Tarsus.⁷ Further, Harrison provides no grammatical or syntactic reason why his view should be the case. Although the narrative frame indicates that the speech took place in Jerusalem (Acts 21: 15, 17, 31) Paul had not made mention of the city so there is no need to disambiguate between Tarsus and Jerusalem

⁶ Harrison, "Acts 22:3," p. 252.

⁷ Harrison, "Acts 22:3," p. 252.

within the speech itself. The use of the near demonstrative in reference to Tarsus, therefore, seems far from “utterly illogical” as Harrison insists.⁸

The question of which city the demonstrative refers to depends largely upon the function of δέ which, surprisingly, all three of the most recent treatments of the issue by Turner, Harrison, and Du Toit pay little attention to—they typically just state that an adversative or continuative use should be preferred.⁹ Because conjunctions have minimal semantic content (they are procedural or relational words) difficulties arise for honing in on a single essential meaning that allows for diverse contextual variations. Nevertheless, recent research on the meaning of δέ in Hellenistic Greek narrative contexts has gone some way in clarifying these relations. Stephanie Black’s recent work argues that when δέ is used it indicates low- to mid-level continuity, that is “that the presence of δέ introducing a sentence cues the audience that some change is to be incorporated into their mental representation of the discourse.”¹⁰ Her proposal is then demonstrated through a thorough analysis of Matthew’s gospel. Levinsohn’s proposal is very similar. He suggests that δέ always introduces something distinct and that it “must also represent a new step in the author’s story or argument.”¹¹ In Acts, for δέ to be employed, there has to be a change in spatio-temporal setting or circumstances, a change in the underlying subject or a change to or from background material.¹²

The exegetical implication of this discussion of δέ for Acts 22:3 is that we must not assume (necessarily) that “but” (or some other term) is the correct translational equivalent but

⁸ Harrison, “Acts 22:3,” p. 252.

⁹ N. Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1965), pp. 83-84; Harrison, “Acts 22:3,” p. 252; A.B. Du Toit, “A Tale of Two Cities: “Tarsus or Jerusalem” Revisited,” *NTS* 46 (2000), pp. 375-402.

¹⁰ Black, *Sentence Conjunctions in the Gospel of Mathew: καί, δέ, τότε, γάρ, οὐν and Asyndeton in Narrative Discourse* (JSNTSup 216; SNTG 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), p. 144.

¹¹ S.H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of New Testament Greek* (2nd ed.; Dallas: SIL, 2000), p. 72.

¹² S.H. Levinsohn, *Textual Connections in Acts* (SBLMS 31; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), p. 96; Levinsohn, *Discourse Features*, p. 72.

only that something distinct or discontinuous is being introduced—the English term “but” seems to carry more contrastive weight than this. Acts 16:12 is the most structurally similar Lukan passage to Acts 22:3. The major differences are the placement of the predicator and the article. There is no reason to assume that Luke did not intend to create a similar structure here. In both instances δέ can be accorded its full semantic value in distinguishing a different set of circumstances that transpired in the city that is in view—even if “and” is a more appropriate English translational equivalent. In Acts 16:12 the demonstrative referentially links πόλει back to Φιλίππους. The conjunction (δέ) does not mark a distinct city, but some change in circumstances that happened within the city that is being referenced: they went to Philippi and stayed in this city. Their remaining for some days (διατρίβοντες ἡμέρας τινάς) in Philippi is marked off by δέ as a change from their traveling to Philippi (κάκειθεν εἰς Φιλίππους). There is no reason why Acts 22:3 should not be understood along the same lines. Paul’s birth in Tarsus (γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῷ) is marked by δέ as a change from his upbringing (ἀνατετραμμένος) in this city. There are no syntactic or structural constraints that require that δέ must mark a distinction between Jerusalem and Tarsus, especially since “Jerusalem” only occurs in the narrative frame. Therefore, it seems more likely that Tarsus is the referent of the demonstrative rather than Jerusalem unless some other feature of the context indicates otherwise.

Andrie Du Toit has recently taken issue with a number of van Unnik’s assumptions.¹³ Du Toit seems to grant that by “this city” Luke (Paul) meant Jerusalem. The major contribution of his article to the discussion is its demonstration of the flexibility of τρέφω and related terms. Contrary to van Unnik’s claim that, when used with γεννάω and παιδεύω, (ἀνα)τρέφω denotes the rearing of a child in the home under parental guidance until around the age of six, Du Toit points

¹³ Du Toit, “Tale of Two Cities,” pp. 375-402.

to several instances of two- and three-part biographical formulas from ancient Greek literature spanning a period of 700 years where τροφή and related terms can indicate a period overlapping with παιδεία or replacing it, regardless of surrounding terms.¹⁴ Whether it should be given this sense in Acts 22:3 or whether it should be understood in the way suggested by van Unnik is dependent largely upon the relationship of ἀνατεθραμμένος to παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ. Du Toit presents two options for the structure of the passage: (1) a *chiasmus* which is easily dismissed and (2) an *inclusio* structure, formed by the two copulative verbs, enclosing the biographical formula, and participles at the front of the three intervening clauses. Longenecker has also emphasized the importance of situating the participles at the beginning of each clause.¹⁵ While I am wary of the basis used for identifying the *inclusio* here, the second option presented by Du Toit does seem to accentuate a rhythmic pattern in the language that joining παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ at the front of πεπαιδευμένος would not.¹⁶ Van Unnik's argument for punctuating the passage so that ἀνατεθραμμένος does not modify παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ is entirely built upon a rigid understanding of the use of ἀνατεθραμμένος in the biographical formula. He states, "Greek readers who knew the significance of ἀνατερέφω in such a context, would of course have regarded it as quite foolish to connect "at the feet of Gamaliel" with that word."¹⁷ But if, as Du Toit shows, ἀνατερέφω can have a broader range of meaning within the biographical formula, often overlapping with παιδεία, then the whole question revolves around how the passage should be punctuated. If Paul's being "brought up" transpired "at the feet of Gamaliel," it seems more likely that Paul is referring to Gamaliel's bringing him up through his

¹⁴See Du Toit, "A Tale of Two Cities," pp. 378-83 for references and discussion.

¹⁵R. Longenecker, *Paul: Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 25-26.

¹⁶Du Toit, "A Tale of Two Cities," p. 384.

¹⁷Van Unnik, *Tarsus*, p. 44.

education—assuming that Gamaliel’s school was not an institution for raising up toddlers.¹⁸ A parallel can be drawn here with Plato who was “brought up in philosophy and similar pursuits” (Plato, *Theaet.* 72C) or with Philologus who was “instructed” (τεθραμμένον) by Cicero in the liberal arts and sciences (Plutarch, *Vit. Cic.* 48 885D).¹⁹ If Paul’s being “brought up” is only a reference to the city, however, then it is more likely that the more restricted use of ἀνατερέφω is meant here, indicating that Paul spent his youth in Jerusalem or Tarsus, depending upon how δὲ is taken. In favor of reading πεπαιδευμένος with κατὰ ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ πατρώου νόμου, Du Toit leans upon Nigel Turner’s research which illustrates Luke’s style, borrowed from classical Greek, of heaping up circumstantial participles, which almost always involves the placement of the participle at the front of the clause.²⁰

The major issues here—the function of δὲ with the demonstrative phrase and the relationship of παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ to its surrounding context—actually turn out to be very interrelated. If Du Toit is correct and παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ should be understood with ἀνατεθραμμένος, then there is a significant contextual indicator that Jerusalem is meant by “this city” since this is where Gamaliel would have been (cf. Josephus, *Life* 1:190). But if van Unnik is right and παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ stands in relation to πεπαιδευμένος then there is no significant qualification on the demonstrative phrase that would indicate that Paul was referring to Jerusalem; thus, Tarsus would be signaled as the city in which Paul was brought up. I am

¹⁸ It seems that Haacker has recently argued for something quite similar to this. He states that “*paideuo* is not the usual term for any sort of professional training, and in the following clause the result of the influence of Gamaliel on Paul is not spelled out in terms of wisdom but in terms of religious zeal leading to action. Paul must have been brought up in the house of Gamaliel or in a school under the supervision of Gamaliel.” K. Haacker, “Paul’s Life,” in J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 19-33, here pp. 21-22. That παιδεύω is not used as a technical term for education or to denote professional education is entirely off base. Perhaps he means specifically rabbinical education, but Luke’s implementation of the biographical formula called for the Greek designation for higher education which was παιδεία and related forms, depending upon the context.

¹⁹ For these and other examples see Du Toit, “A Tale of Two Cities,” pp. 379-82.

²⁰ N. Turner, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* vol. 3: *Syntax* (4 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), p. 158 in Du Toit, “A Tale of Two Cities,” p. 384.

inclined to agree with Du Toit, but either way Tarsus is the more likely option as the city of Paul's youth. If Paul was only educated at the feet of Gamaliel then "this city" probably refers back to Tarsus given the unambiguous parallel construction in Acts 16:12 and the fact that Jerusalem has only been referenced in the narrative frame. This would provide a definite indication of Tarsus as the city of Paul's youth. Of course, it is grammatically possible that δὲ not only marks a contrast in the circumstances but also in terms of the city itself, though this seems less likely given the above analysis—intonation would have probably disambiguated this question entirely for the original audience. If Paul was both brought up and educated at the feet of Gamaliel then we do not have an explicit reference to Paul's youth in Tarsus but a definite implication is present. On this reading Paul is born in Tarsus and then receives his higher education under Gamaliel. He is born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up (i.e. trained) in Jerusalem *by* being educated at the feet of Gamaliel. The contrast with Jerusalem present in this understanding seems to imply that Paul remained in Tarsus until he went to study under Gamaliel since ἀνατεθραμμένος is taken to be synonymous with the later years of study (παιδεία), although this meaning cannot be pressed with total certainty. Both of these readings seem more likely than Unnik's stringent understanding of the passage, however, which only allows for Paul to have spent his adolescent years in Jerusalem, and both situate Paul in Tarsus, possibly up to the age of fifteen, when he would have traveled to Jerusalem to begin rabbinical studies.²¹ Of course, the former interpretation is far more explicit than the latter. In any case, according to Acts, Paul was definitely in Jerusalem by the time he began studies with Gamaliel and possibly before then—although this seems less likely. This would put him in a position to take advantage of higher Jewish education as well as rhetorical instruction in Jerusalem if it was present and if

²¹ On the various ages associated with Greek and Jewish education, see Albright, "Paul and Education," pp. 309-11.

he arrived earlier he may have been able to receive whatever levels of literacy and/or liberal schooling were available (see Chapter 4) as well, depending upon his social status in the city.

2. *Acts 26:4 and Related Material in Acts*

Another passage that deserves brief mention is Acts 26:4: τὴν μὲν οὖν βίωσίν μου τὴν ἐκ νεότητος τὴν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γενομένην ἐν τῷ ἔθνει μου ἔν τε Ἱεροσολύμοις Ἰσασσι πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. Paul presents a portrayal of his youth here that is similar in some ways to Acts 22:3, mentioning Jerusalem and leaving the reference to Tarsus more generic (ἐν τῷ ἔθνει μου) in order to emphasize the Jewish dimension of his background. Van Unnik's attempt to reconcile this passage with his stringent reading of Acts 22:3 is unconvincing. He attempts to take the two expressions together: "among my people, yes indeed in Jerusalem."²² Yet this would undoubtedly cause confusion in the minds of Luke's readers who had come to associate Paul's origins with Tarsus, regardless of the amount of time he is reported to have been there.²³ Paul seems to have in mind here the same twofold pattern that he does in Acts 22:3: a Tarsus origin with his rabbinical education in Jerusalem. It is possible that the passage only refers to Paul's being born in Tarsus, but this seems unlikely given the immediate context. Paul claims that the Jews knew his manner of life (βίωσίν) from his youth (νεότητος), beginning with his own people (or nation) and then in Jerusalem. The Jews had knowledge of Paul's life in both places. He must have spent at least enough time in Tarsus as a youth for the Jews to observe enough of his life to offer a fair evaluation; otherwise, the first half of the statement would have little meaning. This picture is further confirmed by Luke's continual association of Paul's origins with Tarsus (Acts 9:11, 30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3). And as Du Toit perceptively notes, Luke typically adds τῷ γένει as a qualification when he intends to denote that a person was only born in a city (Acts 4:36; 18:2,

²² Van Unnik, *Tarsus*, pp. 46-49.

²³ Cf. Du Toit, "A Tale of Two Cities," p. 388.

24).²⁴ Yet in all of his references to Paul's origination in Tarsus, being a Tarsian, or from "no mean city," he never uses this qualification, which may be an indication of a long enough tenure there that it was appropriate to count Tarsus as his home city rather than Jerusalem. Paul's post-conversion account in Acts also has him returning to Tarsus, probably because of connections he had in this city through friends and family (Acts 9:30; 11:25-26).

3. *Paul's Account in His Letters*

Three passages in the Pauline letters comment significantly upon Paul's pre-Christian background. In Phil 3:4-6 Paul emphasizes that he is a Hebrew of Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, zealous for the law and persecuting the church. A similar statement is found in Gal 1:13-14 where Paul points to his former ties with Judaism, his accomplishments in surpassing all of his contemporaries and his zeal to persecute the church. Likewise, in 2 Cor 11:22, Paul stresses that he is a Hebrew, an Israelite and the offspring of Abraham. It is often objected that since Paul does not mention his citizenship in Tarsus or his Diaspora upbringing, but instead focuses upon his Jewish heritage in his letters, that this reflects an upbringing in Jerusalem. There is no question that Paul's Jewish background and career as a Pharisee left a greater impression upon him than did his Hellenistic background, at least in terms of his worldview. From an educational perspective this should come as no surprise since it was one's instructor(s) at the level of higher education that students came to associate themselves with. They did not find their identity in the *grammaticus*: they were known as students of one of the great rhetoricians or philosophers or, in Paul's case, the rabbi Gamaliel. Paul's career in Judaism and his persecution of the church, linked directly with his Jewish background as a Pharisee, was very much a part of his testimony to the power and greatness of Christ. Both in Gal 1 and in Phil

²⁴ Du Toit, "A Tale of Two Cities," p. 391.

3, after explaining his opposition to the Christian faith as a Pharisee, Paul goes on to explain the power of divine grace in rescuing him from a life that was hostile toward the very things that he held so dear (Gal 1:15; Phil 3:7-11).

The polemic context for these passages must also be kept in mind. In all three instances Paul appears to be responding to criticisms of his apostolic ministry and/or to some form of Judaizing heresy. Some of these may have taken the form of a Jewish exclusivism that promoted circumcision among Christians and separation among Jews and Gentiles, as we see in Galatians (e.g. Gal 2:12). Here Paul's claim to Judaism is a significant part of his polemic against his opponents. He was the *Jew par excellence* and, therefore, could speak boldly on the Jewish-Christian relation without being accused of having vested ideological or ethnic interests. Similarly, 2 Cor 11:22 is part of Paul's response to his opponents in Corinth (2 Cor 10-13). Apparently, Paul was being compared with teachers (perhaps James and Peter and/or a group of Jewish exclusivists) who were identified on the basis of their Jewish ethnicity. Paul's response here is conditioned by these critics and he puts forward only the information regarding his past that is rhetorically useful for his present purposes. The same situation is true of Philippians. Paul's statements in Phil 3 are in the context of warning the congregation against various false teachings that had begun to emerge among the churches. One of these ancient heresies was clearly grounded in Jewish exclusivism. Paul cautions his people to steer clear of those who "mutilate the flesh" and insists in 3:4 that "we are the true circumcision who worship God in the Spirit." These comments then provide the polemic backdrop for Paul's biographical statements in 3:4-6. It would be rhetorically irrelevant for Paul to raise the issue of his Hellenistic education or Tarsian upbringing in these contexts. Luke's accounts are, however, more historically oriented so it is not surprising that what we know of Paul's exposure to Hellenism is evident in Luke, but

only indirectly in Paul's letters (i.e. through his use of Greek language, literature and literary structures). This also accounts for why we only have testimony to Paul's Roman citizenship in Luke-Acts. While mentioning Roman citizenship may have served the author of Luke-Acts' historical and rhetorical interests, this information does not seem relevant to the argumentative strategies employed in the biographical sections of the Pauline letters or within his letters more broadly.

4. *Conclusions*

Although many have accepted van Unnik's conclusions regarding Acts 22:3, it seems that the issues are not so clear cut. When all factors related to the exegesis of the passage are considered, the text actually seems to favor locating Paul in Tarsus for at least part of his adolescent years when a child would typically receive their formal education—he probably remained in Tarsus up to the time that he left for Jerusalem to study with Gamaliel. In any case, Acts 22:3 does not *unambiguously* situate Paul in Jerusalem for his youth as van Unnik insisted. Other passages in Acts provide clues to Paul's upbringing in Tarsus as well, and his account in his letters should not be taken to be in tension with these statements due to the unique rhetorical purposes of the epistolary biographical accounts and the polemic contexts in which they occur. Tarsus, therefore, remains an open and likely possibility as the city of Paul's youth and formal education. The evidence considered so far, at least, seems to favor Tarsus.

CHAPTER 3

Paul and Educational Opportunities in Tarsus

A number of issues are involved in attempting to situate the pre-Christian Paul in his social and educational context. In the previous chapter, I made a case that the available historical evidence suggests that Paul spent at least part of his adolescent years in Tarsus and that he probably remained in the city long enough to complete his formal education before traveling to Jerusalem for rabbinic training under Gamaliel. This chapter attempts to further fill out the historical frame of reference through an investigation of the forms of Hellenistic education in first-century Tarsus and the educational opportunities that might have been available and valuable to Paul there, given his family's economic status and occupation.

1. *Tarsus as an Educational Center*

Among ancient literary treatments, Strabo (64/63 BC-21AD), a first-century writer who would have been writing during the time that Paul was born and lived in Tarsus, provides in his *Geographica* the most extensive account of the geography and educational resources of Tarsus.¹ Strabo makes several important observations about Tarsus. He viewed the city as a center for Greco-Roman education: "the people at Tarsus have devoted themselves so eagerly, not only to philosophy, but also to the whole round of education in general, that they have surpassed Athens, Alexandria [the two leading centers other than Tarsus], or any other place that can be named where there have been schools and lectures of philosophers" (Strabo, *Geog.* 14.5.13; trans. LCL). The city was especially strong in Stoic philosophical education. In particular, Strabo mentions that "The stoic philosophers Antipater, Archedemus, and Nestor were all natives of Tarsus. In addition to these, the two Athenodori and Cordylion. Cordylion lived with Marcus Cato, and

¹ The first paragraph of this section draws from research in S.E. Porter and A.W. Pitts, "Paul and his Bible: His Education and Access to the Scriptures of Israel," *JGRChJ* 5 (2008), forthcoming.

died at his house and Athenodori, the son of Sandon, called Cananites, from a village, was the preceptor of Caesar, who conferred upon him great honors” (14.5.14). Strabo is careful to note, however, that the educational system in Tarsus was distinct from that in other educational centers. He states: “But [Tarsus] is so different from other cities that there the men who are fond of learning are all natives, and foreigners are not inclined to sojourn there” (14.5.13; trans. LCL). It seems to have been the custom for Tarsian citizens to take advantage of the educational opportunities in their native city rather than studying abroad and receiving an education in a foreign city as was the custom in other Greco-Roman cities. This statement only seems to apply to the initial stages of an adolescent’s education, however. Strabo notes that, “even the natives [of Tarsus] do not remain in the city, but they complete their education abroad; and once it is completed, they are pleased to live abroad, and only a few return home” (14.5.13).² This is set in contrast to other educational centers such as Alexandria, for example, which had a mixture of both native and foreign students (14.5.13)—perhaps due to the mixing of Oriental and Hellenistic cultures.³ Apparently, many citizens of Tarsus had traveled to Rome to receive their advanced education and had settled down there. Strabo boasts that “it is Rome that is best able to tell us the number of learned men from this city since it is full of Tarsians” (14.5.15). This would suggest a relatively high rate of education among native Tarsians, perhaps unusually high in comparison to the number of educated citizens that came from other centers and smaller Greco-Roman cities.

Although by the time that Dio Chrysostom (40-112 AD) had arrived there philosophy was being admired less and less due to a pack of pseudo-philosophers who were apparently giving

² As Daly points out, though Strabo is probably describing primarily Greek-speaking people, he also notes elsewhere (*Geog.* 4.5.181) that the Romans frequently did likewise. Daly, “Roman Study Abroad,” pp. 40-58, esp. pp. 40, 55-56.

³ Cf. B. Rapske, *The Book of Acts in its First-century Setting: Volume 3: The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 74.

the discipline a bad name (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 33), he still mentions numerous famous teachers in the city and the omniscience of its orators (33.5).⁴ In his well known biographical account of the Neopythagorean philosopher Apollonios of Tyana (first century AD) (Philostratus, *Apol.-Vita* 1.7), Philostratus (160/70-244/49 AD) records that Apollonius was taken to Tarsus at the age of fourteen by his father to study under the rhetorician, Euthydemus of Phoenicia. Like Dio, Apollonius found the environment of the city unaccommodating for studying philosophy because of the indulgent lifestyles pursued by the Tarsians. So with the permission of his father, he and his teacher moved nearby to Aegae where the surroundings were more peaceful and conducive to philosophizing.

There seems to have been a strong constituent of Jews in Tarsus based upon the assumptions maintained in Acts as well as important passages in Epiphanius (Migne 41.411-27) and Philostratus's biography of Apollonios (*Apol.-Vita* 6.34) which show that the Jews there were great in number and politically well connected.⁵ Ramsay reasons that since Roman citizenship entailed that a person be a member of one of the tribes into which the colonies were divided, which involved shared religious rights, there must have been a Jewish (political) tribe in Tarsus comparable to the one in Alexandria that went by the name, "the Macedonians."⁶ Paul's family must have been a part of this tribe on the basis of their citizenship which allows for the possibility that they were among the upper classes depending upon their status within the tribe. It is also possible that a specifically Jewish version of the Greek liberal school may have emerged in this Jewish colony given the high premium placed upon Greek education by Diaspora Jews

⁴ On Dio Chrysostom's account of Tarsus see T. Callander, "The Tarsian Orations of Dio Chrysostom," *JHS* 24 (1904), pp. 58-69.

⁵ Cited in Ramsay, *Cities*, pp. 170-71.

⁶ Ramsay, *Cities*, p. 176.

and the fact that Paul seems to have come from a fairly strict Jewish family.⁷ Although this is a possibility in light of the relative scarcity of references to Greek authors in Paul as compared to his citation of the LXX, it must be kept in mind that Gamaliel, the teacher who was chosen for Paul's rabbinical instruction, descended from the school of the Diaspora rabbi Hillel who clearly expressed a deep appreciation for the Greek *paideia*, even implementing principles of Hellenistic rhetoric into his hermeneutical method.⁸ As Hengel observes, "Even after the catastrophes of AD 70 and 135 the positive attitude towards Greek education continued in the family of Jewish patriarchs descended from Hillel."⁹ Furthermore, in the Diaspora a Jew could have a fairly high degree of acculturation in the educational system while not totally assimilating into Hellenistic culture through keeping their Jewish identity and relations with the Jewish community firmly intact.¹⁰ So it is conceivable given the Jewish affinities toward Greek education associated with Gamaliel's school and the possibility of resisting Hellenistic assimilation while taking advantage of a Greek education that Paul's parents, as conservative as they may have been, sent Paul to a thoroughly secular school or had him study with a Greek *grammaticus*.

We turn now to consider briefly the Judeo-Hellenistic conceptions and expectations for Jews within the Diaspora in order to assess whether Jews would have been inclined to take advantage of the educational resources of a Greek center like Tarsus. If Paul's family had the economic resources to support his education (this issue will be treated below), what would their attitude toward Greek education have been? Philo clearly expected that fellow Jews of the Diaspora who had the financial means would have put their children through the entire *paideia*:¹¹

⁷ Cf. R.D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (rev.; CBET; Leuven: Peeters, 1999), p. 278.

⁸ D. Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," *HUCA* 22 (1949) 239-64.

⁹ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, p. 77.

¹⁰ On this distinction with specific reference to Greek education and Jewish identity, see J.M.G. Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?," *JSNT* 60 (1995), pp. 89-120, here p. 98.

¹¹ On Philo's portrayal of Greek education, see A. Mendelson, *Secular Education in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1982).

For who can be more completely the benefactors of their children than parents, who have not only caused them to exist, but have afterwards thought them worthy of food, and after that again of education both in body and soul, and have enabled them not only to live, but also to live well; training their body by gymnastic and athletic rules so as to bring it into a vigorous and healthy state, and giving it an easy way of standing and moving not without elegance and becoming grace, and educating the soul by letters, and numbers, and geometry, and music, and every kind of philosophy which may elevate the mind which is lodged in the mortal body and conduct it up to heaven (*Spec. Leg.* 2.229-230; trans. Young; cf. also *Prov.* 2.44-46).

Philo speaks as if this were the norm in Alexandria anyways,¹² a city quite comparable to Tarsus in terms of its Hellenistic cultural and educational resources. Certainly this was his own experience as a youth, being trained in philosophy and grammar from an early age (*Cong.* 74-76). Philo further stresses the importance of Greek education for Jews by asserting that Moses was trained by Greeks: “And immediately he had all kinds of masters, one after another, some coming of their own accord from the neighboring countries and the different districts of Egypt, and some being even procured from Greece by the temptation of large presents” (*Mos.* 1.21; trans. Young). Philo also encourages his readers to study grammar (on the study of rhetoric see *Det.* 41):

For grammar, by teaching you the histories which are to be found in the works of the poets and historians, will give you intelligence and abundant learning; and, moreover, will teach you to look with contempt on all the vain fables which erroneous opinions invent, on account of the ill success which history tells us that the heroes and demigods who are celebrated among those writers, meet with (*Cong.* 15; trans. Young).

Likewise the *Letter of Aristeas*, a creative account of the translation of the LXX written by a Diaspora Jew, assumes that a good Jewish upbringing would have included a thorough Greek education. The letter states regarding the translators that they were:

¹² Cf. Mendelson, *Secular Education*, p. 26.

[M]en of excellent education (παιδεία) thanks to their distinguished parentage; they had not only mastered Jewish literature but also given considerable attention to the literature of the Greeks... They had a great natural facility for discussions and questions concerning the law and zealously cultivated the quality of the middle way (which is the best) eschewing any crude and uneducated frame of mind (ἀποτεθειμένοι τὸ τραχὺ καὶ βάρβαρον τῆς διανοίας) (121-122; cf. also Philo, *Mos.* 2.32)...¹³

As Barclay comments, “In this encomium... we are surely to see the cultural values of the author himself, for whom these translators represent model Jews.”¹⁴ This perspective should, of course, be weighed against various strands of rabbinical thinking that sharply resisted Hellenization and especially the *paideia* (e.g. *b.Menah.* 99b). But as Mendelson argues, these are typically limited to pockets of rabbinical authority in Babylon or emerge out of unique political circumstances.¹⁵ Hengel has demonstrated that the overall perspective of Jews in the Diaspora toward Hellenistic education was positive and that many Jews even in Palestine sought accommodate this mentality of Diaspora Judaism by incorporating many significant elements of Hellenic culture, especially in the arena of education.¹⁶ The Babylonian Talmud is often cited to this effect. By the second century there is already direct evidence of rabbis in Palestine studying Greek wisdom in the house of Rabban Gamliel. Rabbi Simeon, his son, states of the house: “There were a thousand young men in my father’s house, five hundred of whom studied the Law, while the other five hundred studied Greek wisdom” (*b.Sotah* 49b).

The various Greek accounts of Tarsus, and especially Strabo’s description, combined with general educational expectations for Diaspora Jews of economic means aligns closely with the educational and adolescent development of Paul that we find in the New Testament and the structure of Hellenistic education outlined above. Paul was born and received the initial stages of his education in Tarsus (Acts 9:11, 30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3; cf. Gal 1:21), having the opportunity

¹³ The translation follows J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 140.

¹⁴ Barclay, *Jews*, p. 140.

¹⁵ Mendelson, *Secular Education*, pp. xxii-xxiii.

¹⁶ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, pp. 76-83.

of receiving a Greek education there as other Tarsians did, before traveling outside of the city to complete his education abroad in Jerusalem, under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), and not returning there to settle, as was the custom—at least not until much later (Acts 9:30; 11:25). If Paul did indeed follow the normal pattern of Tarsians in his educational pursuits—and there is no reason to think he was atypical—two further questions remain to be answered. First, would Paul’s family have had the economic means necessary in Tarsus to provide a liberal education for Paul or is he more likely to have had access only to basic literacy training (that Paul was illiterate or gained literacy through non-formal means can, I think, be ruled out on literary and linguistic grounds [see chapter 4])?¹⁷ Second, what does this tradition say about the possibility of Paul receiving a formal rhetorical education while in Tarsus and how should Paul and his critics’ negative evaluation of his rhetorical abilities in the Corinthian correspondence be weighed in this discussion?

2. *Paul’s Socio-Economic Status in Tarsus*

In this section, I seek to deal specifically with Paul’s socio-economic status while in Tarsus and the educational opportunities that this would have provided. As Schnelle observes, “Paul’s education ...[is] essentially determined by his social status.”¹⁸ Of course, like many questions revolving around the life of Paul, this question is difficult to answer since the evidence that we have for Paul’s life in Tarsus is significantly limited. But as Rapske points out, “While we have no explicit indication of Paul’s financial resource in Tarsus, the implicit evidence

¹⁷ On the view that Paul was illiterate, see J. Dewey, “Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions,” *Semeia* 65: *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (1994), pp. 37-64; P.J.J. Botha, “Letter Writing and Oral Communication in Antiquity: Suggested Implications for the Interpretation of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *Scriptura* 42 (1992), pp. 17-34.

¹⁸ U. Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* (trans. M.E. Boring; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), p. 62.

suggests that they were significant”—although he fails to mention such evidence.¹⁹ Roman citizenship would have often entailed a degree of social status and wealth, depending upon how it was acquired.²⁰ Ramsey suggests further that Paul’s Roman citizenship would have “placed him amid the aristocracy of any provincial town” and that “the *civitas* may be taken as a proof that his family was one of distinction and wealth” with “a certain attitude of friendliness to the Imperial government..., and also of pride in a possession that ensured distinction and rank and general respect in Tarsus.”²¹ This picture of the social standing of Paul’s family in Tarsus seems overstated, however, given Paul’s trade, which he most likely learned from his family, and the fact that Jews rarely made up the governing classes. In this section I argue that Paul and his family were more likely among the artisan-business class of the ancient world who had some success in their occupation as tent-makers and would likely have had the financial means necessary to fund a Greek education for their son. Paul also seems to be a man acquainted with traveling, probably due to the requirements of his trade, and this as well as the need to keep up business relations with Greek speakers would have made a Greek education an advantageous option to pursue. When these points are coupled with the expectations for Diaspora Jews that we find in the *Letter of Aristeas* and Philo it seems likely that Paul’s parents would have had both the means and the desire to acquire a Greek education for their son. This position is developed more completely by briefly considering (a) the socio-economic structure and possibility for mobility in Greco-Roman antiquity, (b) Paul’s family, citizenship and occupation and (c) their relationship to the social hierarchy of first-century Tarsus.

¹⁹ Rapske, *The Book of Acts*, p. 105.

²⁰ For further see A.N. Sherman-White, *Roman Citizenship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

²¹ W.M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen* (rev. M. Wilson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 2001), p. 35.

a. *Socio-Economic Structure and Mobility in Greco-Roman Antiquity*

The question of Paul's social status is often framed in terms of a false disjunction involving the elite aristocracy on the one hand and low class artisans with very little financial means on the other.²² Yet as Garnsey and Saller point out, "class boundaries are inevitably in a state of flux" in Greco-Roman antiquity.²³ Garnsey and Saller note that the social hierarchy was primarily determined by three factors: "(1) the property system, (2) the legal system and (3) the occupational system (or division of labor)."²⁴ The primary source of wealth in the ancient world was land. Land owners were able to have a very effective means of production through the agricultural industry and through the legal system land owners were able to maintain control over the ownership and distribution of their property.²⁵ They further observe that, "The division of labor followed from and further reinforced the social hierarchy, since occupational position gave individuals and groups access to (or excluded them from) control of property and the means of production."²⁶ These three systems inevitably led to inequality and gave the propertied class the ability to exploit and maintain control as the wealthiest class since land was typically only transmitted through family inheritance. The social structure of the Roman empire was essentially an agrarian society and most of the working class labored in agriculture. This made social mobility for these members of society difficult unless a slave, freedman, or trusted employee had close relations with a family who had no adopted heirs to inherit their land.²⁷

²² E.g. A. Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926), pp. 48-51.

²³ P. Garnsey and R. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987), p. 109.

²⁴ Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, p. 109.

²⁵ Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, p. 109.

²⁶ Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, pp. 109-10.

²⁷ Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, p. 110-11.

Socio-economic mobility, however, was much more available to the class that Rostovtzeff calls the “petty bourgeoisie.”²⁸ This class consisted of urban shop owners, traders, artisans, teachers and so on. According to Rostovtzeff, these members of society made up “the backbone of municipal life.”²⁹ This reliance upon urban workers and various tradesmen represents a development in the older social systems of antiquity in which wealthy citizens had all of their needs supplied from within their own household (i.e. through the craftsmanship of slaves).³⁰ Because of the dependence of the wealthy on artisans and small businesses within urban environments, many people who plied a trade were able to attain considerable capital eventually leading to significant economic resources that could then be invested in various other business endeavors. As MacMullen notes, “There is wide agreement that urban conditions favored mobility far more than did rural.”³¹ He notes that “people who started with some minor skill or minor sum of money could indeed rise to relative affluence—could and did, in verifiable instances that aroused less surprise at their success than contempt of their origins.”³² In other words, while some economic success was possible among urban businessmen, elevation in social status did not necessarily come with monetary achievements as it often does in today’s society. As a class, urban artisans and traders of various sorts were still looked upon with disdain by the upper classes (Cicero, *Val. Max.* 8.14.6). Advanced education, however, was at least one means of social mobility in this direction—for many such businessmen it was usually too late to pursue this option themselves, but for some it could be lived out through providing a Greek education for their children.³³ We may attempt to situate this class of people, successful urban businessmen

²⁸ M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), p. 1:109.

²⁹ Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, p. 1:109.

³⁰ W.W. Fowler, *Social Life at Roman in the Age of Cicero* (London: Macmillan, 1916), p. 43.

³¹ R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations: 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven: Yale, 1974), p. 98.

³² MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations*, p. 99.

³³ Cf. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations*, p. 107.

and merchants, within the middle parts of MacMullen's taxonomy: "we have at the top of Roman society a quite minute but extraordinarily prominent and rich nobility, itself split into higher (senatorial) and a lower (equestrian) stratum; at the bottom, a large mass of totally indigent, mostly free but partly slave; and strung out between the extremes a variety too heterogeneous to be called in any sense a middle class.... Great were the differences between the extremes, attenuated by the middle parts."³⁴

b. *Paul's Family, Citizenship and Occupation*

The most important indicator of where Paul and his family fit within the spectrum of social classes in Greco-Roman antiquity—specifically in Tarsus—is Paul's trade. There are three major positions among scholars regarding the circumstances under which Paul acquired his trade. Those who have emphasized Roman citizenship as a status marker have often attempted to set Paul's acquisition of a trade against ancient rabbinical tradition: "Excellent is the study of the Torah with the practice of a trade" (*M. Abot* 2.2).³⁵ This tradition, however, is undocumented before the mid-second century. Following Urbach, Hock contends that the rabbinical ideal "expresses a rabbinic self-understanding that arose only in the Usha period (A.D. 140-170), due in part to economic crises arising from the Jewish wars."³⁶ Murphy-O'Connor points to further pre-70 AD rabbinical critiques of the notion that rabbis should ply a trade.³⁷ Ben Sira remarks that the craftsman and a scholar are distinct in that "The wisdom of the scribe depends on the

³⁴ MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations*, p. 94.

³⁵ See Schnelle, *Paul*, p. 61; M. Dibelius, *Paul* (ed. W.G. Kümmel; trans. F. Clarke; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), p. 37; G. Bornkamm, *Paul* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 12; J.B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), p. 9; F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 108; C. von Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church* (2 vols.; London: Williams & Norgate, 1897), p. 1:301; W. Michaelis, "ακηροποιός," *TDNT*, pp. 7:393-94, here p. 394.

³⁶ R.F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), p. 23; cf. E.E. Urbach, "Class-Status and Leadership in the World of the Palestinian Sages," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* (Jerusalem: Central, 1968), 2.38-74; R. Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking and the Problem of his Social Status," *JBL* 97 (1978), p. 557.

³⁷ J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 86.

opportunity of leisure; only the one who has little business can become wise" (38:27; cf. also 38:24-39:11) and asserts further that "every artisan and craftsman who labors by night as well as by day" is excluded from wisdom (38:27). This must be held in tension, however, with the fact that we have testimony of tannaitic rabbis who did in fact work. A few others, including Hock, maintain that Paul learned his trade under his father as an apprentice, again on the basis of rabbinic tradition: "Whoever does not teach his son a craft teaches him to be a robber" (*T. Qidd.* 1.11).³⁸ Hock contends that "At the age of thirteen, give or take a year or so, Paul would have begun his apprenticeship and would have spent his days, except for Sabbaths and holidays, in his father's workshop."³⁹ A third view suggests that Paul learned his trade after his conversion, perhaps in Arabia and/or Damascus, as means to support his missionary efforts.⁴⁰ This accounts for his seemingly high social status as a Roman citizen under the covering of his parents (who, perhaps, disinherited him after his conversion) as well his artisan status as a traveling missionary, but it does not answer why a Jewish family would be awarded citizenship. That Paul learned his trade from his artisan father⁴¹ seems to have the most evidence to commend it since it provides a possible way of reconciling the fact that he was a Jew and a manual laborer as well as a Roman citizen. It is likely that one of Paul's ancestors (perhaps his grandfather or great grandfather), also a tentmaker (or perhaps leather worker, cf. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.12.9), aided the military by providing tents for the soldiers and was awarded with citizenship for his services.⁴² Rapske lists five means of attaining citizenship: (1) as a birth right; (2) for military service; (3) as a reward;

³⁸ Hock, *Social Context*, pp. 23-25; J.B. Lightfoot, *Notes on the Epistles of Paul* (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 27; A.T. Geoghegan, *The Attitude towards Labor in Early Christianity and Ancient Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1945), p. 108.

³⁹ Hock, *Social Context*, p. 24.

⁴⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, p. 86.

⁴¹ Hock, *Social Context*, pp. 23-24.

⁴² F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977), 37; J. McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), p. 24.

(4) an en bloc grant or (5) based on financial considerations.⁴³ While Paul acquired his citizenship through birth right (Acts 22:28), Paul's ancestors probably gained citizenship by reward for significant municipal contribution or military service in their tent making and the possibility that their business was prosperous enough to allow them to buy their citizenship can not be ruled out entirely.⁴⁴ Any of these means of acquisition would allow for Paul's Roman citizenship while at the same time accounting for his Jewish family's location among the business classes instead of the upper class land owners or ruling aristocracy (see below). And the general pattern in antiquity was for the son to take up the vocation of his father and there is no reason to suppose that Paul did not do the same. As MacMullen concludes, scholars can only assume, in lack of documentation to the contrary, "that a man usually took up whatever work his family handed down to him."⁴⁵ This raises another question of importance: Where would this picture of Paul's family place them in relation to the social structure of Tarsus and would Paul's family's economic resources have been great enough to provide him with a Greek education?

c. Tentmaking and the Position of Paul's Family in the Social Hierarchy

Paul lived in a very urban environment in Tarsus and there is good reason to believe that his family was among the more successful of the "petty bourgeoisie," somewhere in the middle parts of the social hierarchy that MacMullen discusses—precisely where they fit within this economically diverse group of people is impossible to say. Their Roman citizenship seems to be an indication of some measure of success within their business. Whether they were awarded citizenship for military services, significant municipal contributions or had actually been

⁴³ Rapske, *Acts*, p. 86.

⁴⁴ Hengel puts forward a thesis that suggests that Paul's family's citizenship was purchased. He claims that it is likely that Paul's family was emancipated from slavery by a Roman citizen and therefore was purchased, leaving Paul's family with a well-to-do freedmen status in Tarsus. M. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM, 1992), pp. 11-15, 17.

⁴⁵ MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations*, p. 98.

successful enough to purchase the citizenship is uncertain, but their citizenship does appear to indicate some level of accomplishment in their business as tent makers.

This is confirmed by the fact that Paul's family apparently had the financial means to send him to Jerusalem for advanced study of the Torah under Gamaliel. Only families of significant economic means could afford the cost of sending their son to study abroad for advanced education. It is possible that Paul's entire family moved to Jerusalem since his sister seems to be living there much later (Acts 23:16). Even families living in Jerusalem, however, would still have typically required a great deal of financial stability in order to afford giving up a bread winner. Rabbinical studies were taxing and left very little time for the student to earn money to support himself or his family.⁴⁶ It is likely, therefore, that Paul's family had the economic resources necessary to allow for this kind of study.

The success of a family business such as Paul's would have been largely dependent upon their ability to communicate in Greek. This would have made Greek education an important investment for someone such as Paul who was being trained in the family business. It would have allowed Paul the ability to write and read letters, contracts, receipts, various business documents, and so on. That he in fact learned Greek to a reasonably high level is apparent from his letters (see Chapter 5) which seems to reinforce his family's economic ability to provide for his education. Although Deissmann held that Paul's artisanship was a definite indicator of a low social status, he claimed that "On the ground of his language Paul should be assigned to a higher class."⁴⁷ (This resulted in a somewhat paradoxical social portrayal of the apostle by Deissmann that can be resolved by a more fluid understanding of the artisan-business class in Greco-Roman antiquity [as shown above].) For Deissmann, Paul's language was a clear indicator of status

⁴⁶ Cf. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 95.

⁴⁷ Deissmann, *Paul*, p. 50.

because it meant that Paul must have had the socio-economic means to acquire a decent Greek education.

Paul's trade may also account for his extensive knowledge of the Mediterranean world evidenced through his travels. Tent making was a very mobile trade that served him well in his missionary endeavors and very well could have provided a business reason for travel among various provinces in his pre-Christian days. His family at least seems to have some ties in Jerusalem (Acts 23:16) and Paul appears to have had connections in Damascus (Acts 22:5) as well as continued relationships in Tarsus (Acts 11:26). Aquila and Pricilla, fellow tent makers and missionaries, were also known for their extensive travels throughout the Mediterranean world. A good Greek education would have been indispensable for Paul on these types journeys and in the various business dealings that may have mandated them.

By way of summary, two important points emerge from this discussion. First, Paul's family was apparently one of financial means. As a successful business class family in Tarsus, they would have likely had the economic resources necessary to finance their son's education. Second, not only did Diaspora Jews seem to recognize the inherent value of Greek paideia—at least this was the case for many Alexandrian Jews such as Philo and the author of the Letter of Aristeas—a Greek education would have been an important asset to Paul's trade as he sought to establish business relationships and travel for business purposes. Therefore, it appears that Paul's family would have had both the means and the desire to provide Paul with a good Greek education.

3. Exposure to Literary and Rhetorical Training in Tarsus

Based upon the business class status of Paul's family it seems likely that they would have possessed the financial means necessary and desire to fund an education beyond the craft literacy

schools attended by slaves and other lower class members of society. Moreover, the language that we find in his letters far exceeds what would have been commonly learned in basic literacy schools (see Chapter 5). When these considerations are understood within a two-phase framework for Hellenistic education in larger cultural centers and Strabo's portrayal of educational traditions in Tarsus, it fits nicely with the picture of Paul spending at least part of his formative adolescent years in Tarsus (Acts 22:3; 26:4) where he studied with a *grammaticus* in a liberal school until he traveled abroad to pursue rabbinical training in Jerusalem. The parallel two-phase Jewish educational system (see Chapter 4) would have made this transition quite natural. And it fits nicely with the chronology of a man suggested by *Pirke Aboth* 5:24 (150 AD): "At five years the Scriptures; at ten years the Mishnah; at thirteen the commandments; at fifteen the Talmud etc...."⁴⁸ Although the tradition is later, this account aligns with Paul being educated in the Jewish Scriptures and traditions at home while attending a liberal school in Tarsus before traveling to Jerusalem. While rhetorical education in Tarsus is possible, this seems less likely due to Tarsian tradition regarding advanced education and Paul's confession in 2 Cor 11:7 that he is untrained in rhetoric in response to his critics' accusations in 2 Cor 10:10.

a. *Literary Training in a Liberal School*

Education under a *grammaticus* in Tarsus would have included a thorough training in Greek language and literature, especially the poets. Paul would have also learned compositional skills, such as letter writing and elementary word-plays. Paul's education under a *grammaticus* would have probably included some instruction in the *progymnasmata* as well, exercises in composition that prepared students to study the canon of Attic orators or, for more advanced instructors, the material produced and modeled by the teachers themselves. Students typically

⁴⁸ Porter and Pitts, "Paul and His Bible," forthcoming.

studied the *progymnasmata* at the end of their grammatical education in order to prepare for rhetorical instruction. On the other hand, it was not uncommon for students to study the *progymnasmata* at the initial stages of rhetorical education—again, a rigid understanding of the educational system breaks down. Individual exercises were designed to help the students with declamation and written-speech composition (logography). Though elementary compositional exercises are attested in Greek schools as early as the fourth century BC (the first mention of the *progymnasmata* is found in the *Rhetoric for Alexander*),⁴⁹ formal curricula for the *progymnasmata* may not have been fully standardized by the time of Paul. The first compositional handbook we have attestation to is by Aelius Theon (second century AD), but Hermogenes (second century AD), Libanius (fourth century AD), Aphthonius (fourth century AD) and Nicolaus (fifth century AD) followed soon after. These handbooks provide an important look into elementary rhetorical education. An outline with a few words of description from Hermogenes's handbook provides some indication as to what might have been involved for students at this elementary phase of compositional instruction.⁵⁰

1. On Fable: a characteristically Greek form of story⁵¹
2. On Narrative: the portrayal of an event as if it had already happened
3. On Chreia: sayings or actions that can be referred to for a useful purpose⁵²
4. On Maxim: summary statements
5. On Refutation and Confirmation: instruction on how to refute and confirm arguments
6. On Common-Place: amplifying a point from a commonly agreed upon point
7. On Encomion: an exposition of the good qualities of a person or thing
8. On Syncrisis: comparisons between two sides of something, e.g. greater vs. lesser
9. On Ethopoeia: imitation of the character of a person who is supposed to be speaking

⁴⁹ G.A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World; Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. xi.

⁵⁰ The headings in Kennedy's edition are followed here.

⁵¹ On fables see Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 221-23; W.H. Oldaker, "Greek Fables and Babrius," *Greece and Rome* 8 (1934), pp. 85-93.

⁵² On the chreia see R.F. Hock and E.D. O'Neil (eds.), *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric: Classroom Exercises* (SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World; vol. 2; Leiden: Brill, 2002); R.F. Hock and E.D. O'Neil (eds.), *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric: The Progymnasmata* (SBLTT 27; Graeco Religion Series 9; vol. 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 63-112; Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 185-88. The *progymnasmata* of Aelius Theon (3.96) relates chreia to maxims and reminiscence.

10. On Ecphrasis: descriptive speech
11. On Thesis: a statement on a subject viewed apart from particular circumstances
12. On Introduction of a Law: proposing laws or making objections to them

Variations among the handbooks exist both in terms of how various categories are defined and which ones are included/excluded. Thus, there does not seem to be a strict standardization of the curriculum. The basic structure followed for these handbooks is quite similar, however. Under each category of the *progymnasmata*, there is typically a definition of the category followed by instruction on how to construct the particular literary unit through what is referred to as an “elaboration,” often including a few examples. Although we do not have evidence that formalized handbooks were in use in Hellenistic schools during the first century, many of these preparatory compositional exercises would have still been in use at this time. That we have the handbooks by the second century is indicative of a need to formalize a curriculum that had already begun to develop in various independent forms at an early stage. Under a *grammaticus* in Tarsus, therefore, it is likely that Paul would have been exposed to at least some of these elementary rhetorical exercises. In Chapter 4, I argue that many of the rhetorical figures and devices that we find within Paul’s letters can be accounted for at this intermediate stage of Paul’s education without having to posit that Paul received advanced rhetorical instruction.

b. Advanced Education in a Rhetorical (or Philosophical) School

The historical picture of the pre-Christian Paul presented so far suggests that Paul probably attended a liberal school while in Tarsus, but is it likely that Paul received instruction from a rhetorical school during his time there? Of the two cities of Paul’s youth, Tarsus is the only likely option for rhetorical training since schools of Hellenistic rhetoric would not have been present in Jerusalem (see Chapter 4). Two historical issues need to be considered here: (a) the educational tradition of Tarsians according to Strabo’s account and (b) Paul’s perspective on

rhetoric. The second issue is tied up in the exegesis of two sets of passages from the Corinthians correspondence: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and 2 Corinthians 10-13. These passages will be treated separately below.

1. *Tarsian Educational Tradition and Advanced Education.* Paul's location in Tarsus allows for the possibility of higher rhetorical or even philosophical training.⁵³ That his family had a productive business probably allowed Paul to bypass the schools of basic craft literacy attended by the lower classes in favor of one of the Hellenistic liberal schools in Tarsus, but it still does not seem that he would have been among the socio-economic elite who typically attended the rhetorical (and philosophical) schools of higher education. Remaining in Tarsus to pursue instruction in rhetoric would have also been going against a well established tradition among Tarsians to pursue their advanced education outside of the city. As Strabo notes, for advanced education "the natives [of Tarsus] do not remain in the city, but they complete their education abroad" (*Geog.* 14.5.13). This is at least an initial indication that Paul would not have received rhetorical instruction in Tarsus. Like other Tarsians, he would have traveled abroad for his advanced studies. This was the tradition throughout the Greco-Roman world, not only Tarsus. As Daly notes, it was a common practice in the Roman world for students to visit "Greek centers of learning to stay for rather extended periods for the express or principal purpose of studying with or attending the lectures of recognized authorities, usually in the fields of philosophy or rhetoric, as a sort of supplement to their formal education."⁵⁴ Strabo even suggests that many inhabitants of educational centers would travel abroad to receive the initial stages of their education—Tarsus was distinct in this respect (*Geog.* 14.5.13-15). It appears that Paul, in fact, follows this tradition, but pursuing studies in Jerusalem instead of Rhodes, Athens or Alexandria (though fewer

⁵³ Cf. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, p. 50.

⁵⁴ Daly, "Roman Study Abroad," p. 41.

students traveled to Alexandria in Hellenistic times due to political tensions),⁵⁵ and in Jewish law instead of philosophy or rhetoric.

It is also significant that Paul attributes his education to Gamaliel. It was the tradition to associate one's education with the person under whom they received their advanced training. The *grammaticus* was not famous in the same sense as the instructor of philosophy, rhetoric or, in Paul's case, oral Torah. That Paul was educated under Gamaliel, therefore, should not be taken to mean that he received the entirety of his instruction in a rabbinical school. Greco-Roman biographical accounts often neglect the mention of the name of the instructor in one's formal education. Students are typically identified with their teacher(s) in the school of rhetoric or philosophy so we might have expected Paul to mention the rhetor under whom he studied in Tarsus had this been the case. It must be kept in mind, however, that in Acts 22:3 Paul is speaking to a Jewish audience and may be purposely emphasizing the Jewish dimension of his education. Nevertheless, if Paul went to rabbinical school, as Luke records, at the normal age—somewhere between 12 and 15⁵⁶—then he probably would not have been able to study under a rhetor in Tarsus since this was the same age (it could have been slightly later, but not significantly) at which the rhetorical curriculum began (see Philostratus, *Apol.-Vita* 1.7).⁵⁷ Furthermore, education was vocationally driven. Those who studied rhetoric usually only did so in order to prepare for a career in politics or Roman law and these ambitions were typically guided strongly by the parents since they were funding the project. To suppose, therefore, that Paul attended a school for rhetorical instruction before going to Jerusalem to receive his

⁵⁵ Daly, "Roman Study Abroad," p. 55.

⁵⁶ Cf. S. Safrai, "Education and the Study of the Torah," in S. Safrai (ed.), *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions* (CRINT 1.2; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), p. 953.

⁵⁷ Cf. Marrou, *Education*, p. 102.

pharisaical training would seem to represent a serious conflict of interests early on, not only on the part of Paul, but also on the part of his parents.

2. *Paul's Perception of Rhetoric in the Corinthian Correspondence.* A final historical clue to the level of rhetorical education that Paul might have received in Tarsus is found in his own testimony within his letters. There are a number of passages in the Corinthian correspondence that have appeared, especially to older commentators, to indicate Paul's specific rejection of Hellenistic rhetoric and/or philosophy. In 1 Cor 1:17 Paul notes that he did not preach the gospel with "words of wisdom" (σοφία λόγου). Similar phraseology is employed in 1 Cor 2:1-5. Paul did not bring the gospel to the Corinthians with superiority of speech (ὑπεροχὴν λόγου) or wisdom (σοφίας) (2:1), and his speech (λόγος) and proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom (πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις) (2:4) so that their faith would not be placed in human wisdom but in the power of God (2:5). The Corinthians spoke of Paul as a man whose letters were strong and powerful but whose physical presence and speech were unimpressive (ἐξουθενημένος) (2 Cor 10:10). In 2 Cor 11:6 Paul explicitly claims to be untrained in speaking (ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ). The present section will address Paul's view of rhetoric as it unfolds in 1 Cor 1-4 and the following section will assess Paul's perspective on rhetoric in 2 Cor 10 and 11.

(a) 1 Corinthians 1-4. Several recent works have commented on the role of 1 Corinthians 1-4 in understanding of Paul's perspective on rhetorical theory.⁵⁸ Castelli has analyzed the passage according to principles of modern rhetoric and ideological philosophy, but I doubt that this moves forward our understanding of Paul's intention in his own setting.⁵⁹ In the ancient context, the discussion revolves around the relation of σοφία to Greco-Roman rhetoric and philosophy.

⁵⁸ For a survey of research before 1998, see Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 265-76. My assessment of works on 1 Cor 1-4 prior to 1998 relies heavily upon his analysis.

⁵⁹ E.A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster, 1991).

Pogoloff insists that σοφία was a technical rhetorical term that did not find its way into much ancient rhetorical discussion due to a polemic against philosophy.⁶⁰ This does not amount to a rejection of rhetoric as a whole, however, just the social status associated with it.⁶¹ More recently, Wanamaker has introduced a similar view, claiming that 1 Cor 2:1-5 “is a subtle attack on the value system of the socially superior members of the community who almost certainly would have identified with and even approved of rhetorical sophistication since they appear to have brought in rhetorically trained teachers who attacked Paul for his lack of rhetorical sophistication according to 2 Corinthians 10-13.”⁶² Philosophical polemics notwithstanding, the scarcity of σοφία within ancient rhetorical sources counts as a significant weakness to this approach. Betz argues that in 1 Cor 2:1-5 Paul aligns himself with the philosophers’ complaint that rhetoricians only emphasized form and persuasion rather than truth.⁶³ Betz, however, does not address how πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως fits into this reading and Paul’s use of σοφία seems to marginalize him from the philosophers as well as the rhetoricians.⁶⁴ In line with Pogoloff, Litfin views the use of σοφία in 1 Cor 1-4 against the background of Greco-Roman rhetoric.⁶⁵ Unlike Pogoloff, however, he claims that philosophy and rhetoric had been significantly conflated by the first century AD so that Paul’s critique is directed at a sort of philosophical rhetoric.⁶⁶ But the synthesis of philosophy and rhetoric in the first century is very difficult to maintain since Cicero

⁶⁰ S.M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), esp. pp. 99-172.

⁶¹ Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, p. 120.

⁶² C.A. Wanamaker, “A Rhetoric of Power: Ideology and 1 Corinthians 1-4,” in T.J. Burke and J.K. Elliott (eds.), *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (NovTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 115-37, here p. 128.

⁶³ H.D. Betz, “The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology in the Apostle Paul,” in A. Vanhoye et al. (eds.), *L’Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère* (BETL 73; Leuven: Peeters, 1986), pp. 16-48.

⁶⁴ cf. J.B. Lightfoot, *Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 172. Lightfoot argues that Paul is taking a shot at both rhetoricians and philosophers.

⁶⁵ D.A. Litfin, *St. Paul’s Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁶⁶ Litfin, *Paul’s Theology*, pp. 119-24.

and Quintilian, Litfin's primary advocates for this hypothesis, were actually atypical in Hellenistic intellectual life. The battle between rhetoric and philosophy (especially the Stoics) was still very much alive in the first century. And in addition to the fact that σοφία was rarely used in rhetorical theory, Winter and Anderson have convincingly shown that σοφία is not used in a technical rhetorical sense in reference to form in 1 Cor 1-4, but more generally with respect to content. Paul is pitting the "wisdom" of the world against the wisdom of God.⁶⁷ Rhetoricians and philosophers will have undoubtedly been included in these general references to Greek wisdom, but these institutions do not seem to be specifically in view. These points disconfirm Marshall's contention that Paul's refusal to use rhetoric "indicates that he was familiar with the rhetorical traditions he was rejecting." "It is feasible," Marshall insists, "to suggest that he may have been trained in rhetoric but had deliberately set it aside."⁶⁸ Similarly, Murphy-O'Connor argues that "Choice necessarily implies the reality of an alternative. Paul knew that he could have done otherwise; he could have used the persuasive techniques of rhetoric to proclaim the gospel."⁶⁹ Not only does this analysis fail to take into consideration the more general use of σοφία, it runs contrary to claims that Paul's letters are composed using rhetorical categories. If Murphy-O'Connor maintains that Paul, though he had rhetorical training, refused to use it so that the Corinthians' faith would not rest in human wisdom then it seems hard to fathom that Paul would have structured his letters, in particular 1 Corinthians, according to the same principles he

⁶⁷ B.W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* (SNTSMS 96; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 179-202; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 274-75.

⁶⁸ P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 2.23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), p. 390.

⁶⁹ Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, p. 51.

explicitly refused to use when present among them.⁷⁰ The clear implication is that the letter itself would be an act of hypocrisy.

(b) Paul and Rhetoric in 2 Corinthians 10:10 and 11:7. More significant to Paul's relationship to ancient rhetoric are the remarks found in 2 Cor 10:10 and 11:7. Both of these passages fall within Paul's defense of his ministry to the Corinthians in 10-13 which is probably not "the severe letter" since we have no testimony among the ancients of such composite compilations⁷¹ and since it is likely that the severe letter is mentioned in 10:9-11. Both passages need to be examined in some detail.

(1) 2 Corinthians 10:10a: βαρεῖται καὶ ἰσχυραί. 2 Corinthians 10:10 restates Paul's own admission in 10:1 ("I am humble when I am in your presence but bold when I am away") as a three-fold accusation of his ministry:

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------|
| ὅτι, ... | φησὶν |
| 1. | αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, ... , βαρεῖται καὶ ἰσχυραί, |
| 2. | ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενής |
| 3. | καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος. |

The μέν ... δὲ construction conveys the accusation as a two part critique related to his letters when absent on the one hand (1) and his weak bodily appearance and unimpressive speech on the other (2-3) (cf. 10:1, 11). Some scholars have taken the first remark to be complimentary while reading the second set in a derogatory sense. Garland, for example, states that "Paul's quotation of what persons are saying about his letters attests that even his opponents recognize that they

⁷⁰ Murphy-O'Connor follows M. Mitchell (*Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* [HUNT 28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991], pp. 184-86) in his portrayal of the rhetorical structure of 1 Corinthians. See Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, p. 77.

⁷¹ See H.J. Klauck, "Compilations of Letters in Cicero's Correspondence," in J.T. Fitzgerald, T.H. Olbricht, and L.M. White (eds.), *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham Malherbe* (NovTSup 110; Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 131-51.

have rhetorical power.” “What they called into question,” Garland claims, “was his physical presence and his public oratory.”⁷² Winter proposes a dual connotation. He suggests that “Paul’s detractors are asserting that from a distance Paul can write impressive and persuasive letters in the rhetorical style” but that this was inconsistent with his claim that he came to the Corinthians without persuasive rhetoric in the power of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:1-5).⁷³ Betz claims that βαρύς and ἰσχυρός are technical terms drawn from rhetoric that are used to characterize philosophers: “Depending on one’s point of view, such classification can be good or bad.”⁷⁴ But as Harris notes, viewing the statement about his letters in a positive light seems *prima facie* unlikely since it is hard to imagine “that a slogan of Paul’s opponents would encapsulate a compliment to Paul, even if that compliment served to highlight the contrasted disdain.”⁷⁵ The most significant obstacle with correlating βαρύς and ἰσχυρός with good rhetorical style, however, is that the passage is framed by 10:9: ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς αὐτὸν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν. The use of ὅτι with the verb φημί (10:10) is a common diatribal formula used to introduce the accusation of an opponent.⁷⁶ The conjunction (ὅτι) functions to signal indirect discourse in support of 10:9. Semantic linkage through the use of ἐπιστολή in the last clause of 10:9 and the first clause of 10:10 ensure the readers/hearers that 10:10 expands upon 10:9. In particular βαρύς and ἰσχυρός are interpretive of and expand upon ἐκφοβέω. Some scholars have pointed to the general

⁷² D.E. Garland, *2 Corinthians* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman, 1999), p. 446; see also R.H. Strachan, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), p. 14; C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London: Black, 1973), p. 260; R. Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (trans. R.A. Harrisville; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1995), p. 190; Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, p. 50; J. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* (SPS; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1999), p. 157. Most translations favor this reading: “weighty and powerful” (HCSB, KJV), “weighty and strong” (Darby, ASV, NRSV, NASB, ESV), “impressive and forceful” (ISV), “weighty and forceful” (NET, NIV). “Forceful” may capture a pejorative tone, but it probably does not do so clearly.

⁷³ Winter, *Philo and Paul*, pp. 207-08.

⁷⁴ Betz, “The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology,” p. 41.

⁷⁵ Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 698; cf. also Winter, *Philo and Paul*, p. 207.

⁷⁶ Bultmann, *Second Corinthians*, p. 190.

reference of βαρύς or ἰσχυρός as applied to a rhetorician or philosopher,⁷⁷ but these were not technical rhetorical terms and were very common in all Greek literature. As Anderson points out in response to Winter's suggestion of Lucian's rhetorical use of βαρύς: "Lucian engages in a metaphorical word-play on βαρύς at *DMort.* 373-74. The term is not normally used for rhetorical techniques."⁷⁸ Moreover, while one may be able to find the odd use of βαρύς applied to a rhetorician or rhetorical speech, no one has pointed to a clear example among the ancient rhetors or philosophers where a rhetorician's speech is described as ἐκφοβέω, meaning that a speech or letter is composed with "impressive and persuasive... rhetorical style" as Winter claims for the content of Paul's accusers' accusations.⁷⁹ Winter and other scholars who propose a rhetorical background for these terms neglect the role of ἐκφοβέω in this passage and its structural and semantic connection to βαρύς and ἰσχυρός. Whether Paul's opponents intended to acknowledge the rhetorical character of his letters in 10:10 may be ambiguous if the statement was not made in such close association with ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς αὐτὸν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν. This points to an authoritarian style and tone, perhaps with pointed rebukes and commands so that the letters were "severe and aggressive" rather than "impressive" and "persuasive." In response to the claim of his opponents that his letters were βαρύς and ἰσχυρός Paul responds that he did not intend to terrify (ἐκφοβεῖν) his audience (10:9), suggesting that the harsh style of the apostle had little to do with rhetorical form. This understanding of the passage is further confirmed by Paul's statements in 10:11: οἱοί ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ. Paul continues to interpret βαρύς and ἰσχυρός in 10:11 (the third use of ἐπιστολή here, providing an additional link in this local semantic chain), claiming that the words he says in his

⁷⁷ E.g. Marshall, *Enmity*, p. 385; Winter, *Philo and Paul*, p. 207.

⁷⁸ Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, p. 278.

⁷⁹ Winter, *Philo and Paul*, p. 207.

letters when he is absent, though they are βαρύς and ἰσχυρός, he obeys when he is in their presence. If βαρύς and ἰσχυρός are understood as terms denoting Paul's rhetorical eloquence in his letters then not only would he contradict his claim not to have used persuasive techniques of Greek wisdom while he was with them (1 Cor 2:1-5), the present accusation would be, at best, difficult to understand since it would imply that Paul did in fact use rhetorical techniques when he was among the Corinthians—the exact thing for which he is being faulted and does not deny (cf. 2 Cor 11:7, see below). It is, therefore, more likely that Paul had given the Corinthians harsh exhortations and rebukes in a severe letter. His intent in this letter was not to terrify them, as his accusers claimed, but he did call them (however harshly) to an obedient life, a life that he had lived out while among them.

(2) 2 Corinthians 10:10b: σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος. The first accusation disparages Paul's authoritarian approach in his letters. This is then contrasted with his weak physical appearance and inabilities as an orator. Unlike the objection posed against the manner he conducts himself in his letters, he does not respond to the criticism regarding his physical presence and speaking abilities until chapter 11. Betz (proposing a Cynic philosophical background) and Winter (suggesting a strictly rhetorical understanding)⁸⁰ have argued convincingly that in this second critique Paul's adversaries are judging him according to a standard of public oratory that required attractive physical and bodily appearance (including dress) as well as abilities as a speaker. In addition to the construction that unites these two assertions together, Paul seems to take them as a singular attack on his lack of training in rhetoric

⁸⁰ Winter, *Philo and Paul*, pp. 211-12; Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," p. 42. H.D. Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus und die sokratische Tradition. Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu seiner "Apologie" 2 Korinther 10-13* (BhTh 45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1972), pp. 53-54 in Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," p. 42. It may be both since both groups spoke in public, although the rhetorical understanding Winter suggests would have been much more common as rhetoric was far more pervasive in Hellenistic times than philosophy.

when he finally responds to this insult by granting its truthfulness. Paul seemingly sums up both comments with the admission that he is *ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ* (2 Cor 11:6). Given this context there is not much doubt that Paul's critics measure him against the canons and practices of the rhetoricians in making their accusations. Even scholars who have strongly advocated a rhetorical understanding of Paul's letters readily grant that this passage says otherwise of his public speaking abilities, or at least how they appeared to the Corinthians.⁸¹ The text does not mention the particular aspects of Paul's speech that marked him out as untrained in the art of oratory, but his critics were probably referring to his presentation and preaching style as a whole. We cannot suppose that his Greek was any better than what is represented in his letters nor should we assume that, when judged according to the standards of oratory, he spoke with good Greek pronunciation (cf. Lucian, *Nav.* 2). Clearly contained within the criticism is the accusation that Paul did not arrange his speeches according to the formal canons of the handbooks. To assume with many that Paul must have known rhetoric, but did not use it among the Corinthians is sheer speculation. It may also be too much to assert on the basis of this passage that Paul had no knowledge of rhetoric, but the text certainly seems to hint at this—at least this was the impression he left upon some of his critics. The matter revolves primarily around Paul's response to this criticism in 11:6 since it contains his own first-hand perspective rather than what may be a caricature put forward by his critics.

(3) 2 Corinthians 11:6: *ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ*. Most commentators have recognized that Paul acknowledges in this passage to being untrained in rhetoric, but in recent scholarship many have followed Kennedy and now Winter who suggest that *ιδιώτης* merely refers to a non-practicing rhetorician and should not, therefore, be taken as evidence of Paul's lack of training in formal

⁸¹ E.g. Betz, "Rhetoric and Theology," p. 42.

rhetoric. Kennedy concludes that *ιδιώτης* “basically denotes a private person, not a professional; it does not rule out the individual’s informal acquaintance with a subject or practice in it.”⁸² Winter faults Kennedy for not providing evidence for this meaning and points to three passages that appear to allow for an *ιδιώτης* to have some level of rhetorical training: Philodemus 2.134, Philo, *Agr.* 159-160 and Isocrates, *Ant.* 201. He also notes places where Epictetus, Alcidas and Aristides use the term to refer to those untrained in philosophy/oratory and rhetoric and asks whether Paul uses the term here like Philodemus, Philo and Isocrates or like Epictetus, Alcidas and Aristides.⁸³ A survey of the use of *ιδιώτης* among the rhetoricians will help set these references in proper perspective.

Out of 125 occurrences of *ιδιώτης* in the rhetoricians it is used 74 times to contrast a private citizen with a public official of some sort or to denote nonpublic life more generally.⁸⁴ This is by far the most common usage of the term, setting up a broad dichotomy between those involved in some area of public life and ordinary or private citizens. This general political function of the word is seen in Demosthenes, for example, in making contrasts between a private citizen and a person involved in political life generally (*Sp.* 26.4), an individual and a larger political establishment (i.e. a city) (*Sp.* 23.91), or more specifically in contrast to rulers (*Sp.* 26.5). It is often used to set up a contrast between private citizens or laypeople and philosophers (Isocrates, *Soph.* 7), orators (Aeschines, *In Tim.* 8), officers (Xenophon, *An.* 1.3) and soldiers (Xenophon, *Ep. Mag.* 8.1), all individuals involved in public life in some way. This usage reflects a general distinction between private and public. As Winter notes, the term is also used

⁸² G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Studies in Religion; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 95. See also, for example, Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 748; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, p. 278.

⁸³ Winter, *Philo and Paul*, pp. 213-18.

⁸⁴ The corpus of rhetoricians selected for these counts is based upon all of the Greek texts in the Perseus catalogue (www.perseus.tufts.edu) tagged “rhetoric.” Some individual examples draw upon works outside of this collection, however.

among the rhetoricians to denote a person with little to no rhetorical ability. This meaning is usually realized through the opposition of a rhetor to a private citizen. This is often seen in the accusation of one orator against another that they have attacked a private citizen, someone with no rhetorical abilities to defend themselves. Demosthenes, for example, criticizes his opponent by stating: “To which of the orators has he done so much harm as to the private citizens (ιδιώτας) against whom he has been convicted of moving unlawful decrees? What statesman (ρήτορων) has he brought to trial, since he again took to public speaking (ρήτορα)? Not a single one but plenty of private citizens (ιδιώτας)” (Demosthenes, *Sp.* 25.40; trans. LCL). Demosthenes’s criticism of his opponent for attacking a person untrained in rhetoric was a common technique among rhetors used to attack another speaker’s character (see also Hyperides, *Eux.* 27; Aeschines, *Ctes.* 125; Demosthenes, *Sp.* 25.20). The device illustrates a rhetorical ethic that orators sought to abide by. Such criticisms would make little sense if ιδιώτης in these contexts was intended to refer to one who had graduated from a rhetorical school, but not gone into politics. When used with a modifier for ‘speech’ the term can also specifically denote a person with little or no oratory skills. For example, the only two occurrences in Isocrates’s speeches and letters where ιδιώτης is used unambiguously to refer to someone with little or no training in rhetoric are modified by λόγος (Isocrates, *Pan.* 11; *Soph.* 9; cf. also Hyperides, *Eux.* 13). Winter is correct then that ιδιώτης can be used of private citizens more generally in that anyone who did not become involved in professional political life or even had retired from politics was an ιδιώτης. Yet when used in direct contrasts of conflict between an ιδιώτης and a rhetor or with modifiers such as λόγος specifying a particular relation then the more general meaning is not usually at play. This is what Winter’s examples fail to take into consideration and this is exactly what appears to be going on in 2 Cor 11:6. Paul is responding to criticism of his

speech through the admission that he is ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ. Paul seems to be granting that he is untrained in rhetoric, but at the same time emphasizing that he does have knowledge to offer. Unlike Winter's examples, ἰδιώτης with τῷ λόγῳ indicates here a more specified meaning than the general connotation of a private citizen. It would have been meaningless for Paul to profess in this context that he was a mere private citizen or that he had attended a rhetorical school but did not go into politics. Had Paul gone to a school of rhetoric, the criticisms probably would not have arisen and if Paul was skilled in rhetoric but chose not to use it, this would have been the perfect opportunity to say so (cf. 1 Cor 2:1-5). A more rhetorically nuanced understanding of Paul's argumentative strategy may also be possible here. Perhaps Paul intends to rebuke these professional orators for attacking a private citizen. This would make his question a more adequate response and would fit nicely against the ethical rhetorical background for ἰδιώτης alluded to above. On this reading Paul's response is a double-edge sword: on the one hand he criticizes the rhetoricians in Corinth for attacking an ἰδιώτης while on the other hand he points to his knowledge in the gospel of Christ.

3. Conclusions Regarding Literary and Rhetorical Training in Tarsus. The Tarsian tradition of education seems to align nicely with the account in Acts which allows for Paul to have spent enough time in Tarsus for his literary education before traveling abroad to receive his advanced instruction under a rabbi in Jerusalem rather than under a rhetor in Tarsus. This picture is confirmed by the perception of Paul by his critics and his own admission to being untrained in rhetoric. In 2 Cor 10:10 it is clear that Paul's accusers perceive him to be untrained in the art of oratory, and in 11:7 he seems to grant this criticism, perhaps subtly criticizing his rhetorician opponents for attacking a private citizen.

4. *Conclusions: Paul's Education in Tarsus*

On the two-phase understanding of Hellenistic education adopted in this thesis, families with sufficient economic means living in educational centers would have their children learn in a liberal school under the supervision of a *grammaticus* where they would not only acquire basic skills of reading and writing, but also compositional techniques and some *progymnasmata*. Children in families of a lower social status with less economic stability would be limited to basic literacy training in one of the more affordable elementary schools available in their town or city. That Paul's family seems to have had a productive source of income through a successful business makes it likely that he was able to attend a liberal school while in Tarsus, especially given the benefit that such training would have had for the family business. Paul's progression through the first phase of this educational system in a liberal school in Tarsus aligns nicely with ages of a Jewish man suggested by *Pirke Aboth*, the Tarsian tradition of education transmitted by Strabo and the chronology for Paul's adolescent years suggested by Acts 22:3. After finishing his course with the *grammaticus* in Tarsus, it seems that Paul traveled to Jerusalem to complete his education under Gamaliel—traveling outside of Tarsus was the custom for its natives (Strabo, *Geog.* 14.1.13-15) which, in addition to Paul's statements in 2 Cor 11:7 and those of his critics in 2 Cor 10:10, makes it unlikely that Paul studied rhetoric while in Tarsus. There is no reason to assume that Paul was an atypical Tarsian in any significant respect. Therefore it is likely that, like other Jewish children of economic means in the Diaspora, he studied Greek language and literature at a Hellenistic liberal school in Tarsus and that, like other Tarsians, he did not seek to complete his education there in rhetoric or philosophy but chose instead to travel to a foreign center—in Paul's case, Jerusalem, a center for rabbinical instruction, where he would study under Gamaliel.

CHAPTER 4

Paul and Educational Opportunities in Jerusalem

In the previous chapter I suggested that the available historical evidence favors Paul spending the first major portion of his adolescent years in Tarsus, where he probably studied at a liberal school, before moving to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, there would have been opportunities for Hellenistic education as well. There is plenty of evidence for a widespread knowledge of Greek among first-century Palestinians and this would have required some form of educational mechanism. This makes the existence of elementary Hellenistic schools in Jerusalem during the time of Paul a very likely possibility. Hengel has gone further in his suggestion that rhetorical instruction may have also been available in Jerusalem. He has been followed recently by Murphy-O'Connor, Witherington, Hock and Martin in their treatments of Paul's education.¹ Hock claims that it is likely that Paul benefited from a formal rhetorical education "even if Luke's statement about Paul's having studied in Jerusalem with Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) is true, for Martin Hengel has assembled considerable evidence of rhetorical schooling in Jerusalem, where Paul may well have learned rhetoric and practiced it in the Greek-speaking synagogue(s)."² My concern in this chapter is to consider Paul's relation to the Hellenistic educational milieu of first-

¹ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, pp. 58-60; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, p. 46; B. Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998), pp. 97-98; R.F. Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," in J.P. Sampley (ed.), *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2003), pp. 198-227, here p. 215; R.A. Martin, *Studies in the Life and Ministry of the Early Paul and Related Issues* (Lewiston: Mellen, 1993), p. 16; cf. also Richards, *Secretary*, pp. 150-51. It should be noted, however, that Martin is more cautious regarding the presence of rhetorical schools in Jerusalem than Murphy-O'Connor, Hock, and Witherington. He also argues that Paul would not have had interest in rhetorical instruction there due to the opposition of the Pharisees to Hellenization. Several others have claimed directly that Paul must have received a formal rhetorical education: H.H. Koester, "Paul and Hellenism," in J.P. Hyatt (ed.), *The Bible in Modern Scholarship* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1965), pp. 187-95; C. Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," *NTS* 32 (1986), pp. 1-30, here pp. 22-24; Marshall, *Ermyty*, p. 400; H.D. Betz, "Paul," *ABD*, pp. 5:186-201, here p. 5:187; B.W. Winter, "Rhetoric," in G.F. Hawthorne and R.P. Martin (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), pp. 820-21; Winter, *Philo*, p. 218; cf. also A.J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), p. 56.

² Hock, "Paul," p. 215.

century Jerusalem, including elementary and liberal schools, and to address directly Hengel's assertion regarding rhetorical schools within the city.

1. *Elementary and Liberal Schools in Jerusalem*

Based upon papyrological evidence it seems likely that Jerusalem, like most Hellenized cities,³ would have had access to basic literacy education. It is (on the surface) not probable, however, that institutions of higher education were present there during the first century. As Witherington notices, "it seems odd to think of a Jew such as Paul learning Greco-Roman rhetoric in Jerusalem."⁴ Though Jerusalem was heavily Hellenized, as many have emphasized, it was still far from attaining the status of a center for Greek culture. Therefore, like other cities of its kind, we would only expect it to have schools that facilitated basic literacy and possibly some access to liberal education. The more advanced types of instruction found in the city would have undoubtedly been rabbinical institutions and Jewish wisdom schools,⁵ which no one doubts Paul had access to. These initial assumptions are confirmed by literary and material evidence.

Several scholars have devoted attention to Jewish education in tannaitic and amoraic times.⁶ According to Drazin, a formalized Jewish education system began to develop with the construction of the second temple.⁷ A three-phase evolution of the Jewish educational system is typically attributed to Yehoshua b. Gamla and Shimon b. Shetach, beginning with the

³ The degree to which Judea was "Hellenistic" is still debated. For diverse perspectives, see J.J. Collins and G.E. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (CJA 13; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

⁴ Though he goes on to defend why we should not think of it as odd. Witherington, *The Paul Quest*, p. 97.

⁵ See J.J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Old Testament Library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), p. 38; cf. Hengel, "Hellenization", p. 19.

⁶ See esp. N. Drazin, *History of Jewish Education from 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940); E. Ebner, *Elementary Education in Ancient Israel during the Tannaitic Period (10-220 C.E.)* (New York: Bloch, 1956); M.S. Jaffe, "The Oral-Cultural Context of the Talmud Yerushalmi: Greco-Roman Rhetorical Paideia, Discipleship, and the Concept of Oral Torah," in Peter Schäfer (ed.), *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Greco-Roman Culture* (3 vols.; TSAJ 71; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), pp. 1:27-61.

⁷ Drazin, *History*, p. 35.

establishment of higher learning, then later secondary schools and finally elementary schools.⁸ Bacher's claim on the basis of these texts that a public educational system was fully intact and accessible by the second century BC is probably too strong an inference to draw from these passages.⁹ Although some level of private education may have begun to be facilitated during the second temple period, it seems that, like the Hellenistic schools of the first century AD, education was primarily a private endeavor undertaken within the home or among small gatherings. Significant public standardization of the Jewish educational school system does not appear to take place until the second century AD.¹⁰

It is extremely difficult to provide a convincing reconstruction of early Jewish education since the only literary source that directly mentions it is *b.Bat.21a*, transmitted through the Babylonian Talmud. And many have called into question the reliability of this source. Most believe it to be late, probably from the tannaitic period dating no earlier than late second or early third century AD.¹¹ Talmudic texts that attest to the existence of hundreds of Jewish schools in Jerusalem prior to the destruction of the temple (*y. Meg. 3:1; par.b.Ket. 105b*) are called into question for similar reasons.¹² Education, then, must have been restricted to private instruction within the home, especially by the father but perhaps under the supervision of a tutor as well.

As in the Second Temple period, evidence of elementary education in tannaitic times from rabbinical sources is scarce—although in the amoraic period emphasis upon the parent's role in elementary education becomes more prominent.¹³ In addition to synagogues (one of the

⁸ See Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, pp. 40-41; Drazin, *History*, p. 37; W. Bacher, "Das altjüdische Schulwesen," *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* 6 (1903), pp. 48-81; L. Ginzberg, *Students, Scholars and Saints* (New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1928), p. 8.

⁹ Bacher, "Das altjüdische Schulwesen," p. 60.

¹⁰ B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (rev.; BRS; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 58.

¹¹ E.g. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 46.

¹² Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 47.

¹³ For references, see Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, pp. 49-50.

primary domains for elementary and secondary education during tannaitic and amoraic times) study houses were utilized as meeting places for instruction. Both Drazin and Gerhardsson note the clear establishment of a “two-level” approach to Jewish education by the end of the first century AD, consisting of a secondary (preparatory) school for male adolescents and a more advanced institution designed for training in oral Torah.¹⁴

The structure of this system has distinct parallels with the two-phase understanding of Hellenistic education. As with the Jewish model, Greek adolescents would often receive the initial stages of education (especially moral instruction) from their fathers. A particularly popular Hellenistic schooltext, as indicated by frequent references in the papyri, was the collection of ethical advice from Isocrates to Demonikos, a friend of Isocrates who is receiving his education. Isocrates urges Demonikos not to forget his first teacher, his father: “striving to imitate and emulate his excellence” (Isocrates, *Ad Dem.* 9-11). As Cribiore concludes, “[E]ducation in its simplest form was a son’s imitation of the excellence and conduct of his own father.” By the time the adolescent had reached the age to begin his primary education, “The two figures, the father and the teacher, had joined their efforts, and their images blended.”¹⁵ As noted above, this was followed by study at a literacy or liberal school and then rhetorical education for those who had graduated from the liberal school and desired a career in politics or law. Similarly, Jewish children would move on from instruction under their father¹⁶ to study Hebrew literacy in the school for written Torah. If they performed exceptionally at this elementary level, they would have the rare chance to progress to higher Jewish education, consisting of continued schooling in written Torah as well as instruction in oral Torah or midrash. At the elementary level, Hebrew was studied, as opposed to Greek, and the content of the (written) Torah was used as the basis for

¹⁴ Drazin, *History*, p. 44; Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, p. 57.

¹⁵ Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, p. 106; cf. Bonner, *Education*, pp. 10-19.

¹⁶ This tradition dates as far back as Deut 6:7 and is represented in rabbinic tradition as well (e.g. *t.Hag.* 1:2).

the educational curriculum instead of Homer and other Greek poets. Perhaps the most substantial difference between Hellenistic and Jewish primary schools was the emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy in the Hellenistic schools that appears to be absent (i.e. not mentioned in rabbinical sources) from instruction in Jewish elementary schools.¹⁷ It is likely that by the first century AD, Hellenized Jewish schools had emerged in Jerusalem that issued instruction in Greek, using the LXX as the basis for their curriculum instead of the Hebrew Scriptures. These schools would have had more practical appeal in a culture where the *lingua franca* was Greek and, in Roman Palestine, Aramaic as well. Students could learn their religious tradition while increasing their proficiency in Greek. This is certainly evident among Diaspora Jewish communities and the Hellenistic influence in Palestine probably encouraged the introduction of similar schools—that the Palestinian authors of the New Testament used the LXX most often in their citation of the Old Testament is one clear testimony to this.

Jewish higher education consisted primarily of study with a particular rabbi at the synagogue or in a study house. Studying with the rabbi one desired or even being admitted into the rabbinical school was awarded only to a chosen few.¹⁸ Some have sought to assess parallels and influences from Hellenistic rhetorical education in these schools.¹⁹ Daube has shown the influence of Hellenistic rhetoricians upon the seven interpretative axioms of Hillel, a Diaspora Jew who had a significant impact upon the hermeneutical principles of later rabbinical

¹⁷ N. Morris, *The Jewish School: An Introduction to the History of Jewish Education* (London: Jewish Education Committee Press, 1937), p. 78.

¹⁸ See Hezser, *Social Structure*, pp. 93-110.

¹⁹ For an assortment of perspectives, see related essays in H.A. Fischel (ed.), *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature* (New York: KTAV, 1977); see also S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the 1 Century B.C.E.-IV Century C.E.* (TSJTS 18; New York: JTSA, 1950); H.G. Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians* (RFCC; London: Routledge, 2000); on philosophical schools, see also M.L. Clarke, *Higher Education in the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 1971), pp. 55-108.

interpretation.²⁰ Jaffee has illustrated rhetorical influence upon Galilean rabbis in late tannaitic and amoraic times, suggesting that “it is possible to explore the degree to which such variation [of tannaitic traditions] may be ... explained by the hypothesis that Amoraic rhetorical education, including the intentional oral reconfiguration of written Tannaitic material, may lie behind diverse transmissional variations of such literary units.”²¹

Philosophical parallels have been suggested as well. After making connections between Greek rhetoricians and the rabbis, Jaffe goes on to draw further parallels between Greco-Roman philosophical culture and rabbinic models of discipleship.²² Bergman, Goldin, Fischel, Wasserstein and Hezser have all developed similarities with rabbinical institutions and Hellenistic philosophical schools much further.²³ Fischel has written most extensively on the topic, suggesting that rabbis and philosophers comprised a single “Scholar-Sage-Bureaucrat” class present throughout the Mediterranean world, arguing on form-critical grounds that the use of the “*chria*” by the rabbis and philosophers can be traced back to a common *Sitz im Leben*.²⁴ Alexander notes a skepticism toward the written word as a common belief between rabbis and philosophers.²⁵ But Snyder’s important study has shown that Stoic, Epicurean, Peripatetic and

²⁰ Daube, “Rabbinic Methods,” pp. 239-64.

²¹ Jaffee, “Oral-Cultural Context,” p. 40.

²² Jaffee, “Oral-Cultural Context,” pp. 53-60. Jaffee also draws correlations between rabbinic academies and early Christian discipleship circles, as does Lapin. See H. Lapin, “Jewish and Christian Academies in Roman Palestine: Some Preliminary Observations,” in A. Raban and K.G. Holum (eds.), *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (DMOA 21; Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 496-512.

²³ J. Bergman, “Die stoische Philosophie und die jüdische Frömmigkeit,” *Judaica* (1912), pp. 145-66; J. Goldin, “A Philosophical Session in a Tannaite Academy,” *Traditio* 21 (1965), pp. 1-21; H.A. Fischel, “Prolegomena,” in Fischel (ed.), *Essays*, xiii-lxxvi; H.A. Fischel, “Studies in Cynicism and the Ancient Near East: The Transformation of a *Chria*,” in J. Neusner (ed.), *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 327-411; H.A. Fischel, *Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy: A Study in Epicurea and Rhetorica in Early Midrashic Writings* (Spost-B 21; Leiden: Brill, 1973); A. Wasserstein, “Greek Language and Philosophy in Early Rabbinic Academies,” in G. Abramson and T. Parfitt (eds.), *Jewish Education and Learning* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994), pp. 221-31; C. Hezser, “Interfaces between Rabbinic Literature and Graeco-Roman Philosophy,” in Schäfer and Hezser (eds.), *Talmud Yerushalmi*, pp. 1:161-87.

²⁴ Fischel, “Studies in Cynicism,” pp. 372-411.

²⁵ L. Alexander, “The Living Voice: Scepticism Towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts,” in D.J.A. Clines, S.E. Fowl, and S.E. Porter (eds.), *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in*

Platonic philosophical schools were actually text-centered in many respects, even if the spoken word often took precedence as a pedagogical device.²⁶ Scribal culture must also be considered when evaluating the Jewish dimension. Others have pointed to shared motifs, metaphysical and moral notions, and similar beliefs regarding questions of origins between Hellenistic rabbis and philosophers.²⁷

Although many of these parallels are suggestive of the dependence of Jewish models upon earlier Hellenistic schools, Hezser has rightly cautioned against the “positivistic” search for influences: “The influence question, which occupied scholars for many decades, is a question which can never be answered in a satisfactory way.”²⁸ Cultural and literary parallels do not directly entail influence. The establishment of both types of schools as institutions for higher education (primary education was a necessary prerequisite for both), and the immersion of Jewish culture (rabbinical and otherwise) in Hellenism during the relevant periods, however, should not be underestimated. Thus, while the impact of higher Hellenistic education upon the content of advanced rabbinical schooling during the early periods (i.e. second temple and tannaitic periods) does not seem to be as significant as in amoraic times, it appears quite likely that rabbinic academies have a structural correlate in the Greco-Roman institutions that preceded them. It also appears, especially within extremely Hellenized cities, that rabbis and philosophers, as the academic elite of their respective communities, would have had some level of interaction. These engagements must have been almost entirely informal, however, as we have no evidence from rabbinical sources that rabbis ever underwent formal training in a Hellenistic school of higher education. Therefore, as Hezser notes, “Individual rabbis may have occasionally met and

Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield (JSOTSup 87; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), pp. 221-47.

²⁶ Snyder, *Teachers and Texts*, pp. 14-21.

²⁷ See Hezser, “Interfaces,” pp. 161-83 for a review of the research.

²⁸ Hezser, “Interfaces,” p. 162.

talked to Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals who were well acquainted with Greek philosophy, but there is absolutely no evidence that a Palestinian rabbi mentioned in Palestinian rabbinic documents ever studied properly at a philosophical (or rhetorical) school.”²⁹

Material evidence confirms assumptions of basic Greek literacy and instruction in first-century Jerusalem. Though scholars held for some time that Aramaic was typically used at the exclusion of other languages in first-century Palestine, significant evidence now points to the widespread use of Greek and Hebrew as well.³⁰ In the last forty years a number of scholars have put forward important evidence for specifically Greek influence in Palestine (a body of data far too extensive to chronicle here).³¹ As Fitzmyer notes:

If asked what was the language commonly spoken in Palestine in the time of Jesus of Nazareth, most people with some acquaintance of that era and area would almost spontaneously answer Aramaic. To my way of thinking, this is still the correct answer for the *most commonly* used language, but the defense of this thesis must reckon with the growing mass of evidence that both Greek and Hebrew were being used as well [emphasis his].³²

Lieberman goes as far to assert that “the Greek language was known to the Jewish masses.”³³

According to Sevenster, “It has now been clearly demonstrated that a knowledge of Greek was in no way restricted to the upper circles, which were permeated with Hellenistic culture, but was to

²⁹ Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 106.

³⁰ Latin was also prevalent under the Roman empire. We see little evidence for the use of Latin in Roman Palestine, however. The best New Testament evidence of Latin usage is found in the fact that it was one of the three languages placed upon Jesus’ cross. Some have also sought to see possible knowledge of Latin among Palestinians on the basis of Acts 6:9. See Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 235.

³¹ See esp. S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II-IV Centuries C.E.* (2nd ed.; New York: Feldheim, 1965); J.N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?: How Much Greek could the First Jewish Christians have Known?* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1968); Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, esp. 58-65; G. Mussies, “Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora,” in S. Safrai and M. Stern (eds.), *Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions* (CINT 1-2; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974-76), pp. 1040-64; J.W. Voelz, “The Linguistic Milieu of the Early Church,” *CTQ* 56 (1992), pp. 81-97; Wasserstein, “Greek Language,” pp. 221-31; S.E. Porter, “Jesus and the Use of Greek in Galilee,” in B. Chilton and C.A. Evans (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (New Testament Tools and Studies 19; Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 123-54; Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, pp. 227-350.

³² J.A. Fitzmyer, “The Languages of Palestine in the First-century A.D.,” *CBQ* 32 (1970), pp. 501-31; rep. in J.A. Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 29-56, here pp. 38-39.

³³ Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, p. 2.

be found in all circles of Jewish society, and certainly places bordering on regions where much Greek was spoken, e.g. Galilee.”³⁴ This insistence upon a common knowledge of Greek among various social classes, however, is not meant to imply that the same level of knowledge or use of Greek proliferated all social and economic strata. Hezser has shown through a thorough investigation of epigraphic evidence including letters, documents, notes, inscriptions, literary works and magical texts that the choice of Greek over Aramaic or of Aramaic over Greek depended on a variety of social factors.³⁵ Those who lived “in urban areas, belonged to the wealthier strata of society, and were occupied in the administrative realm tended to use Greek more frequently for writing purposes than the poorer population in the villages and countryside did, if the later used writing at all.”³⁶ While Jerusalem was clearly not as Hellenized as some Palestinian cities,³⁷ a strong Greek linguistic presence is detected here as well. Greek inscriptions found within the city are roughly equal in number to Semitic inscriptions, compared to the two thirds of funerary inscriptions that are in Greek found throughout Palestine.³⁸ Greek ossuaries and tombstone inscriptions that have been discovered in Jerusalem consistently date between 30 BC and AD 70, testifying to the frequent use of Greek in Jerusalem during the time of Paul. Greek inscriptions of these sorts not only confirm an ability to write and communicate in Greek among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they also point to the common assumption that Greek communication would be read and understood by other inhabitants.

With such strong testimony to the profusion of Greek in Roman Palestine in general and within Jerusalem in particular, a pedagogical mechanism must be posited in order to explain high

³⁴ Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?*, p. 190.

³⁵ Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, pp. 251-450.

³⁶ Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 447.

³⁷ For Hellenistic and linguistic influence in the respective cities see J.A. Fitzmyer, “Languages,” pp. 29-56.

³⁸ See P.W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* (Kampen: Kok, 1991). See also Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?*, esp. pp. 143-48.

levels of Greek literacy. The level and settings of Greek education available to Jews in first-century Palestine is, however, difficult to assess since available rabbinical sources make no explicit reference to Hellenistic schools in Palestine—though they do contain discussion on whether or not a parent should teach their child Greek (*m.Sot.* 9:14; *t.Sot.* 15:8).³⁹ Hengel hypothesizes that the introduction of Greek education into Palestine probably worked in tandem with the expansion of the Greek language as early as the third century BC—he points to a Greek secretary among the Jewish family of Tobias in 257 BC.⁴⁰ The abundance of Greek inscriptions around the turn of the millennium strongly suggests a significant presence of elementary Greek education in Jerusalem during the first century AD. The majority of these schools were probably geared toward the middle and even some lower classes in order to equip students with basic Greek literacy in an increasingly Hellenized world.⁴¹ Upper-class children, especially those of the aristocracy, may have attended some of these schools, but (if available) they probably attended a liberal school where they could receive a fuller Greek education. Initially, Greek elementary schools in Jerusalem may have been intended for Diaspora Jews and non-Jewish immigrants, but would have been available to Palestinian Jews as well. However, as the level of Greek communication and literacy increased in Palestine (and Jerusalem), the Jewish contingent of attendees probably began to increase as well. This is confirmed by the fact that there is little evidence to commend the view that Greek inscriptions found in Jerusalem were written solely by non-Jews and Diaspora Jews—many seem to be of Palestinian Jewish origin.⁴² We know from papyrological discoveries in Egypt that Greek elementary schools were very common in significant towns where the Greek language was spoken and written and it is unlikely that it was

³⁹ Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 92.

⁴⁰ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, pp. 75-76.

⁴¹ *Contra* S. Safrai, "Elementary Education, Its Religious and Social Significance in the Talmudic Period," *Cahiers D'Histoire Mondiale* 11 (1968), pp. 148-69, here p. 148.

⁴² See Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?*, pp. 146-49.

not equally the case in Jerusalem. This raises the question as to why reference to such schools is omitted from rabbinic sources. Hezser theorizes that, "Just as rabbis never deal with the secular instruction given in professional (family) guilds, they may not have considered it necessary to mention Jewish students attending Greek elementary schools." Or, "perhaps the editors of the documents deliberately avoided all references to such schools because they constituted a more or less attractive alternative to Torah teaching."⁴³ Although there is no mention of Hellenistic schools among rabbinical sources, there is mention of Homer (*m.Yad.* 4:6; *y.Sanh.* 10:1), probably due to a perception of the rabbis that Homer was in competition with sacred Scripture.⁴⁴ Homer was the primary text used for writing exercises, recitation and reading from the first stages of literacy all the way through the final stages of the liberal school. While this does not provide direct evidence for elementary schools in first-century Palestine, it does highlight the popularity of Homer which went hand in hand with Hellenistic education. In any case, levels of Greek literacy based upon material evidence and (indirectly) the proliferation of schooltext papyri in Greco-Roman Egypt attest strongly to the presence of elementary schools in Jerusalem.⁴⁵ Of course, this is not to suggest that elementary schools were the only mechanism for Greek language acquisition in first-century Palestine. All who came into contact with Greek speakers on a daily basis will have picked up, at least, some colloquial Greek. Others will have attained a much firmer grasp upon the language through day to day communications with Greek speakers. Proficiency levels would have varied from region to region, from social class to social class, and from individual to individual depending on the level of interaction a person had with those who spoke Greek. Greek literacy, however, is not as easily gained from mere social interaction. In addition to Greek secretaries being available within the city, it seems necessary to

⁴³ Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 92.

⁴⁴ Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 71.

⁴⁵ Cf. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, pp. 65-66.

posit the existence of elementary schools where the inhabitants of the city could become acquainted with basic skills of reading and writing Greek.

In addition to elementary schools, there is evidence of a Greek gymnasium in Jerusalem, at least in the time of Jason. 1 and 2 Maccabees provide an account of the founding of the gymnasium in Jerusalem under Jason (1 Macc 1:14; 2 Macc 4:9-14) and the ephebate in association with it in 175 BC.⁴⁶ The Greek gymnasium was an important part of Hellenistic society and typically complemented Greek education by providing a physical, military and entrainment dimension to the training of adolescents in Greek culture. Other schools designed to accommodate education in the Greek language were likely founded in association with the gymnasium, but we have no record of how long it continued or evidence of its existence in the first century AD.

It is possible that a liberal education, under a *grammaticus*, was available to the sons of the aristocracy in Jerusalem and other upper-class members of society. Archelaus (and Philip) and later Antipas were sent to Rome for their education (Josephus, *War* 1:602). It is possible that they received their liberal education under a *grammaticus* in Jerusalem before going to Rome to pursue advanced studies in rhetoric. The practice of receiving a formal education at home and then traveling to one of the major educational centers for one's higher education, usually for instruction in rhetoric or philosophy, however, seems to be limited to Tarsus (Strabo, *Geo.* 14.5.13-15). It was usually the case that students studied abroad for their entire education.⁴⁷ The men in Herod's court were "well-versed in Greek education" (Josephus, *War* 2.21) but this does not suggest that they attained their education in Jerusalem. Josephus seems to have received instruction under a *grammaticus* at some point. In *Ant.* 20.263 he states:

⁴⁶ On the ephebate, see O.W. Reinmuth, "The Ephebate and Citizenship in Attica," *TAPA* 79 (1948), pp. 211-231.

⁴⁷ See Daly, "Roman Study," pp. 40-58.

My own countrymen freely confess that I surpass them in the learning of the Jews, but I have also sought eagerly to gain an understanding of Greek prose and poetry, after having acquired a knowledge of Greek grammar—though the continuous use of my native tongue has hindered me from pronouncing Greek with sufficient precision.

Instruction in Greek grammar and literature would have been the proper domain of the *grammaticus* in the later stages of a liberal school. It is unclear, however, from his account whether he received his education while he was in Palestine or if he sat under a *grammaticus* after he arrived in Rome—the later option seems far more likely. Thus, while the (slight) possibility of a liberal school in Jerusalem exists, these were probably quite scarce in comparison with schools that facilitated basic Greek literacy and (if present) were probably only available to the children of the aristocracy.

Strong material evidence and a few references in literary sources support the existence of elementary schools in Jerusalem as a mechanism for residents acquiring Greek literacy. Therefore, if Paul did grow up in Jerusalem as many believe he almost certainly would have had the opportunity to attend a Greek literacy school—had his family so desired—and although far more unlikely he may have been able to study with a *grammaticus* in the city as well. We must also leave open the possibility of an adapted Jewish form of Hellenistic education in first-century Jerusalem that taught Greek and used the Septuagint as its central curricular basis instead of Homer and the other poets.

2. Rhetorical Schools

The analysis of Acts 22:3 above suggests the possibility that Paul spent a portion of his adolescent years in Tarsus where he most likely sat under a *grammaticus*, learning literacy, Greek literature, and basic letter-writing and compositional skills. Even on a more stringent reading of the biographical formula in Acts 22:3, which places Paul in Jerusalem for his entire education, it is still possible that Paul may have received a formal Greek education in Jerusalem

given the evidence for Greek literacy schools and the (less likely) possibility of a *grammaticus* within the city. On any construal that takes into serious consideration the evidence from Acts, Paul would have been in Jerusalem for his advanced education. The level of higher Greek (specifically rhetorical) education available in Jerusalem during this time, therefore, is a significant factor to consider in constructing a historical account of Paul's Hellenistic education.

The work of many modern scholars tends to situate Paul among the class of the well educated Hellenistic rhetoricians. A number of scholars have even made this claim directly.⁴⁸ These assumptions, however, are rarely defended historically. Most of the evidence for viewing Paul against the backdrop of ancient rhetorical theory comes from an analysis of his letters. Several scholars have already pointed out numerous theoretical and textual difficulties associated with the application of rhetorical categories to Pauline literature.⁴⁹ A couple of scholars have addressed some of the historical issues involved here. Carol Poster documents support for three types of ancient letter writers: (1) basic literacy (marginally literate private individuals, basic clerks, and scribes; knew no rhetorical formulae), (2) professional subelite or nonelite letter writers (those who were in private employment or official employment; would know extensive letter-writing formulas and perhaps specialized epistolary theory), and (3) those who had

⁴⁸ For references, see note 1 of this chapter.

⁴⁹ Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 110-292; S.E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature," in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), pp. 100-22; S.E. Porter, "Paul of Tarsus and his Letters," in S.E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 B.C. to A.D. 400)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 533-85; S.E. Porter, "Paul as Epistolographer and Rhetorician?," in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds.), *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (JSNTSup 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 222-48; J.T. Reed, "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre," in Porter and Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, pp. 292-324; J.T. Reed, "The Epistle," in Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, pp. 171-93; J. Lambrecht, "Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament," *Bijdr* 50 (1989), pp. 3-29; D.L. Stamps, "Rhetorical Criticism and the Rhetoric of New Testament Criticism," *JLT* 6 (1992), pp. 268-79; D.L. Stamps, "Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament," in S.E. Porter and D. Tombs (eds.), *Approaches to New Testament Study* (JSNTSup 120; Sheffield: JSOT, 1995), pp. 129-69; J.C. Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* 10 (1992), pp. 319-44; P.H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistles* (SNTSMS 101; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

rhetorical/sophistical training (members of the Greco-Roman elite [or subelite] who were employed in very wealthy private houses or major public offices; had advanced rhetorical training).⁵⁰ She argues that the question of whether we should find rhetorical categories or epistolary formulas in (say) the letters of Paul is, therefore, dependent on the training of the letter writer and his use of secretaries. “We can not make generalizations that hold true for all socio-economic strata.”⁵¹ According to Poster, Paul and his apostolic contemporaries would have certainly fallen outside of the bounds of the Greco-Roman elite and would have been—at best—among one of the subelite socio-economic communities. Poster’s analysis, however, does not take into consideration issues of geographical location, social status and the broader Greco-Roman education system as they relate to individual New Testament figures. While these initiatory observations are insightful and on track, her application to Paul is significantly underdeveloped.

Martin Hengel is the only scholar, to my knowledge, who has attempted to marshal positive historical support for the presence of rhetorical schools in Jerusalem during the time of Paul and he has been followed by several others (noted above).⁵² Hengel paints a very interesting picture of Hellenized Jerusalem in the time of Paul. Most of it is quite convincing. Perhaps there was a Hellenistic school run by Jews that taught the Greek language, but through the use of the LXX instead of the Greek poets.⁵³ Undoubtedly, preaching in the synagogue would have involved the use of oratory skills and those who consistently practiced preaching in the synagogue would have naturally had much opportunity to develop these techniques. They

⁵⁰ Poster, “Economy,” pp. 112-24.

⁵¹ Poster, “Economy,” p. 123.

⁵² Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, pp. 58-60. He is followed by Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, p. 46; Witherington, *The Paul Quest*, pp. 97-98; Hock, “Paul and Greco-Roman Education,” p. 215; Martin, *Studies*, p. 16; cf. also Richards, *Secretary*, pp. 150-51.

⁵³ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, pp. 58-59. For a similar portrayal, see Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, pp. 62-63.

certainly could have possessed the kind of “un-literary rhetorical training, focused on speaking publicly in the synagogue”⁵⁴ that Hengel speaks of—but it was probably not Asianic rhetoric.⁵⁵ His suggestion that there was specifically Greek rhetorical schooling available in Jerusalem at the time of Paul is more open to question, however, based upon the papyrological evidence discussed above and the weakness of the positive evidence he provides. Greek literacy is well confirmed in Jerusalem and this is what we would expect based upon widespread geographical distribution of elementary Greek schooltexts in Greco-Roman Egypt. One would not, however, expect to find more advanced Hellenistic schools in a place like Jerusalem. And if the Jews in Jerusalem adapted the education curriculum to exclude Greek literature, then why would they have incorporated wholesale Greek rhetorical practices and compositional techniques in their synagogue instruction? Why not continue with the Jewish rhetoric that had already been established or turn to Old Testament and previous rabbinical models for preaching?

Unlike those who have built upon his work on education, Hengel’s analyses of early Hellenistic schools in Jerusalem are heavily Jewish in orientation and are more cautious toward whether Paul would have received rhetorical education, even if it was available in Jerusalem. The majority of the evidence he offers suggests the thesis that “Paul learned the basic insights of his indubitable rhetorical art, which is not oriented toward classical literary models, through practical application in Greek-speaking synagogues in Jerusalem.”⁵⁶ Although he insists that formal rhetorical instruction may have been present in Jerusalem, “whether Paul had such instruction may be left an open question.”⁵⁷ But it is far from certain that rhetorical schools, which were still lacking in a few major Greek cultural centers during the first century AD, would

⁵⁴ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, p. 58.

⁵⁵ J. Fairweather, “The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric,” *TynBul* 45 (1994), pp. 1-38, pp. 213-43, here pp. 229-35.

⁵⁶ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, p. 58.

⁵⁷ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, p. 60.

have been represented in a place like Jerusalem, and the evidence that Hengel provides is not decisive.

Perhaps the strongest piece of evidence for rhetorical schools in Jerusalem suggested by Hengel and reemphasized by Witherington is found in Nicolaus of Damascus, a well educated historian and philosopher who played a significant role in Herod's court. Hengel claims that Nicolaus instructed Herod in rhetoric,⁵⁸ but this is far from certain. As Wacholder notes, it would be 'surprising to learn that Herod...expressed a desire to master philosophy or rhetoric. Josephus's long account of Herod contains nothing to suggest that the king had an interest in either discipline.'⁵⁹ Herod's interests in Nicolaus were much more political, and he consistently sought to exploit the talents of his court orator in order to gain respect and power among the Greeks.⁶⁰ Nicolaus's rhetorical training would have undoubtedly assisted him in these duties but this does not entail that he employed his talents more broadly as a teacher within the city. Our account of Nicolaus (for example in his *Autobiography*) during his time in Judea (14 BC-4 BC) paints him as a political figure and representative of the Herodian court, not as an instructor of a rhetorical school in Jerusalem. As one of Herod's chief ambassadors, Nicolaus was required to be away from Jerusalem for long periods of time (see Josephus, *Ant.* 16.289), which would have made the implementation of the five to six year rhetorical curriculum quite difficult.⁶¹ One also wonders why Herod would have sent Archelaus and Philip⁶² and later Antipas to study in Rome if advanced Greek education was already available in Jerusalem. That Herod had well educated men within his court is to be expected (Josephus, *War* 2.21). But to assume further on this basis

⁵⁸ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, p. 59.

⁵⁹ B.Z. Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (UCPH 75; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 30.

⁶⁰ Wacholder, *Nicolaus*, pp. 13-46.

⁶¹ Criatore, *Gymnastics*, p. 224.

⁶² Archelaus and Philip probably left Palestine around 10 BC, which would have meant they left while Nicolaus was an active part of the Herodian court. See H.W. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (SNTSMS 17; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 13.

that these men went on to found or in some way propagate schools for advanced Hellenistic education in Jerusalem or that they were representative of a larger educational trend in the city that would have been available to Paul seems unwarranted. It appears that to gain an informed and representative picture of the nature of Greco-Roman education in Jerusalem, we must venture outside of the royal family and its inner circle. Many major Egyptian cities had a strong political presence, which would have meant that Greek education was well represented among the officials in their courts, but we find no evidence that rhetoric was being taught in these cities.⁶³

Of course, if Paul received rhetorical education in Jerusalem, we have to assume not only that Nicolaus facilitated (or represented) rhetorical training during his tenure there (14 BC-4 BC) but also that the respective school(s) were sustained under Antipas long after Nicolaus's retirement in Rome.⁶⁴ Also relevant is whether Paul, given his socioeconomic status and vocational ambitions, would have had access to advanced Greek education and interest in it—even if it was available in the city. Would rhetorical schooling in Jerusalem have been available and appealing to Paul?

Witherington suggests that it would have on the basis of Wacholder's remark that "certainly the leading Pharisees studied Greek."⁶⁵ But this conflates Greek literacy with rhetorical education.⁶⁶ These phases of education remained distinct and exposure to the former did not entail the later. In contrast to rhetoric,⁶⁷ lower levels of Hellenistic education were common throughout the Mediterranean world and were available to a wide range of social

⁶³ For statistics see Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 288-89, 306-07.

⁶⁴ I am assuming a date for Paul's birth around the turn of the century. See R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (trans. Doug Stott; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 213-14.

⁶⁵ Witherington, *Paul Quest*, p. 98; Wacholder, *Nicolaus*, p. 48.

⁶⁶ See also Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁷ While no major social restrictions were placed on elementary education, grammar and rhetoric was limited to a very select group. Slaves, barbarians, peasants, illiterates, children and women were excluded. Morgan, *Literate Education*, p. 235.

classes. And if, as Hengel suggests,⁶⁸ Paul did not study the traditional Greek grammatical curriculum, which included instruction in the Greek literature and elementary compositional exercises but focused instead on the *LXX*,⁶⁹ then it is questionable whether he would have had the necessary prerequisites to go on to rhetorical schooling.⁷⁰ The last phases of the Greco-Roman liberal school served as essential preparation for what would be learned under the rhetorician, especially instruction in the *progymnasmata*.⁷¹

Pharisaic resistance to Hellenization may have also turned Paul away from pursuing a rhetorical education had it been present. As Martin suggests, even if Greek rhetorical education existed in Jerusalem, “that the very strictest wing of the Pharisees and that the most zealous and strictly observant young scholar Paul would have been encouraged or permitted to attend such a school, or even would have desired such deepening in Hellenization is hardly likely!”⁷² The bitterest opponents to Hellenism in Jerusalem were Hasidim, Qumran Essenes and the Pharisees. This clearly would have been an obstacle for Paul, a member of a group who in the past had pioneered the resistance to Hellenization in Judea, indulging himself in the most central and advanced elements of Hellenistic culture while a practicing Pharisee. Furthermore, the fact that there is absolutely no evidence among tannaitic sources of a Palestinian rabbi that studied formally at a Hellenistic school of rhetoric would make Paul the only documented exception to this had he attended a rhetorical school in Jerusalem.

⁶⁸ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, p. 38.

⁶⁹ See Marrou, *History*, pp. 160-75.

⁷⁰ Cf. Koester, *Introduction*, p. 97.

⁷¹ Clark, *Rhetoric*, pp. 61-64. Suetonius states that the grammarian would implement very basic compositional exercises so that “they might not turn their pupils to the rhetoricians wholly ignorant and unprepared.” *On Grammarians*, p. iv in Clark, *Rhetoric*, p. 64.

⁷² Martin, *Studies*, p. 16.

The second piece of evidence that Hengel claims is suggestive of rhetorical instruction in Jerusalem is Tertullus,⁷³ an orator who accompanied Ananias and the members of the Sanhedrin to Paul's trial in Caesarea (Acts 24:1-9). We know very little about Tertullus. He may have been a Jew or a Greek: his name is not helpful in determining the issue since it was a common Latin name. The first person plural is used throughout Tertullus's accusation, but Luke also seems to imply a degree of separation in 24:9 when he says "the Jews also contributed," making a clear distinction between Tertullus and "the Jews." Perhaps Tertullus employed the first person plural as a representative of the Jews, expressing a level of unity with his clients.⁷⁴

The text is unclear regarding where Tertullus lived. While it is a possibility that he lived in Jerusalem, it is equally likely that the Jews brought him in from a larger city for their trip to Caesarea, especially if he was hired because of his knowledge of Roman law.⁷⁵ Yet since the location where Tertullus lived and worked remains unclear from the Acts account, whether he set up a school for rhetorical instruction in Jerusalem continues to be a matter of speculation with little evidence to commend it. It is also interesting that Ananias, the aristocratic high priest and mostly likely candidate outside of Herod's court to have advanced Greek education, deems it necessary to bring an orator in addition to his politically well connected crew of elders in the Sanhedrin, though Tertullus's expertise in Roman law must have also been an important credential.

3. Summary and Conclusions: Toward a Historical Picture of Paul's Hellenistic Education

Most scholars conclude that Paul was not educated to a very high level in Tarsus, receiving the majority if not all of his education in Jerusalem. This is usually based on a number

⁷³ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, pp. 59-60.

⁷⁴ Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, p. 410.

⁷⁵ Again, we may point to Herod's sending his sons out of Jerusalem to study Roman law and rhetoric.

of historical assumptions including a traditional three-stage understanding of the Greco-Roman educational system, an overly stringent reading of Acts 22:3, a low social status for Paul and his Jewish ethnicity.⁷⁶ This thesis has sought so far to call into question the standard three-phase portrayal of Hellenistic education as well the almost universal reading of Acts 22:3 in terms of van Unnik's overly restrictive interpretation. In final analysis, Acts 22:3 appears to favor a Tarsus upbringing for Paul. The chronology provided by Acts 22:3, furthermore, fits nicely with a two-phase account of Hellenistic education, in which Paul would have studied at a liberal school where he learned the Greek language and had some basic exposure to the Greek poets and certain compositional exercises, being trained in Torah within the home, up until the age when it was time to depart for Jerusalem. And while Paul was among trade labors in Tarsus it is not implausible, given his Roman citizenship, that he was part of a family who had a successful business of tentmaking in Tarsus that provided them with the necessary financial means and desire to provide Paul with a Greek education. The *Letter of Aristeas* and Philo's expectations regarding Greek education for children of Diaspora Jews of financial means further indicate that Paul's Jewish ethnicity is less of an issue than some have assumed. But although Paul's family seemed to have a productive trade that would have allowed for some education and traveling, it is not likely, given Strabo's account of education tradition among Tarsians and the statements of Paul and his critics regarding his rhetorical abilities, that Paul was trained in a rhetorical school in Tarsus. Like other Tarsians, Paul probably only received his formal education there and traveled abroad to complete his education in Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, Paul studied in a rabbinic wisdom school under Gamaliel and may have come under further Hellenistic influence here as well. Some scholars have followed Hengel who

⁷⁶ Paul's awareness of Greek literature has to factor in as well, but this issue is taken up in the literary analysis in Chapter 7.

proposed that there were probably schools of Greek rhetoric present in Jerusalem as well that Paul may have attended. It has been shown, however, that Hengel's assertions do not hold up under scrutiny and that it is quite unlikely that schools for formal Greek rhetoric were present in Jerusalem and available to Paul. The fact that we have no record of a Palestinian rabbi from tannaitic times or mentioned in tannaitic sources studying at a formal school of rhetoric (or philosophy) confirms this picture. Paul's acquisition of rhetorical training in Tarsus or in Jerusalem, therefore, is only likely if he was atypical in either or both cities. Paul's focus in Jerusalem was upon mastering the wisdom of the pharisaic rabbis, not learning the art of oratory from the Greeks. In Part Two, this historical hypothesis concerning Paul's relationship to Hellenistic education will be tested against the literary evidence provided his speeches in Acts and his epistolary literature to see whether verification of the hypothesis can be acquired at a reasonable level.

Part Two: Literary Analysis (Verification)

Part One has endeavored to examine the available historical evidence for Paul's relationship to Hellenistic education. This historical analysis suggested the hypothesis that Paul probably studied at a liberal school in Tarsus before traveling to Jerusalem to study rabbinic wisdom with Gamliel. Part Two seeks verification for this hypothesis by arguing that the available literary evidence points in the same direction. Paul's use of the Greek language (Chapter 5), the Hellenistic letter protocol (Chapter 6), Greek literature (Chapter 7) and the relationship of Paul's epistolary composition to Hellenistic rhetoric and philosophy (Chapter 8) all provide important windows into Paul's literary abilities and warrant consideration in relation to the educational background in which these skills may have developed. These chapters are loosely organized according to the progression of the Hellenistic educational system. The first three chapters (5-7) address issues proper to the curriculum of the liberal school while Chapter 8 considers literary evidence in favor of advanced Hellenistic education. The acquisition and use of the Greek language was the foundation for all other disciplines of learning. It is not entirely clear where epistolary instruction fit into Hellenistic education, but it seems that children learned this skill early on in the liberal school so that they could write letters to their parents, constantly perfecting the skill as they progressed through their education, and it is likely that some elementary schools taught letter writing. Learning the great pieces of literature, especially the poets, came later under the instruction of the *grammaticus* in the liberal school. The crowing achievement of Hellenistic education was rhetoric (and philosophy to a far lesser degree), which was learned last, in the second major phase of Greek instruction, higher education.

CHAPTER 5

Paul's Use of Greek Language

As Botha has pointed out, there is a great deal of ambiguity that revolves around the study of "style" in New Testament literature and a lack of explicit criteria for identifying specific features of style.¹ Style may refer to literary features (e.g. *inclusio*, *chiasmus*, parallelism) or structures (e.g. epistolary and/or rhetorical form), literary and narrative strategies (e.g. irony), rhetorical features (e.g. diatribe, word-plays, *Progymnasmata*), epistolary and/or philosophical *topoi* (e.g. antithesis, philophronesis), formulae (e.g. disclosure statements, joy expressions), syntactic structure (e.g. parataxis vs. hypotaxis), grammatical consistency (e.g. anacolutha), vocabulary (e.g. diction, use of technical terminology), rhythm and many more besides. For the present purposes two dimensions of Paul's style will be treated in order to assess his literary abilities and the educational background that this style seems to entail. First, his use of language or his linguistic style will be considered followed by a treatment of his use of literary forms or localized compositional and rhetorical structures.

1. *Linguistic Style: Language Formality and Style in Paul*

In treating the linguistic style of Paul three issues must be raised. First, Paul must be situated on the continuum of language formality in the Hellenistic world. How does Paul's language compare to that of the papyri and the literary authors? Second, the style in which Paul employed the Greek language and his level of competency in skills such as syntax and clause structure, rhetorical word order, grammatical consistency, and periodic eloquence and rhythm must be considered. Third, it is necessary to explore the use of a secretary in the composition of Pauline letters in relation to questions of literacy, style, and rhetoric.

¹ J.E. Botha, "Style in the New Testament: The Need for Serious Reconsideration," *JSNT* 43 (1991), pp. 71-87.

a. *Language Formality in the Hellenistic World*

The Greek language of the Hellenistic world is found in diverse forms and styles. As a mean of standardizing the rhetorical curriculum, ten Attic orators (the canon of the ten) associated with Athens just prior to and at the beginning of the Hellenistic period were canonized and set up as the standard for Greek style according to which Greek writers and speakers would be educated and evaluated.² As time progressed and oratory began to spread outside of Athens there began to be a variety of literary reactions to the “Atticism” of the ten orators. The most important of these was a first-century AD phenomenon known as “Asianism”—which may in final analysis just be a handy descriptive term. The Asianic movement was a stylistic response to the Attic dialect that was characterized by “truncated sentences, ... dancing rhythm, ... unusual images and artificial phrases.”³ Atticism was characterized by a carefully crafted hypotactic and periodic sentence construction whereas Asianism and other reactions to literary Greek reverted to a more paratactic style. The widespread impact of the Asianic movement throughout the Mediterranean world resulted in a large scale use of a non-literary Greek dialect. Another factor contributing to the diverse linguistic continuum of Hellenistic Greek in the first century was the nature of the educational system and the wide range of differing educational levels and literacy abilities among Greek-speaking people. Harris, for example, sees it necessary to distinguish between mass literacy, scribal literacy and craftsman literacy.⁴ This rise in Greek literacy during the Hellenistic period (in many areas as high as craftsman literacy) led to a more

² On the canon of the ten orators, see S. Usher, *Greek Oratory: Tradition and Originality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³ A. Wifstrand, *Epochs and Styles: Selected Writings on the New Testament, Greek Language and Greek Culture in the Post-Classical Era* (eds. L. Rydbeck and S.E. Porter; trans. D. Searby; WUNT 179; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), p. 87.

⁴ Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, p. 7.

utilitarian view of the language and resulted in the loss of many of its artistic qualities.⁵ Harris points out that:

It can be conjectured that while writing extended its political and administrative functions in the Hellenistic period, it lost some of its awe-inspiring quality. Every city-dweller, whether literate or not, was commonly in the presence of the written word. Yet writing must have retained a certain authoritative quality in the eyes of many people, for it was still associated with the wishes and power of the government.⁶

That some elementary literacy education was available to the poor meant that many would attain rudimentary writing abilities, perhaps knowledge of some common formulaic expressions, key vocabulary and basic letter writing skills. Many would have learned just enough Greek to create simple business transactions and various types of letters. Others utilized Greek for merely communicative or documentary purposes so that while the Greek may have been written by an educated person, their intention was pragmatic, not literary. This led to a proliferation of vulgar and non-literary forms of written Greek, attested strongly in the papyri, usually among the lower to middle classes of Hellenistic society, but among some elite members as well (e.g. official transactions written in non-literary Greek). More literary and Atticizing expressions of the Greek language were still found among many of the non-Asiatic sophists and in the institutions of higher education in the Greco-Roman centers and were preserved in many of the classics, especially the canon of the ten orators. Issues of bilingual interference must also be considered: when considering Jewish writers, for example, it may be important to weigh the level of Semitic influence which often resulted in a far less literary more paratactic style in line with the Hebrew language. The result of these variations was a broad continuum of Greek language formality

⁵ For factors contributing to the rise of literacy see Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, pp. 136-46.

⁶ Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, p. 124.

within the Hellenistic world. Porter has classified this continuum according to four forms of Greek language common during the Hellenistic period:⁷

Language Form	Literary Expression
Vulgar:	Papyri concerned with personal matters, monetary accounts, letters, etc.
Non-Literary:	Official and business papyri, inscriptions, scientific texts, and longer texts, e.g. Epictetus, Apollodorus, Pausanias
Literary:	Philo, Josephus, Polybius, Strabo, Arrian, Appian
Attistic:	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch, Lucian

The New Testament writers fit in at different places on the continuum. Luke, the author of Hebrews, 1 Peter and James all have some features of literary Greek syntax and style, but they have not yet approached the literary level of Philo or Arrian, much less Demosthenes. The Johanine literature and Mark evidence more septuagintal influence and fall closer to the vulgar side of the spectrum while Paul is situated comfortably among the non-literary expressions of Greek.

b. *Language Formality and Style in Paul*

There has been surprisingly little treatment of style in Paul from a strictly linguistic standpoint. The older treatments of Turner⁸ and BDF are helpful but clearly linguistically outdated and too reliant upon issues of Semitic influence (especially Turner) for their determinations of stylistic effect. There are multiple issues of bilingualism that need to be considered when assessing Semitic interference. Many of these concerns are bound up in issues of diglossia and register variation, making determinations of Semitic influence far more complex than it was at one time perceived.⁹ Issues of diatribe, rhetorical figures, word-plays and various

⁷ This chart is based upon data provided in S.E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (SBG 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989), p. 153.

⁸ Turner, *Style*.

⁹ On bilingualism and diglossia in first-century Palestine see relevant essays in S.E. Porter (ed.), *Diglossia and Other Topics in New Testament Linguistics* (JSNTSup 193; SNTG 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); G.H.R. Horsley has pointed out some of the complexities in his important essay, "The Fiction of 'Jewish Greek,'" in

literary structures may also be considered under the heading of style. Here, however, we shall focus attention on Paul's style as it relates directly to linguistic form and his abilities as a Greek writer. Other issues of style and literary structure will be addressed in following sections.

Paul writes in a non-literary form of Greek, characterized usually by a paratactic style (e.g. Rom 13:3; Col 2:5), lacking periodic eloquence (but see 1 Cor 7:27; Rom 12:3) with several instances of harsh parenthesis (e.g. Rom 1:13; Eph 2:5; 2 Thess 2:7), anacolutha (e.g. 2 Cor 5:12; 12:17), trajection (e.g. Rom 11:3; 1 Thess 2:13; Gal 3:15), zeugma (e.g. 1 Cor 3:2), *casus pendens* (e.g. Rom 8:3), and the use of asyndeton to unite paragraphs or subjects (e.g. Rom 9:1; 1 Cor 5:9, 6:1).¹⁰ He is also given to long sentences (e.g. Eph 1:3-14), allowing himself to be carried along linguistically by his thought process, which sometimes appears to shift into a new topic only to revert back to further expounding upon the previous topic at greater length (e.g. Eph 3:1-13). His letters contain numerous bursts of emotional appeal which went directly against the established standards of rhetorical and literary composition. Paul typically inverts standard rhetorical word order as in Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἔζησεν (Rom 14:9) instead of Χριστὸς ἔζησεν καὶ ἀπέθανεν, αἷμα καὶ σάρκα (Eph 6:12) instead of σάρκα καὶ αἷμα, and Ἕλληνα καὶ Ἰουδαῖο (Col 3:11) instead of Ἰουδαῖο καὶ Ἕλληνα.¹¹ Certain passages, however, such as Rom 8:28-39 and 12:1-21 and 1 Cor 9-13 (especially chapter 13) have distinct rhythmic literary qualities illustrating Paul's ability to construct a more artistic form of prose when the need arose.¹² Other literary characteristics include antithesis (e.g. 1 Thess 2:6-7), irony (e.g. 1 Cor 9:19; 2 Cor 6:8-10), word-plays (e.g. Rom 1:28-31), diatribe (e.g. Rom 5; 1 Cor 9:1-19) and particular

New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 5 (Marricksville: Southwood, 1989), pp. 5-40; see also M. Wilson, "Semiticisms in the New Testament," *ANRW* 2.25.2, pp. 978-1029.

¹⁰ See BDF, §465-470 and Turner, *Style*, pp. 85-86 for these and further examples. Note also that there is some overlap in these features.

¹¹ Turner, *Style*, p. 81.

¹² For analysis and comparison of Paul's style in 2 Cor 11:15-12:23, Rom 8:9-39, and Phil 3:2-14, see A.B. Spencer, *Paul's Literary Style: A Stylistic and Historical Comparison of 2 Corinthians 11:15-12:23, Romans 8:9-39, and Philippians 3:2-14* (ETSMS; Jackson: Evangelical Theological Society, 1986).

Progymnasmata (e.g. Gal 3:1) (see below for further comments on the diatribe, word-plays, and *Progymnasmata*). To these Turner adds, “aposiopesis (Rom 7:24 Phil 1:22 perhaps 2 Thess 2:3f), prodiorthosis and epidiorthosis (Rom 3:5 8:34, 2 Cor 7:3 11:1ff., 16ff., 21, 23 12:11, Gal 4:9), paralipsis (he pretends not to say something but nevertheless says it: Phm 19), and the rhetorical question closely paralleled in the diatribes of Epictetus (Rom 3:1 4:10, 1 Cor 7:18). Other literary devices are allegory, metaphor, ellipse and the parallelism.”¹³

These features of Paul’s use of the Greek language provide a basis for making determinations regarding his linguistic form and style. It must first be kept in mind that Paul’s compositions are not intended as literary art, but are employed for the pragmatic purposes of day-to-day communication. This is appropriate epistolary style according to Philostratus, who faults a rhetorician named Herodes for departing from epistolary style through excessive use of Atticism and insists that proper epistolary style will not have a very elevated literary level, it will be more literary than everyday speech but “more ordinary than Atticism, and it must be composed in accord with common language” (Philostratus, *Ep.* II 257).¹⁴ Paul fits in among the vast majority of Greek writers in utilizing the language to keep in contact with communities and individuals who were important to him for some reason. The language of his letters, therefore, should not be judged according to Attic or literary standards since they were not conceived as an artistic medium, but as a resource deployed for ministerial and administrative purposes. The influence of Asianism and other non-literary reactions to the Atticists had made non-literary and vulgar forms of Greek more popular, even among a number of elite academics (Asianism was,

¹³ Turner, *Style*, p. 83. Further literary features in Pauline literature are noted in Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 280-90; Fairweather, “Epistle,” pp. 1-38, pp. 213-43; Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, pp. 55-59; E.B. Howell, “St. Paul and the Greek World,” *Greece and Rome* 11 (1964), pp. 328-32; T.S. Duncan, “The Style and Language of St. Paul in His First Letter to the Corinthians,” *BibSac* 83 (1926), pp. 129-43; F. Köster, “Did Paul Model his Language after that of Demosthenes?,” *BibSac* 11 (1854), pp. 514-27.

¹⁴ Similarly, Seneca states: “I prefer that my letters should be just what my conversation would be...for my letters have nothing strained or artificial about them” (Seneca, *Ep.* 75.1; cf. also ps.-Libanius, *Ἐπιστολιμαῖοι Χαρακτήρες* 46-48.

after all, a reaction of the non-Athenian Sophists). As Fairweather notes, "Barbaric though Paul's vocabulary and syntax must seem to anyone approaching his writing for the first time with preconceptions about Greek prose derived chiefly from Athenian classics of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., it turns out, time and time again, that his unclassical expressions had in fact been in currency for two or three centuries previously."¹⁵ Similarly, Norden has shown that, when Paul is not measured by rhetorical or Attistic standards, but according to the epistolary literary form in which he wrote, much of his style is quite impressive, even rivaling Plato in certain places.¹⁶

At the same time, grammatical imperfections and roughness must be taken into consideration. It is possible that some of Paul's harshness can be attributed to the influence of Asianism in the city where he learned Greek,¹⁷ but his diction, use of the period and balance in his sentence structure do not reflect the conventions of those usually labeled Asianists¹⁸—although Fairweather has illustrated Asianic qualities in Paul's use of figures and epistolary tone.¹⁹ As a means of accounting for Paul's linguistic form and style, however, this must be ruled out. Fairweather suggests instead that perhaps Atticism had not had an impact upon Tarsus during that period of his youth since the common language may have been *koine*.²⁰ *Koine* was probably the spoken language in Tarsus, but it seems unlikely given the status of Tarsus (assuming this was the city of Paul's youth) as one of the most elite centers for learning in the

¹⁵ Fairweather, "Epistle," pp. 27-28.

¹⁶ E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa. Vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance 2* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1958), pp. 492-509, esp. 509 in Du Toit, "Tale of Two Cities," p. 397.

¹⁷ Hengel, following Norden's suggestions, takes this view. Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, p. 58. It should be noted that Norden was quite cautious about this suggestion, apparently more so than Hengel at least. See Norden, *Kunstprosa*, p. 507. Judge and Duncan also suggest that Paul may have been more acquainted with the Asianic style of rhetoric and language. See E.A. Judge, "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice," *ABR* 16 (1968), pp. 37-50, here pp. 40-41; Duncan, "Style," pp. 129-43; cf. also E.A. Judge, "Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Clues from Contemporary Documents," *TynBul* 35 (1984), pp. 3-24, here pp. 12-13.

¹⁸ Cf. Fairweather, "Epistle," pp. 233-34; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, p. 283.

¹⁹ Fairweather, "Epistle," pp. 229-33.

²⁰ Fairweather, "Epistle," p. 234.

Greco-Roman world that Attic did not have an impact upon the city, at least in its educational and literary life. Their citizens seem to have no problem getting along in Rome (cf. Strabo, *Geog.* 14.5.15) and this city rivaled Athens itself for its educational prestige and opportunity (Strabo, *Geog.* 14.5.13-15). Perhaps, then, Paul's choice of language was intentional and had political and religious reasons that go back to the anomalists (who promoted a more stylistically polished mode of Greek) and analogists (who attempted to adopt Greek in its common form, with all of its abnormalities) controversy.²¹ This later view, however, is not intuitively obvious and ends up firmly in the realm of speculation.

Fairweather's hypothesizing seems based upon the unproven assumption that Paul could write with a more literary form of Greek had he so desired, but this presupposition clearly leads to strained and unconvincing conjecture. The most likely explanation is that Paul utilized the language in a way that came mostly naturally to him and in a way that best suited his purposes in writing which, in the end, were pragmatic and practical rather than artistic and philosophical. While literary elements emerge throughout his writings in various places, displaying his potential and abilities, they are generally suppressed by his apparent desire to string along his thoughts and be led by the emotions and passions that stirred him to write his letters in the first place. That he composed his letters in the private letter format instead of in the form of a letter-essay indicates that he had personal communication in mind rather than artistic leisure and perhaps that he was unfamiliar or untrained in the more polished letter-essay of the philosophers (see Chapter 6). Paul's language was a natural expression of his own abilities and seems to provide a helpful window into his intellectual development. Before examining the precise contribution of Paul's language to our understanding of his educational background, the role of the secretary and Paul's use of literary forms must be considered.

²¹ Fairweather, "Epistle," p. 235.

c. *The Secretary in Relation to Pauline Literacy, Style, and Rhetoric*

Some have called into question whether Paul was even literate—much less educated in Greek literature or formal rhetoric—on the basis of Paul’s use of a secretary and especially his comment in Gal 6:11: “Ἴδετε πηλίκοις ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ.”²² The phrase τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ is a typical formula that Paul often used to redirect attention to his own handwriting as an autograph (1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17; Philm 19—all clear testimonies to Paul’s use of a secretary).²³ His comment that he wrote with large letters probably has little to do with his writing abilities. Turner has suggested that Paul may have sustained a severe hand injury by being crucified at Perga in Pamphylia.²⁴ Much more likely is the common view, based upon autographical practices in antiquity, that Paul wrote with large letters for emphasis, much like bold or italics would function in today’s society.²⁵ It must be concluded, therefore, that this statement provides us with little insight regarding Paul’s level of literacy, other than that he had the ability to sign his letters with his own hand. And many of the great writers of Greco-Roman antiquity employed a secretary (e.g. Cicero, Cato)²⁶ so that Paul’s use of one is hardly evidence against his literacy.

This raises the second issue: the impact that a secretary would have had upon Paul’s style and rhetoric. Secretaries in the Greco-Roman world could range in role anywhere from a copyist, recording what was dictated and making subtle editorial corrections, to something like a co-author, contributing significantly to the content of a letter. But Richards suggests that the use of a

²² E.g. P.J.J. Botha, “Greco-Roman Literacy as Setting for New Testament Writings,” *Neot* 26 (1992), pp. 195-215; P.J.J. Botha, “Letter Writing and Oral Communication in Antiquity: Suggested Implications for the Interpretation of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *Scriptura* 42 (1992), pp. 17-34, here pp. 22-23; cf. also J. Dewey, “Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions,” *Semeia* 65: *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (1994), pp. 37-64, here p. 49.

²³ Richards, *Secretary*, pp. 172-73.

²⁴ Turner, *Grammatical Insights*, p. 94.

²⁵ See for example R.N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1990), p. 298.

²⁶ For a number of literate composers who used secretaries see Richards, *Secretary*, pp. 14-43.

secretary typically did not involve a change in rhetorical content and that the “tone and broad style remained consistent for most authors, whether they used a secretary or not” yet “more specific indicators of style could vary.”²⁷ Richards points to the example of Cicero who paid meticulous detail to the production of his letter-essays on philosophical topics, but was less concerned with his private letters to his friend. More of the secretary’s style was allowed to slip through in these instances, but the Ciceronian language and overarching style is still readily detectable. The use of a different secretary could, therefore, result in a difference in style among particular Pauline letters. However, multiple grammatical slips, solecisms and zeugma, issues that scribes would normally correct, could be an indication that Paul exerted more control over his letters than was usually the case. But it is more likely that the scribe was a friend instead of a hired professional, probably a member of the apostolic band.

2. *Literary Forms: Localized Rhetoric in Paul*

This section is concerned with the use of rhetorical and compositional features at the local level of Pauline discourse, literary features that occur within the clause or section. While two separate chapters of this thesis are devoted to dealing with literary structures governing the composition of an entire discourse—Chapter 6 on epistolary form and Chapter 8 on rhetorical and philosophical letter forms—this section seeks to address rhetorical features emerge in small, isolated stretches of text. A full scale investigation of literary features in Paul’s letters is outside of the modest scope of the present section of this thesis.²⁸ My analysis, therefore, is restricted to those features which may be able to provide a direct link with Paul’s educational background. In

²⁷ Richards, *Paul*, p. 154.

²⁸ This has, however, been attempted most recently in J.D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul’s Letters* (ETS Studies; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 1998). Theoretical support for oral literary features is marshaled in P.J.J. Botha, “The Verbal Art of the Pauline Letters: Rhetoric, Performance and Presence,” in Porter and Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, pp. 409-28.

particular, the diatribe, rhetorical figures and devices, *Progymnasmata*, and word-plays in Paul will be assessed with reference to their place in the Greco-Roman world in general and in Hellenistic education in particular.

a. *Diatribē*

With the growth in attention given to Hellenistic rhetoric and philosophy among contemporary New Testament scholars, there has been a renewal of interest in the Greco-Roman diatribe as a literary form utilized in Pauline literature.²⁹ The diatribe was utilized heavily by Epictetus, Seneca, Teles, Zeno, Ariston, and Musonius Rufus, to name a few of the more prominent figures. There are a number of Pauline passages that strongly exhibit the features of diatribe (e.g. Rom 1:18-2:11; 5; 9:14-23; 11:1-24; 1 Cor 4:6-15; 9:1-19). But there is no reason to suppose that Paul's use of or exposure to the diatribe required a formal rhetorical education. Although the diatribe was a recognized literary genre among many philosophers and rhetoricians, Paul's knowledge of the diatribe could have been unintentional and intuitive, as Bultmann argued in carefully insisting "that the relationship which he wanted to establish did not imply a conscious or intentional literary imitation of this *Gattung*."³⁰ Unlike the letters of Seneca, for example, Paul's letters and dialogic style emerged out of the epistolary situations that inspired the composition of the letter. The simplistic pedagogical form of the diatribe would have been easy to pick up or may have even come naturally to a speaker as they worked through their

²⁹ For a survey of research, see S.K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (SBLDS 57; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 7-48; S.K. Stowers, "The Diatribe," in D.A. Aune (ed.), *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament* (SBLBS 21; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 71-86, here pp. 71-74; T. Schmeller, *Paulus und die "Diatribē": Eine vergleichende Stilinterpretation* (Munster: Aschendorff, 1987), pp. 1-54 in S.E. Porter, "The Argument of Romans 5: Can a Rhetorical Question Make a Difference?," *JBL* 110 (1991), pp. 655-677; rep. S.E. Porter, *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice* (SBG 6; New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 213-38, here p. 214. Judge has noted that many classicists have abandoned understanding the diatribe as a valid literary genre. He laments that "The Cynic-Stoic diatribe has haunted New Testament criticism for too long. It is a ghost summoned up for lack of a more adequate explanation of what confronts us there. It is not at all clear that it has any claim to exist, especially at this period, but the reservations of classical scholars, and the problems of definition and evidence, are not always noticed on the New Testament side." E.A. Judge, "St. Paul and Classical Society," *JAC* 15 (1972), pp. 19-36, here p. 33. On the validity of the diatribe as a literary genre, see Porter, "The Argument of Romans 5," pp. 214-20.

³⁰ Stowers, *Diatribē*, p. 18.

arguments and gave deliveries. Though in disagreement with Bultmann about the intuitive origin of the diatribe in Paul, Stowers's important work further confirms that formal rhetorical education is an unnecessary link for explaining the use of the diatribe in Paul. In response to Anderson, Stowers summarizes his research as follows:

Frankly, I am mystified that Anderson takes my work as supporting the idea that Paul was trained in the elite culture of rhetoric. My study of diatribe, focusing on its dialogical and pedagogical features, illuminated just such an alternative tradition of rhetoric nourished by moral teachers and philosophers who may or may not have had high rhetorical educations.³¹

Schmeller, in the most recent monograph on Paul's relationship to the diatribe, goes a step further in asserting that "we cannot explain *to what extent* Paul in fact learned this style and *where* he got it from" (emphasis his).³² This is not to rule out entirely an educational setting for Paul's acquisition of this technique. As Stowers has shown, the diatribal style in Paul clearly reflects a "school" setting,³³ even if it was not the setting of advanced rhetorical education. A craft literacy elementary school would probably not have employed such techniques, at least not at the level of sophistication we see in Paul—imitation of letters and small pieces of Homer were most important at this stage. But the possibility that Paul was originally introduced to these techniques by a *grammaticus* and then carried them over into his apologetic writing ministry certainly cannot be ruled out. Another possibility is that Paul's diatribal style was an expansion or adaptation of the common-place (see Hermogenes, *Progymn.* 6) that he learned from the *progymnasmata* or perhaps a more primitive form of a similar type of handbook (or curriculum) in his liberal education.³⁴

³¹ S.K. Stowers, "Apostrophe, ΠΡΟΣΟΠΟΠΟΙΑ, and Paul's Rhetorical Education," in J.T. Fitzgerald, T.H. Olbricht, and L.M. White (eds.), *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (NovTSup 110; Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 351-69, here p. 368.

³² Schmeller, *Paulus*, in Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, p. 58.

³³ Stowers, *Diatribes*, p. 183

³⁴ Cf. Judge, "St Paul," p. 33. He notes that the diatribe was the development of a common-place.

b. *Rhetorical Figures and Progymnasmata*

There are numerous rhetorical figures throughout Paul's letters, especially the main letters. Fairweather has catalogued several in Galatians and they are woven throughout Betz's commentary along with many other parallels to classical literature—which in my view should be treated with a great deal of caution.³⁵ Mitchell points to multiple devices throughout her analysis of 1 Corinthians, Long lists a number of figures in 2 Corinthians in his recent analysis of the letter, and Stowers has brought attention to the use of the rhetorical figures apostrophe and προσωποποιία in his treatment of Romans.³⁶ Porter has also assembled a helpful list of tropes and figures found across the Pauline corpus in his analysis of Paul's relationship to rhetorical style.³⁷ The origin of many of these micro-level rhetorical structures can be accounted for through intuition and universal rhetoric, as Bultmann suggests regarding the relationship of Paul to the diatribe, or by understanding that many of these more localized, elementary techniques were learned in the liberal school through the *progymnasmata* and similar (more basic) exercises in preparation for advancing further into the curriculum of the liberal arts school (in the case of the more basic exercises) and for later study under the rhetorician (in the case of the *progymnasmata*). It seems that more elaborate rhetorical outlines and genre ascriptions based upon the handbooks would have required either a formal rhetorical education or acquisition and

³⁵ Fairweather, "Epistle," pp. 229-36; H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Church of the Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

³⁶ M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUNT 28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); F.J. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology: The Compositional Unity of 2 Corinthians* (SNTSMS 131; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 199-229; S.K. Stowers, *A Reading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), e.g. pp. 16-21, 36-37, 100-04; 143-45; 232-33; 264-78; S.K. Stowers, "Romans 7:7-25 as Speech-in-Character (προσωποποιία)," in T. Engberg-Pedersen (ed.), *Paul in his Hellenistic Context* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), pp. 180-202; Stowers, "Apostrophe," pp. 351-69.

³⁷ Porter, "Paul of Tarsus," pp. 578-83.

detailed study of the rhetorical handbooks.³⁸ But if the historical and linguistic arguments suggested above are on track, then it seems unlikely that Paul would have attained formal rhetorical training in his pre-Christian days and, as Judge notes, what we know of Paul after his conversion does not seem to suggest that he would have “belonged to the leisured circles who could afford such education.”³⁹ This probably also means that he would not have been spending much time with those who were part of the elite class of rhetoricians, among whom the handbooks were circulated—in any case, we have little to no evidence of uneducated citizens acquiring handbooks and becoming self-taught in the art of oratory. This leaves Paul’s education in the liberal school, what could be gained from hearing public speeches and reading literature in various forms, and his natural abilities as a speaker/writer (i.e. universal rhetoric expressed through tropes and figures common in all types of literature)⁴⁰ to account for such phenomena. Given the evidence for Hillel’s hermeneutical model being informed by principles of interpretation from Hellenistic rhetoric, consideration should be allowed for some rhetorical figures to have come through Paul’s pharisaical education under Gamaliel. Although since Hillel’s dependence upon Hellenistic rhetoric is more concerned with rabbinic models of interpretation than compositional strategies, this is an unlikely path for acquiring theoretical-historical justification for rhetorical analysis of an entire letter in terms of its compositional structure.⁴¹ It seems that these factors can easily sustain the level of rhetoric that we do find in Paul in terms of various rhetorical figures, localized literary structures and word-plays without having to also posit formal rhetorical training of some sort.

³⁸ For helpful summaries of these outlines proposed by various scholars in different Pauline letters see Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, pp. 77-79; Porter, “Paul,” pp. 541-61.

³⁹ Judge, “Paul’s Boasting,” p. 44.

⁴⁰ The classic catalogue of the features is found in E.W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech used in the Bible* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1889). This is seen in the fact that many of the figures he mentions can be identified in the Old and in the New Testaments.

⁴¹ See Daube, “Rabbinic Methods,” pp. 239-64.

Although far outside of the scope of the present section, a comprehensive analysis of the *progymnasmata* in relation to Pauline literature could prove to be quite profitable for the purposes of the present analysis; nevertheless, a few more significant examples will have to suffice. Since it is harder to demonstrate what likely came as intuitive to Paul or what he may have picked from other speakers/writers—although Lemmer has attempted to isolate rabbinic rhetorical elements in Galatians⁴²—I will focus my attention on rhetorical features that can be located within the liberal arts phase of Hellenistic education. This will not only demonstrate that Paul’s localized rhetoric does not provide a necessary link to formal rhetorical training, but it will also provide additional positive evidence for his attendance at a liberal arts school.

A number of rhetorical figures in Paul can be located in the *progymnasmata*. As noted, above, Stowers has pointed to the prominence of προσωποποιία in Romans. The rhetorical figure is mentioned by Quintilian (*Inst.* 1.8.3) in the context of the instruction for young boys; thus, Stowers concludes, “people with some education in Paul’s world were trained to ‘read’ for—meaning to listen for—speech according to character, and they composed their writings accordingly.”⁴³ Stowers is concerned here to distance himself from the position that such rhetorical figures must be explained in light of formal instruction in rhetoric.⁴⁴ This is backed up by the treatment of προσωποποιία in Aelius Theon’s *Progym.* (cf. also Hermogenes, *Progym.* 9). Similarly, Fairweather readily admits that the various figures that she identifies in Galatians including πρόληψις, a general version of θέσις-deliberation (dealt with in Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata* 11), σχήματα, *oxymoron* (treated by the Alexandrian grammarians) and ring-composition (which is not treated in the handbooks) do not require “that Paul owed something to

⁴² R. Lemmer, “Why Should the Possibility of Rabbinic Rhetorical Elements in Pauline Writings (e.g. Galatians) Be Considered?,” in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference* (JSNTSup 131; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 161-79.

⁴³ Stowers, “Apostrophe,” p. 354.

⁴⁴ Stowers, “Apostrophe,” p. 354.

the Greek art of persuasion, that he had actually attended a school of rhetoric or that he had been brought up on an extensive reading of the pagan classics.”⁴⁵ Similar remarks can be made regarding the numerous devices discovered by Long in 2 Corinthians under his discussion of rhetorical invention. The use of counter-statements,⁴⁶ for example, is addressed in Aelius Theon’s *Progym.* (cf. also Hermogenes, *Progym.* 5). The multiple *narratios* in Long’s analysis are problematic if viewed as a part of a global structuring technique since the speeches of the rhetoricians provide no parallels to multiple embedded *narratios*, but are easily accounted for when read as local structures against the background of the *progymnasmata*—incidentally, Paul’s narrative sections in 2 Corinthians (1:8-16; 2:12-13; 7:2-16) have all of the components for a narrative mentioned in Theon’s *Progym.* (5.32-34): person(s), their action(s), place, time and manner of actions (see also Hermogenes, *Progym.* 3).⁴⁷ Several authors mention *hyperbole* in their surveys of Pauline rhetorical features.⁴⁸ This device is discussed by Theon in the context of *chreia* and by Hermogenes under maxims and statements (*Progym.* 4). Finally, brief mention should be made of the Gorgianic figure *παρονομασία* (word-play).⁴⁹ While there is no clear testimony to this figure in the various *progymnasmata*, Paul’s use seems to violate the canons of rhetoric, which required the use of this figure only in contexts of jest and showcase rhetoric.⁵⁰ Paul must have obtained these abilities through some other means. The most likely place for Paul to have learned these and other local level compositional techniques would have been in one of the Hellenistic liberal schools (probably in Tarsus), through instruction in the *progymnasmata*.

⁴⁵ Fairweather, “Epistle,” p. 242.

⁴⁶ Long, *Ancient Rhetoric*, pp. 206-09, p. 207.

⁴⁷ Long, *Ancient Rhetoric*, pp. 151-57.

⁴⁸ E.g. Du Toit, “Tale of Two Cities,” p. 396.

⁴⁹ *παρονομασία* is discussed, for example, in Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.11-12. For a survey of the primary sources in ancient rhetorical theory see Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 283-87.

⁵⁰ See Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 283-88. On the use of technical rhetorical terms by Paul, see Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 288-90.

3. *Conclusions: Situating Paul's Language in the Context of Hellenistic Education*

While Paul's Greek was more sophisticated than the vulgar language of the papyri, it is not Atticizing or literary in character. Nor does Paul express himself with a careful hypotactic or periodic style. His Greek can be comfortably located within the non-literary domain of the spectrum of Greek language formality in the Hellenistic world. Of course, proper epistolary style seems to have warranted Paul's use of non-literary Greek in letter composition, but his consistent grammatical slips, anacoluthon, solecisms, use of vulgar vocabulary, formalized language and at times unclear Greek expression, leads readers to believe that Paul was still far from perfecting his linguistic abilities. Although literary elements are clearly detected in numerous places throughout Paul (as shown above), his Greek, especially his structural and syntactic abilities, is still in need of much refinement and development. He does not speak with the language of a well-trained rhetorician. As Turner notes, "Despite the rhythmic quality of some passages in [Paul's] letters, it is unlikely that he attended a Hellenistic teacher of rhetoric, for his anacolutha and solecisms are too numerous."⁵¹ Yet his abilities, especially when they are at their best, far exceed the vulgar ramblings and rigid formulaic language that we find among the papyri, clearly evidencing a firm grasp of a wide range of literary forms and techniques. Paul's language, therefore, lies somewhere in between the elevated style and quality of the Greco-Roman academics and those who evidence only a basic elementary literacy education. That Paul seems to have been trained beyond the level of basic literacy suggests the likelihood that he received his education at a liberal school in Tarsus rather than at one of the local elementary schools that were spread across the Greco-Roman world. Paul's language appears to be that of a person who had probably been trained in Greek literacy in a liberal school where he also learned some basic rhythmic and rhetorical structures from studying the poets and the *progymnasmata*, but instead

⁵¹ Turner, *Style*, p. 86.

of refining and perfecting his literary-linguistic skills in one of the Attic or even Asian schools of rhetoric (or a school of philosophy), he went on to study with a rabbi and was never able to fully work out various grammatical and structural imperfections in his language. As Furnish concludes, Paul was “apparently trained in the subjects that constituted the lower and middle levels of Hellenistic education.”⁵² In other words, Paul seems to have received the educational equivalent of what would have been learned in a Hellenistic liberal school. Such an education provides a plausible explanation for the form of language and level of literary style that we find in Paul’s letters.

⁵² V.P. Furnish, “On Putting Paul in his Place,” *JBL* 113 (1994), pp. 3-17, here p. 11.

Chapter 6

Paul's Use of the Hellenistic Letter Form

Like the Greek language, letters served an important communicative role in the Greco-Roman world and often functioned as a way of identifying a person's level and/or progress in Hellenistic education. In order to understand how Paul's use of the letter form informs our understanding of his education it is important to locate his epistolary style on the spectrum of Greco-Roman letter writing. In this chapter, epistolary theory, classification and style in Greco-Roman antiquity are considered in relation to the Pauline letter. I conclude by exploring the role of the letter in Hellenistic education and the implications that this may have for assessing Paul's level of education based upon his use of the Greek letter protocol.

1. *Classification of Letters in Greco-Roman Antiquity*

Letter writing was employed for both personal and professional purposes.¹ The uses for which letters were intended range from fictitious letters for comic, imaginary or even historical purposes,² to philosophical propaganda to personal correspondence to elementary school exercises. Letters were used for private and official communication. Private letters were employed by a vast range of social classes including women (e.g. *P.Mich.* 29; *P.Mich.* 183), public officials (e.g. *P.Col.* 121; *P.Paris* 49), physicians (e.g. *Sel.Pap.* 104), and even the poor of society (e.g. *P.Oxy.* 3057). As Exler remarks, "The papyri discovered in Egypt have shown that the art of writing was more widely, and more popularly, known in the past, than some scholars

¹ On the personal letter see H. Koskenniemi's classification in *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des Griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr. Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae* (Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemia. Sarja B. nide 102, 2; Helsinki, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1956), pp. 128-54; cf. D. Brooke, *Private Letters Pagan and Christian* (London: Ben, 1929); C. Kim, *The Familiar Letter of Recommendation* (SBLDS 4; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972).

² On this group of letters and their purposes, see C.D.N. Costa, *Greek Fictional Letters: A Selection with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. xiv-xv.

have been inclined to think.”³ Philosophers made extensive use of the letter-genre in their attempts to propagate particular philosophical schools or agendas, often using the letter form very loosely as literary artifice for pursuing their interests on particular topics.⁴ Rhetoricians also made use of the letter genre,⁵ though rhetorical and epistolary traditions seemed to remain distinct throughout the Hellenistic period.⁶ Letters seem to have proliferated in the ancient academic profession. In addition to rhetoricians and philosophers, they have been attributed to historians, mathematicians, physicians, grammarians and poets.⁷ Literary letters on technical and philosophical matters, however, differed substantially from the personal letters common among the Egyptian papyri. This warrants a further classification of epistolary material.

The distinction between literary and non-literary, personal and official letters⁸ is well established⁹—although it is probably best to follow some recent scholars who have suggested that there is a range of letter types from non-literary vulgar types of letters to finely crafted

³ F.X.J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1922), p. 126.

⁴ Cf. A.J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (LEC 4; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), p. 79; S.K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 6; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), pp. 37-38; M.L. Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography* (SBS 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), p. 17.

⁵ E.g. Demetrius, *Ep. 2*; Plato, *Ep. 3*; Isocrates, *Ep. 8*.

⁶ As Klauck observes, “A particularly mechanical application of the classical four-part speech model to letters and letter components is more likely to discredit rhetorical analysis than to promote it. Rhetorical analysis must not be pursued at the expense of the unique features of the letter genre that epistolography has helped us to understand.” H.J. Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (with D.P. Bailey; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), p. 225. See also Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 109-27; J.T. Reed, “The Epistle,” in S.E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 B.C. to A.D. 400)* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 1997), pp. 171-83. Extensive work has been done seeking to make a distinction between these traditions in Paul. See for example: J.T. Reed, “Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul’s Letters: A Question of Genre,” in Porter and Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, pp. 292-324; S.E. Porter, “The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature,” in Porter and Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, pp. 100-22.

⁷ Cf. Stirewalt, *Studies*, p. 17.

⁸ Cf. Julius Victor *Rhet. 27 (De Epistolis)*; Cicero (*Fam. 2.4.1*) distinguishes between non-literary private letters, literary letters and official letters.

⁹ See esp. W.G. Doty, “The Classification of Epistolary Literature,” *CBQ* 31 (1969), pp. 183-99; M.L. Stirewalt, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography* (SBS 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 1-26.

literary letters and multiple letters falling somewhere in between.¹⁰ Demetrius, however, is careful to distinguish personal letters from the literary letters of Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle which are not truly letters (οὐ μὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐπιστολαὶ γένοιντο ἄν) but are more like treatises (συγγράμματα) with letter openings attached (Demetrius, *Eloc.* 225, 228). Early on, therefore, ancient theorists affirmed a distinction between literary philosophical letters and letters that were intended for personal communication.¹¹ Part of this dynamic is captured within the intended audience of the letter. Literary letters are intended for a public reception while personal or private letters are addressed to a particular individual or community. Stirewalt's analysis of this situational difference is helpful. He discusses the distinction between letter-writing in normative, extended and fictitious settings.¹² Official and personal letters are written in normative settings: "they are normative in that they are developed in actual correspondence and supply basic models for derivative uses of the form."¹³ In these settings, "the sender writes in his own name, to addressees known directly or indirectly to him, in an actual, contemporary context."¹⁴ The correspondence arises out of the context provided by the relationship between the author and the recipient. As the name suggests, an extended setting goes beyond this by extending the typical epistolary context and subject matter. Letters written in an extended setting are intended for the public and expound upon "non-epistolary topics for a group of people,

¹⁰ E.g. Richards, *Paul*, pp. 126-27; cf. also M. Stirewalt, *Paul the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 26.

¹¹ Several scholars blur this distinction. See for example D. Dormeyer, "The Hellenistic Letter-Formula and the Pauline Letter-Scheme," in Stanley E. Porter (ed.), *The Pauline Canon* (PAST 1; Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 70-95, here p. 71; B. Fiore, *The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles* (AnBib 105; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986), p. 126.

¹² Stirewalt, *Studies*, pp. 14-17.

¹³ Stirewalt, *Studies*, p. 2. It should be noted that a normative letter setting does not rule out the possibility that the letter be circulated in broader contexts. Stirewalt (*Studies*, p. 2) suggests that "Even in normative settings a writer may assume or intend that his message be shared with a larger audience than those people addressed. Thus an official letter may be publicized and permanently displayed; the writer of a personal letter may expect the letter to be passed among others not named by him, or its reception may be the occasion for a social gathering. That is, a community exists at each end of the communication, and in some way and to some extent the two are united because two individuals or groups of people are in correspondence."

¹⁴ Stirewalt, *Studies*, p. 2.

identified or unidentified, and known or assumed to be interested.”¹⁵ Letters written on technical subjects or intended as philosophical or imperial propaganda are often created in extended settings. In fictitious settings, “the writer impersonates another and composes a message in that person’s name,” often used for entertainment purposes and school exercises.¹⁶

Non-literary private letters were employed for a wide range of purposes in antiquity including family and friendship correspondence, business dealings and political communication, even for magical incantations as we see in some of the *Magical Papyri*. Most private letters consist of very short notes and notices or various recommendations or pieces of advice recorded on papyrus. As Julius Victor comments, “In personal letters brevity is the first norm” (*Ars Rhet.* 27).¹⁷ The epistolary handbooks describe a whole range of purposes for which private letters can be employed, referred to as letter “types” (τύποι). Demetrius’s Τύποι “Ἐπιστολικοί, for example, lists (among others) the friendly letter, the blaming letter, the reproachful letter, the consoling letter, the praising letter, the advisory letter, the inquiring letter, the apologetic letter and so on. Such categories do not seem to function as prescriptive designations for forms a letter should take as much as they seem to provide descriptive categories for the forms a letter does take. Some of the early handbooks, however, may have been used for educational purposes so that certain standards that had developed within the practice of letter writing would be reinforced at the theoretical and educational level. The non-literary letter is characterized by a very distinct three to four part form (opening, an optional thanksgiving, a body [with its own opening, middle and closing], a closing) and is often written in vulgar Greek with extremely formulaic language.

Although usually written in a private setting, letters utilized for diplomatic correspondence constitute a distinct category. These are letters that were created by logographers

¹⁵ Stirewalt, *Studies*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Stirewalt, *Studies*, p. 3.

¹⁷ Translations of the theorists are taken from Malherbe, *Theorists*.

in order to be read in the absence of a city-state official, letters of daily official business among royal officials and letters from citizens to their officials, usually regarding some political matter.¹⁸ Official edicts or diplomatic addresses from the emperor or king often took the letter form as well (e.g. *P.Lond.* 1912). Julius Victor treats the official letter form at more length than any of the other ancient theorists. He says (*Ars Rhet.* 27):

Official letters are such in virtue of their official and serious subject. Characteristic of this type are weighty statements, clarity of diction, and special effort at terse expression, as well as all of the rules of oratory, with one exception, that we prune away some of its great size and let an appropriate familiar style govern the discourse.

The official letter tends to use a slightly more elevated level of Greek, allows for greater length boundaries and often employs less formalized language, at times making use of rhetorical techniques.

The types of letters used by poets, rhetoricians, historians and philosophers are typically written in extended contexts.¹⁹ The epistolary handbooks, especially Demetrius's *On Style*, seem concerned to distinguish epistolography as expressed through personal letters from literary letters on philosophical and technical matters, including the moral letter-essays often compared with Pauline ethical material.²⁰ The private letter serves as the basis for the example letters in the handbooks,²¹ indicating that that they had a specified letter type in mind that (at least at some level) excluded more literary philosophical expressions of the tradition. Some ambiguity still

¹⁸ Stirewalt, *Paul*, pp. 30-32. He refers to these as (1) reports to a constituted body, (2) executive or administrative letters and (3) the reverse line of communication.

¹⁹ This is not to say philosophers did not use the letter genre for correspondence (cf. Philostratus, *Ep.* II 257). But preempting the discussion a bit, it should be noted here that the letters used by biblical scholars as a source for Greco-Roman paraenesis are letters of this type or moral treatises without epistolary framing. See Chapter 8.

²⁰ Philostratus (*Ep.* II 257) faults a rhetorician named Herodes for departing from epistolary style through excessive use of Atticism and insists that proper epistolary style will not have a very elevated literary level, it will be more literary than everyday speech but "more ordinary than Atticism, and it must be composed in accordance with common usage" (translation taken from Malherbe, *Theorists*, p. 43); cf. also ps.-Libanius, Ἐπιστολμαῖοι Χαρακτῆρες 46-48.

²¹ In ps.-Demetrius, Τύποι Ἐπιστολικοί, all 21 letter types are illustrated with the personal letter as are all 41 letter types in ps.-Libanius, Ἐπιστολμαῖοι Χαρακτῆρες. And as noted already, Demetrius plainly makes the distinction between the tradition he intends to describe the more philosophically oriented letters (Demetrius, *Eloc.* 223, 228).

revolves around the precise literary designation of these letters within the broader Hellenistic letter tradition. They have been referred to as literary letters,²² letter-essays²³ and philosophical letters.²⁴ It is probably best to understand these as macro-categories and sub-categories. Letter-essays are a type of literary letter and philosophical letters are one type of letter-essay.

The broader term, literary letters, was reinforced in biblical studies by Adolf Deissmann. Literary letters are written in artistic form for the public while non-literary texts “are the products not of art but of life; their destiny is not for the public and posterity but for the passing moment in a workaday world.”²⁵ While scholars today generally reject much of Deissmann’s rigid two part classification as too clear cut and failing to take into consideration various transitional phases, most would still maintain that there are more and less literary letters.²⁶ We do not have the originals for most literary letters as they are usually transmitted through various collections and copied texts. These letters represent a more elevated, Atticizing style of Greek, employ very little formalized language and use the letter form only very loosely. This category is very broad encompassing philosophical and imperial propaganda, rhetorical exercises, poetry in letter form, philosophical treatises, letters intended for recording history and various fictitious writings—whether school room exercises or intentional forgeries.

The Greek letter-essay is a very common form of the literary letter written on a variety of technical and professional topics.²⁷ Stirewalt has provided the most extensive treatment of the

²² E.g. F.I. Merchant, ‘seneca the Philosopher and His Theory of Style,’ *AJP* (1905), pp. 44-59, here p. 54.

²³ E.g. H.D. Betz, “De Tranquillitate Animi (Moralia 464E-477F),” in H.D. Betz (ed.), *Plutarch’s Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (SCHNT; Leiden: Brill, 1978), pp. 199-220, here p. 199.

²⁴ E.g. B. Inwood, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), p. 345.

²⁵ A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (trans. L.R.M. Strachan; New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), p. 145.

²⁶ Cf. Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, p. 70.

²⁷ Aune distinguishes between philosophical letters and letter-essays, but his criteria are not entirely clear—except that the letter-essay does not make extensive use of epistolary form. However, some of the examples he provides seem no less epistolary than the philosophical essays he mentions. D. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (LEC 8; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), p. 167.

Greek letter-essay.²⁸ He prefers abandoning the term “literary letter” and using “letter-essay” in its place but this does not account for works of fiction, school exercises and poetry in letter form. While I agree that the letter-essay is a helpful descriptive category, I am less inclined to see it as all-encompassing enough to account for the wide range of letters written in a more literary style. Instead, the letter-essays seems to be a very popular form of the literary letter. Stirewalt identifies four components in the form of the letter-essay:²⁹

- A. Heading
- B. Epistolary Introduction
- C. Transition from the introduction to the Body
- D. Closing

The most distinguishing feature is the epistolary introduction which usually contains:³⁰

1. a statement of the theme of the letter, and
2. an acknowledgment of the request or need which called it forth;
3. the writer’s response to the request including a fuller statement of purpose, and often the basis or presupposition of his work;
4. a description of the method or manner by which the work is presented.

Letter-essays are “written out of a genuine letter-setting and they retain ... formal and structural epistolary characteristics.”³¹ However, “they are losing some of the form, phraseology and structure of the letter and are incorporating the more impersonal, objective style of the monograph....[T]he writers themselves refer to them most often as *logoi*.”³² Letter-essays are also made intelligible to a third party (often using the third person as well as first and second) and seem to express an intention for later publication. These letters occur, therefore, in extended letter settings since they are intended for public use.³³ This sub-genre of the literary letter accounts for a vast range of ancient epistolary material including philosophical letters as we see

²⁸ M.L. Stirewalt, “The Form and Function of the Greek Letter-Essay,” in K. Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate* (rev. and exp.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 147-71.

²⁹ Stirewalt, “Greek Letter-Essay,” p. 156.

³⁰ Stirewalt, “Greek Letter-Essay,” p. 162.

³¹ Stirewalt, “Greek Letter-Essay,” p. 148.

³² Stirewalt, “Greek Letter-Essay,” p. 148.

³³ Stirewalt, “Greek Letter-Essay,” pp. 169-71.

in the philosophical treatises of Epicurus and the moral philosophy of Seneca and Isocrates, letters on history as we have transmitted in the letters of Pliny and biographical novels as we see for example in Hippocrates.

2. *Assessing the Pauline Letter Form*

In recent scholarship most scholars have followed Deissmann in viewing Paul's letters primarily against the background of the private non-literary letter, although some have argued that his letters are closer to a literary letter or philosophical letter-essay³⁴ or even perhaps an official letter.³⁵

Although Long and Stirewalt have recently suggested that the Pauline letter may be closer to official letters in their structure and function, the content of his letters continues to pose a major obstacle for this understanding, even if they do take the form of the official letter as Stirewalt contends. Paul's letters do not appear to be concerned mainly with official matters, detached from personal situations; they do not seem to be written "for the conduct of state business and sent between states, rulers, military officers, or ambassadors in the exercise of their duties" as Stirewalt remarks.³⁶ Nor does Paul seem to obey the rules of oratory or have the "clear diction" that characterizes the official letter (see Julius Victor, *Ars Rhet.* 26).

It is also hard to see how the Pauline letter could be correlated with the letter-essays of the philosophers (and to a lesser degree rhetoricians). One of the most obvious differences between the Pauline letter and literary letters, especially letter-essays, is the epistolary situations out of which the two emerge. Many of Paul's letters respond and speak to very acute situations

³⁴ Dormeyer, "Hellenistic Letter-Formula," p. 71; cf. also C.E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (NovTSup 81; Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 175-76.

³⁵ Stirewalt, *Paul*, pp. 25-125.

³⁶ Stirewalt, *Studies*, p. 6

within particular church communities.³⁷ All of his letters emerge out of an actual correspondence. They are not written in extended, but in normative contexts. They do not communicate in the detached, removed style of the monograph nor were they written with the intention of publication or seem to supplement some already published work. They are written with a constant sense of the audience in mind and the content often emerges directly out of situational and contextual factors within the communities to which he was writing. They are letters in the normal sense of the term, not philosophical treatises with epistolary framing.

Another problem for understanding Paul's letters as literary letters or letter-essays is the issue of structure. While the content is significantly expanded and more complex, the form and function of the Pauline letter seems to align most closely with the example letters represented in the handbooks and the private letters found among the documentary papyri. Paul uses the typical non-literary letter format with an epistolary opening, a body (with an opening, middle and closing) and an epistolary closing as indispensable elements, often employing a thanksgiving/health wish and paraenetic section as well. White notices distinct similarities within the letter body as well, with the only dissimilarities being length and a quasi-independent paraenesis within the body. The similarities he finds between the Pauline letter body and the letter bodies of the Greek papyri are: (1) they both divide into three structural components (although the paraenesis could be considered an additional component), the body-opening, -middle, and -closing; (2) the transition into the body in Paul and in the papyri both begin with a formulaic or quasi-formulaic construction; (3) stereotyped language; and (4) all body-opening formulas that we find in Paul find their parallel in the papyri.³⁸ These formal similarities align the letters in the Pauline corpus most closely with the non-literary private letter tradition and we have no parallels

³⁷ Cf. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric*, pp. 100-101.

³⁸ J.L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in the Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle* (SBLDS 2; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972), pp. 153-54.

of letter-essays that took the non-literary letter form and employed epistolary formulae as extensively as Paul. Even in the case of Romans, which has received some attention along these lines recently, we have no parallels among the philosophical letters in terms of structure.³⁹ They are either entirely descriptive and philosophical (like Romans 1-11) or their content is entirely ethical (like Romans 12-15), not a combination of the two.

A third problem that presents itself to those who seek to portray Paul's letters against the backdrop of the literary epistle is stylistic. Typical formulas found in the papyri are employed throughout the Pauline corpus, often more frequently (and with more flexibility) than what we find in the papyri.⁴⁰ Mullins catalogues a helpful list of formulae occurring in the papyri that also occur in New Testament letters and especially the Pauline corpus.⁴¹

At the beginning of the letter:

Disclosure	P. Oxy. 1155, P. Oxy. 1481
Petition	P. Oxy. 292
Ironic Rebuke	P. Oxy. 1223, P. Oxy. 1348
Thanksgiving	P. Oxy 1299
Greeting	P. Oxy 531, P. Oxy. 1160, P. Oxy. 1679

In the middle of the letter:

Disclosure	P. Oxy 1670 (See also P. Oslo 151)
Petition	P. Oxy 1480 (See also P. Oxy 745)
Ironic Rebuke	P. Oxy 113, B.G.U. 1041
Thanksgiving	P. Oxy 1070
Greeting	P. Oxy 1765, P. Oxy 1070, P. Oxy 1679

At the end of the letter:

Petition	P. Oxy. 1666 (See also P. Oxy. 745)
Thanksgiving	P. Oxy. 1481, P. Giess. 21, P. Merton 81
Greeting	P. Oxy 1216, P. Oxy. 1679

Expressions of joy and astonishment, transitional indicators, hesitation formulas and statements of report with the formulaic use of "hearing" or "learning" terminology can also be added to this

³⁹ Romans has been compared to the Greek letter-essay more often than any of the other Pauline epistles. There have been several studies which seek to cast Romans on the background of the Cynic-Stoic philosophical conversation form related to diatribe, for example. R. Bultmann initiated this movement in *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910); he has been followed by several others, see esp. Stowers; Stowers, "Diatribe," pp. 71-86; Schmeller, *Paulus*; D.A. Aune, "Romans as a Logos Protreptikos," in K. Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate* (rev. and exp.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 278-96.

⁴⁰ White, *Form and Function*, pp. 153-55.

⁴¹ T. Y. Mullins, "Formulas in New Testament Epistles," *JBL* 91 (1973), p. 387.

list.⁴² All of these find their parallels in the papyri and can be detected in Pauline epistles to a greater or lesser degree. However, epistolary formulas were rarely utilized in Greek letter-essays in general or by the philosophers in particular, further distancing the Pauline letter form from the literary letter of the Greek intellectuals.

Length and complexity in Paul's letters does, on the other hand, provide a point of contact with the literary tradition of letter writing. But while Paul's letters are longer than the typical personal letters of his day, they exceed the average length of literary and official letters as well.⁴³ While the letter tradition that has been preserved outside of the New Testament testifies to the currency of much shorter letters, there seems to be some difference of opinion among the ancient theorists as to whether pressing normal length boundaries went against good epistolary style. Clearly Demetrius thought that personal letters should not be as long as the philosophical letters of Plato and Thucydides: τὸ δὲ μέγεθος συνεστάλω τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ λέξις (Demetrius, *Eloc.* 28; cf. also Julius Victor, *Ars Rhet.* 27). However, Gregory states: "Ἔστι δὲ μέτρον τῶν ἐπιστολῶν ἡ χρεία· καὶ οὔτε μαχαρότερα γραπτέον οὐ μὴ πολλὰ τὰ παράγματα οὔτε μικρολογητέον ἔνθα πολλά (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep.* 51). According to this later theorist (4th c.), a letter that achieves its purpose without excess is appropriate epistolary style: one should not expound unnecessarily upon a limited subject nor should one spare words when there is much to say. So while unusual, there is some indication (at least in later development of epistolary theory) that personal letters may have stretched beyond conventional bounds from

⁴² An analysis of the formal features of these formulas can be found in several places. See Mullins, "Formulas," pp. 380-90; T.Y. Mullins, "Petition as a Literary Form," *NovT* 5 (1962), pp. 46-54; T.Y. Mullins, "Disclosure: A Literary Form in the New Testament," *NovT* 7 (1964), pp. 44-50; J.L. White, "Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter," *JBL* 90 (1971), pp. 91-97; J.L. White, "Epistolary Formulas and Clichés in Greek Papyrus Letters," *SBL Abstracts and Seminar Papers* 14 (1978), pp. 289-319; J.T. Reed, "Philippians 3:1 and the Epistolary Hesitation Formulas: The Literary Integrity of Philippians, Again," *JBL* 115 (1996), pp. 63-90; J.T. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," *JBL* 81 (1962), pp. 348-62. A convenient summary is found in Richards, *Secretary*, pp. 203-206.

⁴³ Cf. P.J. Achtemeier, "*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," *JBL* 109 (1990), pp. 3-27, here p. 22.

time to time when the epistolary situation called for it. Certainly the situation in many of the churches to which Paul wrote would have warranted this. Other, more individual situations, like Philemon, Titus and 2 Timothy called for much less. But many of Paul's letters remain long according to any standard of letter writing in antiquity so this characteristic must be viewed as a Pauline adaptation of the letter form, regardless of which letter type one sees Paul most closely aligned with—it ends up being a matter of degree. This is confirmed by Richards's recent analysis:

In the approximately 14,000 private letters from Greco-Roman antiquity, the average length was about 87 words, ranging in length from 18 to 209 words... Cicero averaged 295 words per letter, ranging from 22 to 2,530, and Seneca averaged 995, ranging from 149 to 4134. By both standards, though, Paul's letters were quite long. The thirteen letters bearing his name average 2,495 words, ranging from 335 (Philemon) to 7,114 (Romans).⁴⁴

Length and complexity differed among all types of letters in the ancient world. Paul's letters were longer than most and went beyond many philosophical treatises in terms of their length and complexity, which may be an indication of a more technical setting. But length alone is not enough to overturn several other literary and contextual factors that mitigate against a strictly literary background for the Pauline letter form—especially given the fact that Paul's letters are unusually long when compared to literary *and* non-literary letters. Several further factors separate Paul's letter from the literary letter. As noted above, his letters do not take the form of the letter-essay, use their non-formalized aesthetic character of language or resemble their content structurally—they typically involve description followed by exhortation not one or the other which is unparalleled in the philosophical letters. Further, the epistolary situation involves a much different social context with occasional setting, attention to particular situational details and lacks the extended artistic character of the literary letter. As Stowers observes:

⁴⁴ Richards, *Secretary*, p. 213.

The social context for such literary letters is a small circle of aristocratic friends who share advanced rhetorical educations. The purpose is aesthetic entertainment. As Pliny remarks, the first requirement from this kind of literary activity is leisure (Letter 7.2). Pliny notes that such letters should usually be brief and employ simple vocabulary and direct style (Letter 7.9.8). The paradox is that Pliny employs elaborate structure and studied prose rhythm in order to achieve this simplicity and directness.⁴⁵

This may have been true of Pliny, Seneca, Cicero and Philo, but not Paul. His letters were intended to be taken seriously. They were not written for the entertainment of an elite crowd of aristocrats.

An additional point of contact between the Pauline and the literary letter that has already been addressed in some detail is Paul's language. As discussed in Chapter 5, Paul's Greek was more sophisticated than the vulgar language of the papyri. Yet his syntax was still far from being constructed with a careful hypotactic or periodic style. We see in Paul various grammatical slips, anacoluthon, solecisms, the use of vulgar vocabulary, formalized language and at times unclear Greek expression. Paul's language does not reach the heights of the Atticizing character of the literary letter but is certainly of higher quality than the vulgar form of Greek that most of the papyri are written in. We might, therefore, plot Paul on the spectrum of non-literary and literary letters somewhere close to the middle, but still more on the side of the non-literary letter. Much like his language, Paul's letters are more literary than John's epistles, the papyri, etc., due to their length, complexity and some elevated language but much less literary than the letter-essays of the Hellenistic philosophers, historians and rhetoricians due to the private letter form, paratactic style, various grammatical *faux pas* and formalized language. As Stowers insightfully observes, like other New Testament letters, Paul's letters "resemble neither the common papyri from the very lowest levels of culture and education nor the works of those with the highest levels of rhetorical training." "They fall somewhere in between," he concludes, "and have the cast of a

⁴⁵ Stowers, *Letter Writing*, p. 26.

Jewish subculture.”⁴⁶

3. Conclusion: Implications of Paul's Letter Form for his Hellenistic Education

From an educational standpoint, it is interesting that Paul's letter form surpasses the level of the common Greek literates attested in the papyri, who probably gained their proficiency in Greek through attending a local elementary school, but fails to aspire to the high compositional and literary standards of the letters of the well educated philosophers and rhetoricians. Richards suggests that this may be due to flexibility of the literary letter as represented in Cicero's Latin letters and in the Greek letters of Seneca and Pliny.⁴⁷ But while Cicero's letters are written out of a genuine occasional epistolary setting, his contemporaries readily recognized that they still have a very distinct literary quality that extends beyond the needs of the direct epistolary situation. As Klauck notes, “the very fact that people collected these letters from the beginning already points beyond the immediate occasion of writing” and justifies the classification of these correspondences as literary letters.⁴⁸ Unlike Paul's letters, which were retained for religious purposes, these letters seem to be kept on the basis of their literary and historical value. Seneca and Pliny fit quite comfortably within the letter-essay genre, using epistolary framing to pursue technical matters of philosophy and history. Thus, due to the substantial differences between the Greek letter-essay and Paul's letter form noted above, this explanation must be deemed unsatisfactory.

A more reasonable evaluation is that, like Paul's linguistic skills, his abilities as a letter writer reflect his level of education and epistolary training. Although the role of developing epistolary skills in education has not been thoroughly investigated, several pieces of evidence

⁴⁶ Stowers, *Letter Writing*, p. 25; cf. Richards, *Paul*, p. 127; Richards, *Secretary*, pp. 215-16.

⁴⁷ Richards, *Paul*, p. 127.

⁴⁸ Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, p. 157.

point to the importance of acquiring letter composition skills in the educational process. First, the collections of example letters used in handbooks like ps.-Demetrius and ps.-Libanius as well as the handbooks themselves may have played an important role in the Hellenistic schools in providing theoretical guidelines to be followed and model letters to be imitated, although this must be stated with caution since the more theoretical handbooks and expositions on epistolography seem to be written for the purposes of more advanced discussion (e.g. Cicero, Philostratus, Demetrius, Julius Victor). These were perhaps intended for training professional scribes and secretaries and as contributions to theoretical development of the discipline.⁴⁹ The collection of *topoi* in *P.Bon.5* is likely to have been used for instructional purposes in formal Hellenistic education, having less of an emphasis on the theoretical dimension of letter writing and a more positive focus upon specific examples that could be imitated. Second, the grammarians Dionysius (first century AD), Theon (first century AD), Apollonius (second century AD) and the sophist Nicolaus (fifth century AD) exhibit a concern for epistolography in connection with grammar or preparatory exercises. Third, the consistent use of the stereotyped language, formalized expression and letter structure point to standards that must have been reinforced through education.⁵⁰ Most believe that epistolary skills were attained under the *grammaticus* as part of the study of composition since, aside from schools that taught Coptic, letters were rarely used as the basis for elementary exercises. On the two-phase model presented here, this would place the acquisition of epistolary skills through instruction under a *grammaticus*—when it was introduced probably varied from teacher to teacher. This was probably the case for students receiving a liberal education but the diversity of social classes and educational levels among letter writers make it likely that certain elementary schools may have

⁴⁹ Malherbe, *Theorists*, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Cf. Criatore, *Gymnastics*, pp. 216-17; Malherbe, *Theorists*, pp. 6-7.

culminated with some basic instruction in letter writing such as an introduction to basic letter form and conventions. The proliferation of standardized language and form is hard to explain otherwise. It is possible that the collections of epistolary types as noted above may have served as the basis for instruction within some of these schools.⁵¹

Cribiore has shown that letters to home were often used as a test or demonstration of the education a student was receiving.⁵² In *P.Ryl.* 624 there is evidence that the student's teacher helped him compose the letter with "correct punctuation and lectional signs" ensuring that the letter was "unusually replete with accents, breathings and marks of punctuation—reminders that their teacher was earning his money."⁵³ It is also likely that many letters served both as school exercises and as real letters sent home to display a student's progress or, in some cases, lack thereof. An example from a young student's (Anastasios) father displays the later scenario very vividly through the father's announcement of his plans to discontinue his son's education based upon a letter he recently received from him:

You have written to me about young Anastasios, and since I owe you money, be sure you will be paid in full. Nothing of what has been told you is true, expect that he is stupid and a child and foolish. He wrote a letter himself quite in keeping with his appearance and his empty wits. And since he is a child and stupid, I will bring him home. I am keeping his letter to show you when I come.⁵⁴

Apparently this father planned to use a letter written by his son as evidence of his lack of progress: "its poor quality was the proof in a father's eyes that education had failed: showing it to the teacher was a gesture of veiled reproach."⁵⁵ A third example mentioned by Cribiore is *P.Oxy.* 3070. In this papyrus two students use the letter form to compose a mock letter with a "literary flavor" as an exercise in creativity employing the skills learned under the grammarian.

⁵¹ Cf. Malherbe, *Theorists*, p. 6.

⁵² Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, pp. 217-19.

⁵³ Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, p. 218.

⁵⁴ *SB* 7655 in Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, p. 218.

⁵⁵ Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, p. 219.

The students make a number of word-plays, employ a metrical style, utilize obscure and obscene glosses in their descriptions and even make use of literary chiasmus, all contributing to a nicely constructed letter with an impressive style. Criore concludes that “After learning how to phrase a letter and by practicing their skills in conventional epistles sent to their families, Apion and Epimas felt confident enough to compose a mock literary letter....”⁵⁶

If the ancients used the form and quality of a letter to judge a person’s level of education, it is not a far logical step for moderns to do the same. Paul’s letters lie somewhere on the spectrum between the non-literary papyri that emerged from those with basic Greek literacy and very minimal compositional skills, often reflecting a modest elementary education, and the highly developed literary letter of the Hellenistic academicians. It seems that Paul had acquired the basic skills of literacy and composition and grown comfortable enough with the letter form to expand and modify it for his own purposes and needs as Apion and Epimas had learned to do. We see this not only in his pressing of conventional length boundaries, but also in his employment of an innovative five-part epistolary structure (opening, thanksgiving, body, paraenesis, closing) in many of his letters. The language and form of Paul’s letter is beginning to approach the caliber of the literary letter but his Greek grammar and style is still in need of much refinement, lacks the aesthetic polish of a trained rhetorician or philosopher and evidences some Semitic (i.e. septuagintal) interference. His literary achievements, therefore, seem to situate him below the professional Hellenistic intellectuals of his day but above those with basic literacy and some knowledge of letter-writing. This seems to be precisely the level of ability one would expect from a person who had studied at a liberal school with a *grammaticus* but had not perfected his skills in Greek schools of higher education in rhetoric or philosophy. We must, therefore, agree with Stowers’s assessment that “Paul’s Greek educational level roughly equals

⁵⁶ Criore, *Gymnastics*, p. 219.

that of someone who had primary instruction with a *grammaticus*, a teacher of letters, and then studied letter writing and some elementary rhetorical exercises.”⁵⁷ Perhaps this goes some way toward accounting for why Paul’s letters are such an anomaly and why they defy typical categories of epistolary classification when compared to other letters of his day. Students at the Greek liberal schools of Paul’s day who hoped to pursue a career of writing and speaking as Paul did would have typically continued on to perfect and refine their skills through advanced education at one of the major capitals so that they would be able to leave their impression upon the world of literary art and scholarship. Paul, however, sought to complete his education at a rabbinic academy and therefore never had the opportunity to fully master literary forms of language and composition.

⁵⁷ Stowers, *Romans*, p. 17. He later clarifies that “The way the sentence is written and punctuated one might misleadingly get the impression that the *grammaticus* and the teacher of letters were the same. The former was of a much higher educational level and could take students far beyond the early stages of reading and writing.” Stowers, “Apostrophe,” p. 369. It should also be noted that Stowers here endorses a traditional three phase approach to the educational system which I believe is inadequate, but cf. Stowers, *Letter Writing*, p. 32. Anderson echoes these sentiments: “It would seem rather unlikely that Paul enjoyed a formal rhetorical education....Paul, *at most*, will have become acquainted with certain *progymnasmata*” (emphasis his). Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, p. 276. Richards makes similar remarks, but less constructive: “While some modern writers attempt to place Paul within the class of well-trained rhetoricians, Paul’s letters do not display a consistent conformity to established rhetorical standards. It seems unlikely that a trained rhetorician would permit such *faux pas*.” Richards, *Secretary*, p. 151.

CHAPTER 7

Paul's Use of Greek Literature

Having considered Paul's linguistic and epistolary-compositional abilities, it is now appropriate to turn to an analysis of his use and knowledge of Greek literature. As Fairweather notes, the extent of Paul's knowledge of Greek authors is used today both as a proof both for the assertion that Paul was educated to a fairly high level in the Hellenistic schools and as the basis for its denial.¹ The issue is, of course, plagued in the contemporary discussion by skepticism as to whether the record in Acts is a reliable link to the historical Paul and in the Pauline letters, whether the Pastorals are authentic, since the most significant citations from Greek literature are found in Acts and the Pastorals, but as I have already noted, I am unconvinced that there are good reasons for excluding either as adequate sources for knowledge about the historical Paul (on issues of authenticity and the use of sources, see Introduction—the question of historiography and speeches is addressed below). Citations from Greek authors in Paul's speeches in Acts and in his letters are considered in this chapter with reference to the typical literary curriculum of the Hellenistic liberal schools.

1. The Citation of Greek Literature in Pauline Speeches in Acts

Before assessing the value of Acts in constructing an account of Paul's Hellenistic education, the degree to which the form of speeches in Acts can count as evidence for Paul's rhetorical abilities must be considered. Several of Paul's speeches are interrupted. But given practices current in Hellenistic historiography, it seems questionable whether even the uninterrupted speeches can provide a direct link to the historical Paul. On the other hand,

¹ Fairweather, "Epistle," p. 30.

assuming historicity (see Introduction), the content of the speeches may turn out to be useful. Issues of accounts of rhetorical speeches in Greek historiography are considered first, followed by an analysis of the use of Greek authors in Paul's speeches.

a. *Greek Historiography and Rhetorical Speeches in Acts*

Although Paul's letters resist rhetorical analysis due to the disjunction between epistolary and oratorical literary forms (see Chapter 4), this may not necessarily be the case with respect to his speeches in Acts, precisely because they appear to be written records of orations. This would seem on the surface to make this material quite susceptible to sustained rhetorical analysis and a number of scholars have proceeded to do just this.² The major obstacle to analysis of Paul's speeches in this way is the literary form—some type of historiography—in which they are embedded and what this implies for the relationship of the speeches to the historical Paul.³ There is a great deal of ambiguity that revolves around the question of how many liberties historians took in recording historical material, especially speeches.

The most programmatic passage for assessing the reliability of the speeches in Act has been Thucydides 1.22.1:

With reference to the speeches in this history, some were delivered before the war began, others while it was going on; some I heard myself, others I got from various quarters; it was in all cases difficult to carry them word for word in one's memory, so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said (trans. LCL).

² E.g. the treatment of Paul's speeches in Witherington, *Acts*, among many others.

³ For a detailed review of recent research on the genre of Acts see Phillips, "Genre of Acts," pp. 367-96. As noted above, Phillips concludes his survey by noting (p. 385) that "In the eyes of most recent scholars, [Acts] is history—but not the kind of history that precludes fiction." In other words, while a consensus seems to be emerging among scholars that Acts is some form of history, it is now generally agreed that an understanding of the genre of Acts does not aid in the question of its historicity. Though this captures much of what is going on in contemporary Acts studies, Phillips summation is probably too monolithic.

However, as Porter notes, there are a number of lexical and grammatical ambiguities that revolve around the interpretation of this passage.⁴ First, the word translated above as “difficult” (χαλεπόν) could mean anything from the realm of mere possibility, “unable, perhaps under any circumstances,” to an inability to attain the historical record with absolute precision, but a nearly exact account may be possible if the correct method is employed. A mediating sense is even possible where χαλεπόν is understood as an inability unless the right circumstances obtain. Second, the meaning of the phrase τὴν ἀκρίβειαν αὐτὴν τῶν λεχθέντων (translated above “word for word”) is unclear. Does this refer to the individual utterances or the reliability of the record as a whole? Third, does the adverb μάλιστα (“likely,” “especially”) go with the thing “demanded of them,” to “say,” or with the whole clause, to “say what was in my opinion demanded of them”? Fourth, the phrase translated above as “demanded” (τὰ δέοντα) leaves open question as to how exactly the situations demanded things from the speaker and what exactly they demanded. Fifth, the phrase ὅτι ἐγγύτατα, translated “as closely as possible,” could be a reference to keeping as closely as possible to what Thucydides deemed as necessary or it could refer to keeping as close to the general sense of what was said in light of the situation. Sixth, the phrase τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης (“the general sense”) could mean the basic “gist” of what was said or the line taken by the speaker. Seventh, τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων (“really said”) could denote either “spoken truthfully” or “truly spoken.” These exegetical ambiguities make a “Thucydidean View” hard to maintain and of little help in evaluating how speeches were recorded in Acts. Furthermore, Thucydides has been shown to be somewhat atypical among the historians, at least in particular

⁴ S.E. Porter, “Thucydides 1.22.1 and Speeches in Acts: Is There a Thucydidean View,” *NovT* 32 (1990), pp. 121-42; rep. S.E. Porter, *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice* (SBG 6; New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 173-93, here pp. 179-91.

aspects of form and style.⁵ Porter's cautions with Thucydides, therefore, are duly noted but the picture of speeches in Greco-Roman historiography still needs to be filled out by other theorists.

Isocrates, although not a historian, sets the agenda for many of the Greco-Roman historians. He suggests that when recording an account of a person's achievements it is best to *add artistic style and then present them to others to consider*:

For these reasons especially I have undertaken to write this discourse because I believed that for you, for your children, and for all the other descendants of Evagoras, it would be by far the best incentive, if someone should assemble his achievements, give them verbal adornment, and submit them to you for your contemplation and study (*Evag.* 76; trans. LCL).

This methodology was carried over into historiography by several of Isocrates's students including Theopompus, Ephorus, Diodorus and Xenophon.⁶ Historians that followed in the tradition of Isocrates enhanced the original events and speeches with rhetorical style and aesthetic ornamentation. Similarly, Dionysius of Halicarnassus understood the historian's task as an extension of rhetoric (see Dionysius, *Thuc.* 18, 41). As Gempf notes, "For Dionysius, the fashioning of speeches is taken to be the test of a real historian's ability, that ability being reckoned in terms of rhetorical style and skill.... Artistry was most important, even at the expense of faithfulness.... There can be no doubt that Dionysius composes the speeches he presents in his own books in a stereotyped rhetorical fashion."⁷ The same perspective is echoed by Cicero in his criticisms of past historians (see for example Cicero, *De Or.*, 2.12.53-54 and 2.15.62). He states that "the privilege is conceded to rhetoricians to distort history in order to give more point to their narrative" (Cicero, *Brutus*, 11.42-3; trans. LCL). Likewise, Lucian held that the historian was to be true to the facts that he records, even if the form was altered:

⁵ See S.A. Adams, "Luke's Preface and its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander," *JGRChJ* 3 (2006), pp. 177-91.

⁶ C. Gempf, "Public Speaking and Published Accounts," in B.W. Winter and A.D. Clarke (eds.), *The Book of Acts in Its First-century Setting: Volume 1: Ancient Literary Setting* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 259-303, here p. 270.

⁷ Gempf, "Public Speaking," pp. 275, 276, 282.

“expression and arrangement” could be different but not facts such as geography (Lucian, “The Way to Write History,” 23; trans. Fowler and Fowler).⁸ With respect to speeches Lucian suggests that the historian is completely justified in showing off his eloquence and “bringing the speech into a good rhetorical style” (ῥητορεύσαι, rhetorizing) once the speaker and situation have been accurately situated:

When it comes in your way to introduce a speech, the first requirement is that it should suit the character both of the speaker and of the occasion; the second is (once more) lucidity; but in these cases you have the counsel’s right of showing your eloquence (ῥητορεύσαι καὶ ἐπιδείξαι τὴν τῶν λόγων διενότητά) (Lucian, “The Way to Write History,” 58; trans. Fowler and Fowler).

Although Lucian insisted on the value of recording historical truth, he saw no problem with reconstructing a speech so that it accorded with the canons of rhetoric. Herodotus is an interesting contrast to the historians considered so far in that he combines his historical investigations with the art of epic poetry, often creating imaginary speeches for his characters. Of the evidence available to us, Polybius seems to be the most concerned of the historians to report truthfully and accurately what was said, but even then, only when it is most effective:

Still, as I do not think it becoming in statesmen to be ready with argument and exposition on every subject of debate without distinction, but rather to adapt their speeches to the nature of the particular occasion, so neither do I think it right for historians to practice their skill or show off their ability upon their readers: they ought on the contrary to devote their whole energies to discover and record what was really and truly said, and even of such words only those that are the most opportune and essential (Polybius 36.1; trans. LCL).

Clearly Polybius is on the more conservative side of the spectrum; nevertheless, he does seem to condone editing down what was said in order to have the greatest literary impact.

Gempf points to two important examples of speech writing where the originals can be compared with the accounts of the speeches recorded by the historian.⁹ The first is an account of a series of speeches recorded by Livy (12.42ff.; 28.27ff.; 30.30; 37.53ff.) that he found in Polybius (3.62ff.; 11.28ff.; 15.6,4ff.; 21.1ff.), a situation that may be comparable to the

⁸ Lucian, *The Works of Lucian of Samosata* (trans. H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler; 4 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), p. 2:134.

⁹ Gempf, “Public Speaking,” pp. 281-82.

circumstances under which Acts was composed where Luke used sources of some kind to construct his account of the early church, including Paul's speeches—although the possibility must also be allowed that Luke was able to hear some of Paul's speeches and that he may have had to rely upon memory or personal notes to document certain speeches. The second is an example from Tacitus's *Annals* (11.24) that can be compared to a bronze tablet found in Lyons that records what appears to be an original version of a speech that was given by the Emperor Claudius. Gempf's comparative analysis illustrates that:

Livy treats the speeches in his sources with some respect, reproducing the content while changing the form.... Tacitus' version [of Emperor Claudius's speech as compared with the bronze tablet] is much shorter, the order in which the topics are addressed is drastically altered and the style is much more polished.... Much in the original...has been condensed and even left out entirely in the published account.... Tacitus' text is a better organized and more cogent version of the same arguments...¹⁰

These examples, taken in tandem with the theoretical dimension of ancient historiography, highlight some of the complexities involved in assessing the historical Paul's rhetorical abilities based upon his speeches in Acts. It is clear that historians would typically "play the orator" in their accounts of ancient speeches. Many would attempt to remain true to the content, but most seem to feel the need to alter the form of the speeches in order to enhance their aesthetic appeal. There is no reason to believe that Luke did not do the same. The Pauline speeches in Acts, therefore, probably tell us more about Luke's literary abilities than those of Paul.

Porter points to a number of further preliminary issues that should be considered before employing rhetorical categories as a heuristic tool for analyzing Pauline speeches in Acts.¹¹ First, there is still widespread disagreement over the knowledge of rhetoric that a member of Greco-Roman society would have obtained through informal means and how much would be mediated strictly through the educational system. It is doubtful whether any of the New Testament authors

¹⁰ Gempf, "Public Speaking," pp. 281-82.

¹¹ Porter, *Paul*, pp. 109-15.

would have associated with the elite rhetoricians of society and therefore would have had access to the rhetorical handbooks. Although Paul could have been an exception to this, I think that the above analysis has demonstrated otherwise. Second, many scholars have tended to apply the handbooks in a prescriptive fashion that does not align with their intended purpose to provide *aids* in speech composition. Third, it is uncertain whether any of the speeches in Acts are complete accounts of the actual speeches that were given. Many are interrupted and others seem to be presented in condensed form. All of these cautions present significant obstacles for utilizing Paul's speeches in Acts as a basis for making assertions regarding his rhetorical abilities.

The direct implication of this study for evaluating the contribution of Pauline speeches in Acts to our appraisal of Paul's Hellenistic education is clear. Given the nature of ancient historiography and historical practices, it seems rather unlikely that these speeches were recorded in their entirety or in the original form and style in which they were given. There is simply no way to know for certain. The content of the speeches, however, is probably—at least—grounded in the actual events, even if the form has sustained significant alterations. Therefore, while the structure and style of the Pauline speeches in Acts will provide little help in bringing us into contact with the historical Paul and his education, the content is probably nevertheless a condensed representation of what was really said. So we turn now to consider what insight the content of Paul's speeches in Acts might give us into Paul's education.

b. The Citation of Greek Authors in Paul's Speeches in Acts

In Acts, four citations in three passages provide evidence of Paul's knowledge of Greek literature: Acts 17:28, 21:39 and 26:14. Conceptual parallels may also serve a confirmatory role

in our understanding of Paul's exposure to Greek literature, but these are less certain and cannot function as independent evidence.¹²

1. *Epimenides in Acts 17:28*. According to Clement of Alexandria (*Misc.* 1.14.59.1-2), this citation goes back to Epimenides, the Cretan poet, but there is a close parallel in Callimachus's *Hymn to Zeus* 7-8 as well. The citation in Acts comes from Epimenides's poem, *Cretica*, containing the famous "liar paradox." Unfortunately, the poem is not preserved in its original form. The form of the poem we possess today is transmitted in Syriac through a ninth-century commentator, Isho'dad, who probably depended upon Theodore of Mopsuestia; nevertheless, Harris has attempted to translate the text back into Greek.¹³ The English translation of the entire poem from Syriac is:¹⁴

They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one—
The Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellics!—
But though art not dead; thou livest and abidest forever,
For in thee we live and move and have our being.

Perhaps what is most intriguing about this citation is that whereas the last line of hexameter verse from the poem is cited here, the second line is cited in Titus 1:12 (see below), establishing a connection between the knowledge of Greek literature represented in the Paul of Acts and in the Paul of the letters.

¹² MacDonald has recently argued for a number of allusions to Homer's *Iliad* in Paul's address to the Ephesian elders: *Iliad* 6.485-89 in Acts 21:13-14, *Iliad* 6.440-46 in Acts 20:18-21, *Iliad* 6.361-62 and 367-68 in Acts 20:22-23, *Iliad* 6.447-49 in Acts 20:25, *Iliad* 6.490-93 in Acts 20:28, *Iliad* 6.447-49 in Acts 20:29, *Iliad* 6.446 and 474-75 in Acts 20:36-37. D.R. MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Case from the Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 74-92. MacDonald's argument is that Luke structured his narrative and Paul's address after Hector's farewell to Andromache and its surrounding events in the *Iliad*. The problem with using these the parallels in the present analysis, therefore, is that—if they prove to be convincing—they reveal far more about the author of Luke-Acts than about the historical Paul since they are based primarily in the relation between the events surrounding Hector's/Paul's farewell and the function of the address in the narrative structure of the *Iliad* and Luke-Acts and concern issues like structure and character/plot development rather than direct citations or allusions to Homer.

¹³ See M.D. Gibson (ed.), *Horae Semiticae X* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), p. 40; J.R. Harris, "A Further Note on the Cretans," *The Expositor* 7 (1907), pp. 332-37, here p. 336; on this citation, see also J.R. Harris, "The Cretans are Always Liars," *The Expositor* 7 (1906), pp. 305-17.

¹⁴ This translation is taken from Bruce, *Acts*, p. 339.

2. *Aratus and Cleanthes in Acts 17:28*. A second, more significant, quotation is found in Acts 17:28 and is not likely to have been circulated as stock phraseology among popular culture. The citation in Acts 17:28 states τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἑσμέν. Cleanthes's *Hymn to Zeus* has ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἑσμέν (Cleanthes, *Hymn* 4), which has the addition of the second person pronoun and the preposition while lacking the article and καὶ. Aratus, *Phaenomena* 5 parallels the phraseology in Acts exactly: τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἑσμέν. There is some debate as to which of these poets Paul was quoting.¹⁵ Edwards and Dibelius dismiss the possibility that the citation is meant to evoke numerous references based upon the differences mentioned above between Acts 17:28 and Cleanthes *Hymn* 4 and the presence of the previous citation.¹⁶ In my view, however, Paul's indication in the narrative that he is quoting some of their own poets (pl.) should be taken into more serious consideration. He introduces the citation with the following formula: ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν.¹⁷ Ὡς seems to serve as the introduction to a new quotation that is formally marked rather than anaphorically designating the previous citation and linking it to the following quote. The use of the plural form for τίς and ποιητής appears to indicate that Paul has in mind more than one poet, even if he does not intend to cite both here. The most likely explanation of the plural forms together with the exact replication of Aratus's expression of this Stoic belief is that Aratus is cited as representative of a conception common among the Athenian Stoic poets and that the passage from Cleanthes was probably also in mind, as well as perhaps other expressions of this notion in Athenian poetry that have not been preserved. This view is

¹⁵ See for instance Witherington, *Acts*, p. 529 and Bruce, *Acts*, 339 n76 who weigh both options.

¹⁶ M.J. Edwards, "Quoting Aratus," *ZNW* 83 (1992), p. 266-69, here p. 266; M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (ed. H. Greeven; London: SCM, 1956), p. 50 n76.

¹⁷ Some MSS (P⁷⁴, 33, 326, 614) have the first person plural pronoun instead of ὑμᾶς, a change that probably took place due to the fact that Paul was citing Aratus, a fellow Cilician, or perhaps due to the similarity in sound between the two. On this last option see B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), p. 406.

further commended by the fact that both authors were Stoic, Athenian poets (they both studied in Athens and came into contact with Zeno) and that the citation from Aratus would have likely evoked this general notion throughout Stoic poetry in the minds of the philosophers to whom Paul was speaking.

Regarding the origin of this quotation Edwards puts forward two interdependent proposals.¹⁸ First, he insists that the quotation must have been a Lukan contribution to the speech since Paul's language does have the Attic style that betrays a Greek education and since the only citation of a Greek author in the authentic Pauline letters is from Menander in 1 Cor 15:33. Second, he argues that Luke must have borrowed the citation from the second-century Jew Aristobulus (frg. 4 in Eusebius, *Pra. Eva.* 9.27, 23) who changes Zeus to θεός throughout the hymn. Concerning the first point he makes, Edwards is right to suggest a Greek education as the most likely means of exposure to this citation, but his assumptions regarding the language that Paul would have used and his requirement that Paul would have cited more Greek authors if he had received a Greek education is unwarranted. As I argue in Chapters 5 and 6, ancient epistolary theory indicates that proper style for private letters required a less literary style of Greek. Although Paul has definitely not perfected his use of language, the language that he does use is not inconsistent with the proposal that he was educated to a fairly high level in the Hellenistic education system. And it is questionable whether Paul's purposes in his letters would have called for the use of Greek authors as the context which he finds himself in at Athens clearly does. Paul would have likely acquired knowledge of this notion among the Stoic poets late in his liberal education and it is suggestive that he feels most comfortable with the expression of the idea by the Cilician poet, Aratus, who may have had a privileged status in a liberal school in Tarsus due to the Poet's birth in the city. Edwards's second point is very

¹⁸ Edwards, "Quoting Aratus," pp. 266-69.

speculative and difficult to confirm. Although it is possible that Luke (or on my view Paul) would have had some serious reservations about the ascriptions made to Zeus throughout the poem, it seems doubtful that the intent here is to evoke the entire context of the hymn. Paul seems merely to take the portion of the hymn that is relevant to his apologetic purposes on the occasion and does not seem to thereby commit himself to the worldview that underpins the hymn in its entirety.

3. *Euripides in Acts 21:39*. Paul borrows a stock phrase found in Euripides (*Ion* 8) to describe the city of Tarsus in Acts 21:39: οὐκ ἀσήμου πόλεως (see also Strabo, *Geog.* 8.6.15; Achilles Tatius, *Clitoph.* 8.3.1). Although this phrase appears to be stereotyped and is likely to have been known by people of the Hellenistic world with little or no education, especially residents of Tarsus, Harris has convincingly argued that in order for the phrase to function as a proper answer to the question “Do you know Greek?,” Paul would have had to know something of the context of the saying within Euripides, *Ion* 8 where it is stated that Athens is described as a “famous city of the Greeks.”¹⁹ Therefore, as Harris concludes, “The Apostle describes Tarsus as a second Athens in terms that would be familiar to any well educated person, moderately well read in the Greek masterpieces.”²⁰

4. *Euripides in Acts 26:14*. Another citation from Euripides (*Bacchae* 794-95) is found in Acts 26:14, a Greek proverb common among the poets (see also Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1624; Terence, *Phorm.* 1.2.27). Acts 26:14 uses the exact phraseology (πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν) as Euripides, *Bacchae* 794-95 with exception of the form of the verb (πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζοιμι). The contexts

¹⁹ On this citation, see J.R. Harris, “Did St. Paul Quote Euripides?” *ExpTim* 31 (1919), pp. 36-37.

²⁰ Harris, “Did St. Paul Quote Euripides?” p. 37.

for these passages are actually quite similar. Both are speaking about resisting god. This knowledge could have been gained from education in a liberal school, but it would be hard to rule out popular exposure because of the proverbial nature of the phrase and its occurrence in a number of sources.

5. *The Role of Conceptual Parallels with Greek Literature.* Numerous parallels suggested by Boring, Berger, Colpe and Evans should also be considered.²¹ The references these authors provide are often not citations or even allusions (the citations in their lists are discussed above),²² but typically point to conceptual similarities between Pauline notions or sayings and passages found among Greek literature. For example, Boring, Berger and Colpe point to Polybius 6.56 as parallel with Acts 17:22 on the basis of the same positive perspective on religion (δελσιδαμονία) portrayed in both passages.²³ Such parallels may be fascinating, but these connections are not convincing enough to count as direct evidence for Paul's knowledge of the relevant Greek author. At best, they may in certain instances show the impact of Hellenistic culture upon his thinking and some of this influence certainly could have come through the means of formal education. Conceptual parallels, therefore, serve a confirmatory role in combination with other direct citations, but such correlations are not strong enough to count as independent evidence.

²¹ M.E. Boring, K. Berger, and C. Colpe (eds.), *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), pp. 319-34; C.A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to Background Literature* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), pp. 376-378.

²² On terminology, see S.E. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology," in C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders (eds.), *Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigation and Proposals* (JSNTSup 148; SSEJC 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 78-96.

²³ Boring, Berger and Colpe, *Hellenistic Commentary*, p. 326.

2. *The Citation of Greek Literature in Pauline Epistolary Material*

There is a diversity of perspectives among scholars regarding the level of Greek influence upon Pauline epistolary literature. These range from those who acknowledge only a few proverbial sayings²⁴ to those who interpret much of Paul's language and thinking through Greek philosophical thought.²⁵ Four passages among Paul's letters should be considered in relation to classical authors: 1 Cor 15:33, Phil 4:4, 1 Tim 2:7 and Titus 1:12. As with Acts, a number of authors have suggested conceptual parallels with Paul and contemporary Greek thought and these may serve a confirmatory role here as well.

1. *Menander in 1 Cor 15:33.* Menander, *Thais* frg. 218 is cited in 1 Cor 15:33.²⁶ Many see this passage as the only legitimate citation of a Greek author in Paul since it is the only such reference found in the *Hauptbriefe*.²⁷ The citation is also found in Diodorus Siculus, *His.* 16.54.4; Euripides, *Frag.* 1,013 and Philo, *Det.* 38. The occurrence of similar phraseology in works outside of Menander may indicate that it had become a proverb or maxim, but perhaps finding its origin in Menander. Although Menander's writing were not restricted to the realm of poetry, his sayings played a significant role in Hellenistic education. Quintilian suggests that Menander alone was almost sufficient to provide a complete education (*Inst.* 10.I.69). The importance of Menander to the curriculum for Hellenistic education is seen in the fact that schooltexts of Menander are the third most common found among the Greco-Roman grammatical papyri (only surpassed by the writings of Homer and Euripides) and gnomic sayings and anthologies by Menander are more numerous than any other author. As Morgan summarizes,

²⁴ E.g. Barclay, "Paul Among Diaspora Jews," p. 104.

²⁵ E.g. E.B. Howell, "St. Paul," pp. 7-29.

²⁶ On this citation, see F.W. Danker, "Menander and the New Testament," *NTS* 10 (1964), pp. 365-68.

²⁷ E.g. Edwards, "Quoting Aratus," p. 267.

“[gnomic sayings] display the full range of schoolhands and appear to have been used at every stage of the *enkyklios paideia* from elementary reading and writing to rhetorical exercises. Most of those we have are quotations from Menander or Menandrian in style, confirming Plutarch’s observation that Menander provides reading, study and entertainment, in public and private, for a wider audience than any other Greek masterpiece.”²⁸ One likely source for this citation was Paul’s exposure to Hellenistic education but due to the popularity of Menander and the proverbial nature of the saying (although this could be further proof that Paul learned the saying from an anthology), it is probably best to suspend judgment on how Paul became familiar with the saying.

2. *Aeschylus in Phil 4:4*. In Phil 4:4 the farewell formula of Aeschylus, the tragic poet, is probably adapted:²⁹ χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε πάλιν ἐρῶ χαίρετε can be compared with χαίρετε χαίρετε (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 1014-15). Harris has argued convincingly for the origin of this citation in Aeschylus.³⁰ He shows that as with *Eumenides*, Philippians uses χαίρετε-formulas as structuring devices at three key transitional points in the discourse (the *imptv.* form is found in 2:18; 3:1; 4:4; the lexeme is used in some other form in Phil. 1:18; 2:17; 4:10), culminating with a double usage in Phil 4:4 as we see in *Eumenides* 1014-15. Harris also draws attention to the citizenship motifs present throughout both works and concludes that, “St. Paul knew this great play, either by reading or by scenic representation, and that his own moral lesson to the Philippians was under the influence of the great appeal which Aeschylus had made to the

²⁸ Morgan, *Literate Education*, pp. 122-23. By rhetorical exercises Morgan means the kind of exercises usually performed during literary training.

²⁹ On the use of this farewell formula see J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1894), pp. 159-60; G.F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (rev. and exp. R.P. Martin; WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), p. 244. For additional bibliography, see P.T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 348 n11.

³⁰ J.R. Harris, “St. Paul and Aeschylus,” *ExpTim* 35 (1924), pp. 151-53.

Athenians, five hundred years before.”³¹ It appears further that the most likely means of exposure that Paul would have had to this poet would have been through Hellenistic education. Aeschylus was used for the purposes of schooltext exercises and was anthologized with Homer (e.g. *P.Köln.* 125). Morgan ranks him among the most significant authors in Hellenistic education: “Hesiod, Callimachus, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Demosthenes, Isocrates and Philemon are all the most important authors, or among the most important, in their respective genres and all appear in the schooltext papyri.”³² The Hellenistic liberal school, therefore, would have been a likely place to become acquainted with such a formula.

3. *Pindar in 2 Tim 2:7*. Harris has assisted us again in identifying a citation from Pindar (frag. in Strabo, *Geog.* 6.2.3), the lyrical poet, in 2 Tim 2:7 (νόει ὁ λέγω... σύνεσιν) as a form used to introduce Paul’s charge to Timothy.³³ He demonstrates that the language is derived from a “Pindaric formula” that served to call attention to understanding throughout Greek literature. Harris points to the occurrence of the Pindaric quotation in Gregory of Nazianzus, Plato and Aristophanes and it may have been present in a number of other literary works that Paul could have gained access to through his education.

4. *Epimenides in Titus 1:12*. The most significant citation among the Pauline letters is the entire line of hexameter verse cited in Titus 1:12 from Epimenides, a philosopher-poet (and apparently considered a prophet) from Crete (for further discussion of this poet and the full text of the poem cited here, see above in the present chapter on Epimenides in Acts 17:28). A remarkable parallel to the first part of the statement is also found in Callimachus’s *A Hymn to Zeus* 8. As with Acts

³¹ Harris, “St. Paul and Aeschylus,” p. 153.

³² Morgan, *Literate Education*, p. 99.

³³ J. R. Harris, “Pindar and St. Paul,” *ExpTim* 33 (1922), pp. 456–57.

17:28, it is difficult to account for this citation by means other than formal exposure within the school setting.

5. *The Role of Conceptual Parallels.* As with Acts, a number of conceptual parallels have been identified by scholars between Pauline letters and various conceptions among Hellenistic authors, but these cannot count as direct evidence.³⁴ For example, in addition to highlighting the citations in Acts and Paul's letters expounded above, Howell provides a number of conceptual similarities between Paul and Plato. For instance, he sets Plato's language of cleaving to the upward road (Plato, *Rep.* 586a) against Paul's exhortations in Col 3:1 for his audience to seek things above. Again, while such language may be suggestive of Hellenistic influence, it is difficult to establish a direct connection and, therefore, only confirms more well established evidence.

3. *Conclusions: Paul's Use of Greek Literature and its Place in Hellenistic Education*

Although historiographical considerations preclude connecting the form of the Paul's speeches in Acts with the historical Paul, the content of the speeches provides helpful information. When the use of Greek literature in Paul's speeches in Acts and Paul's letters is investigated, a number of direct citations can be located that cannot be easily explained through exposure within popular Hellenistic culture. What is most interesting about the quotations from Acts and Paul's letters cited above is that they all come from the Greek poets and standard educational texts that would have been utilized at the latter stage of the Hellenistic liberal schools—precisely where our analysis has pointed us so far. While there may be other ways of

³⁴ See Howell, 'st. Paul,' pp. 7-29; Boring, Berger, and Colpe, *Hellenistic Commentary*, pp. 335-508; Evans, *Ancient Texts*, 378-395; references found throughout Betz, *Galatians*.

accounting for the use of these texts (e.g. Hellenistic literature popular in Jewish circles), Paul's references—both in Acts and in his letters—to standard works of literature taught by the *grammaticus* fit nicely with the historical, linguistic and literary evidence examined in this thesis that suggests that Paul's Hellenistic education equaled that of a person trained under a grammarian with some exposure to the poets and *progymnasmata*. This evidence is not definitive but it is quite suggestive.

Some have claimed that if Paul had received a literary education then we would expect to see much more use of secular authors,³⁵ but this is not necessarily the case. As Fairweather notes, “there is a comparable scarcity of quotation from Greek authors in, for example, the letters of Plato and Epicurus.”³⁶ Accordingly, Hermogenes and Aphthonius show relatively little inclination toward citing Greek authors in their works when compared with figures such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Plutarch. Certainly this provides no basis for calling into question the knowledge of Greek literature possessed by these significant academicians. The polemic and rhetorical situations for the Pauline letters must also be kept in mind. Paul constantly seems concerned to emphasize his Jewish identity and the basis of his views in the Jewish Scriptures in order to combat the criticisms of his opponents and does not seem to derive the principal components and apologetic for his Christian worldview from pagan but from Jewish literature. Taken together, these considerations disconfirm the assumption that Paul's exposure to a Greek literary curriculum in his youth would have had a resulted in a significant number of citations from those Greek authors several decades later. We should expect this from Paul no more than we expect a New Testament scholar formally trained in English literature to cite Shakespeare in his publications on New Testament related issues—although he may choose

³⁵ E.g. Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, p. 2.

³⁶ Fairweather, “Epistle,” p. 31.

to do so, lack of reference to Shakespeare or other great works of English literature would be no proof that he never received literary training.

Chapter 8

Rhetorical and Philosophical Influences on Epistolary Composition

The previous three chapters focused their attention upon different components of the curriculum in Hellenistic liberal schools, the first phase of education for many privileged children living in urban environments, especially educational centers such as Tarsus. As with the historical section, the literary analysis so far has pointed in the direction of a liberal education for Paul. I also attempted to show in the previous three chapters that while Paul's language and epistolary literature evidence a great deal of literary ability, his linguistic style and the form of his letters are not consistent with what we would expect from an author who had progressed through the advanced stages of Hellenistic education. Furthermore, all of the citations from Greek literature that we find in Paul come from the poets. Reference to the philosophers and rhetoricians are altogether lacking. We now turn in this final chapter to consider more directly the positive evidence for philosophical and especially rhetorical influence upon the composition of Paul's letters. Paul's relationship to rhetoric is addressed first, followed by a brief analysis of Paul's relationship to Hellenistic philosophy.

1. *Paul and Hellenistic Rhetoric*

The rhetorical handbooks from the Hellenistic period provide a classification of categories used by public officials, lawyers, debaters and speakers of various sorts. Although neglected in biblical studies for some time, there has been a recent revival of interest in Paul's relationship to ancient rhetoric. Several of these scholars claim directly that Paul received a formal rhetorical education.¹ Hopefully this thesis will go some way toward putting to rest this

¹ Koester, "Paul and Hellenism," pp. 187-95; Forbes, "Comparison," pp. 22-24; Marshall, *Enmity*, p. 400; Betz, "Paul," p. 5:187; Winter, "Rhetoric," pp. 820-21; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, pp. 49-51; Winter,

claim. Others seem to strongly imply it in their analysis by requiring that Paul have very detailed knowledge of a wide range of rhetorical genres, styles, compositional techniques, figures and technical terminology.² Many other scholars have followed Kennedy's assumption: "Even if [Paul] had not studied in a Greek school there were many handbooks of rhetoric in common circulation which he could have seen."³ Yet Kennedy's position is hard to maintain since the handbooks would have typically been circulated within the schools of higher education and among the political and oratory leisure culture of the Greco-Roman elite, not readily available to for common citizens who wanted to teach themselves rhetoric—if there even were such people. But the question of whether we need to postulate an origin (in the schools, through culture or some other means) for Paul's knowledge of rhetoric is largely dependant upon whether letters reflect organization according to the categories of formal rhetoric. Since localized rhetoric has already been treated in some detail and can be accounted for through the curriculum used in the liberal school, I limit the present analysis to brief comments on two areas of importance related to the larger compositional structure of the Pauline letter: (a) the relation of ancient epistolary theory to classical rhetoric and (b) the possibility of sustained rhetorical analysis throughout individual Pauline letters.

a. *Ancient Rhetoric and Epistolography*

One of the major criticisms of applying rhetorical categories from the handbooks to letters has been the theoretical distinction between the literary-structural categories in letter and

Philo, p. 218; Witherington, *Paul Quest*, pp. 97-98; Hock, "Paul," pp. 209-17; cf. also Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, p. 56; Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, pp. 58-59.

² E.g. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric*; Betz, *Galatians*; Mitchell, *Paul*.

³ Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, p. 10. For similar reasoning see Longenecker, *Galatians*, pp. cxii-cxiii; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, pp. 48-49; Jewett, *Thessalonian Correspondence*, pp. 63-68; Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric*, p. 26.

speech composition in antiquity.⁴ As Reed, for example, has shown, though epistolary categories may, in some instances, parallel rhetorical ones, this does not necessitate a formal equivalence between the two.⁵ White has drawn similar conclusions: “the judicial...and the deliberative...were not the traditions upon which letter writers depended, at least not through the first two or three centuries of the Christian era.”⁶ Although objections along these lines have been numerous, responses from rhetorical camps have not been forthcoming.

Long’s recent work is, at least in some ways, an exception to this. In addition to listing a number of “Letter Speeches,” he responds to this criticism by citing Stowers, Malherbe, and his own work as examples of research that suggest that “a rigid dichotomy between ancient epistles and oratory” can no longer be maintained.⁷ But this is certainly not the impression one gets when consulting Stowers and Malherbe. Malherbe acknowledges that rhetorical theorists did have an interest in and awareness of letter writing, but he also states that they did not incorporate it into their theoretical discussions of rhetoric in any significant way: “Epistolary theory in antiquity belonged to the domain of the rhetoricians, but it was not originally part of their theoretical systems.”⁸ Similarly, Stowers mentions a few Latin letter writers who had rhetorical training (but that rhetoricians often had training in letter writing is not in question) as well as the appended discussion on letter writing by Julius Victor, a fourth century rhetorician. Yet he still maintains that the guidelines for ancient epistolography and rhetoric remained distinct—regardless of whether certain epistolary theorists had also published works on rhetoric. His understanding of

⁴ See Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 109-27; Reed, “Epistle,” pp. 171-83. Extensive work has been done seeking to make a distinction between these traditions in Paul, see Reed, “Rhetorical Categories,” pp. 292-324; Porter, “Theoretical Justification,” pp. 100-22; Porter, *Paul*, pp. 98-125. Cf. Poster, “Letter Writing,” pp. 112-24.

⁵ Reed, “Epistle,” 171-83; see also Reed, “Ancient Rhetorical Categories,” pp. 292-324.

⁶ White, “Discussion,” p. 52.

⁷ Long, *Ancient Rhetoric*, p. 98; Malherbe, *Theorists*, pp. 2-7; Stowers, *Letter Writing*, p. 34; F.J. Long, ““Have we been defending ourselves to you?” (2 Cor 12:19): Forensic Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Unity of 2 Corinthians,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microforms; all in Long, *Ancient Rhetoric*, p. 98.

⁸ Malherbe, *Theorists*, p. 2.

the relationship of epistolography to rhetoric as portrayed in his *Letter-Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* is made abundantly clear in his recent response to Anderson:

My work on letter writing tried to show the limited and complex relationship between epistolography and the dominant rhetorical tradition.... My comparison of types of letters to broad functional categories of three rhetorical genres is phenomenological and certainly not an attempt to claim that the rules for speeches were considered generally applicable to letters. I write "letter writing remained only on the fringes of formal rhetorical education through antiquity" (34); "the letter writing tradition was essentially independent of rhetoric" (53); and that moral "exhortation was never systematically treated by rhetoricians" (91). I conclude that Christian letters in the first two centuries were largely paraenetic and hortatory and that the hortatory moral tradition "was only tangentially related to rhetorical theory" (52). I have consistently maintained that Paul's letters do not follow the rhetorical parts of speeches or other rules for speeches.⁹

Like Malherbe, Stowers clearly cannot be reckoned among those who support Long's view, even if Long can. It seems that there is still very little research to support a conflation of epistolary and rhetorical genres by the first century. And so-called "Letter Speeches" often mentioned by rhetorical critics are textbook examples of the letter-essay, which was not the letter form used by Paul (see Chapter 6).

b. *Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature*

A second issue that needs to be briefly considered in attempting to assess the level of rhetorical influence that we find upon Paul's letters is the use of rhetorical categories in individual Pauline epistles. Anderson's impressive work has dealt thoroughly with the application of the categories from the handbooks to Pauline epistolary literature.¹⁰ The major complaint that Anderson has with contemporary New Testament scholars throughout the monograph is that they have misunderstood and misapplied primary rhetorical sources. Anderson's work was pre-figured in many ways by Porter's article on the theoretical justification for rhetorical categories.¹¹ This was followed later by an analysis of rhetorically based research

⁹ Stowers, "Apostrophe," p. 368.

¹⁰ Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, pp. 129-232.

¹¹ Porter, "Theoretical Justification," pp. 100-122; S.E. Porter, "Paul," pp. 541-61.

in individual Pauline letters.¹² In this essay, Porter concludes by making four telling observations based upon his assessment of the contemporary state of Paul and rhetoric. First, there seems to be a lack of homogeneity among rhetorical critics in their outlines, especially with respect to Paul. Although they are all working with the same categories, there seem to be as many classifications of the Pauline epistles as there are New Testament rhetorical critics.¹³ Second, there is an inconsistency in the way that the categories are employed. Some stick with strictly Aristotelian categories, but most mix Greek and Roman categories in a way that is not represented in the handbooks. Third, a disproportionate and inconsistent amount of material is often placed in the various categories. Fourth, rhetorical outlines rarely square with the epistolary structure of Paul's epistles. Not much progress on these issues has been made since in terms of rhetorical critics offering compelling responses to their critics so there is no need for furthering the discussion here. Paul's letters seem to display evidence of knowledge of some elements of rhetorical style, but not an application of the genres and arrangements specified in the ancient handbooks. It is unlikely, therefore, that Paul progressed beyond literary education to study under a rhetorician.

2. Paul and Hellenistic Philosophy

I know of no scholar who claims directly that Paul formally attended a school of philosophy. Nevertheless, the possibility should be considered briefly for the sake of comprehensiveness. The strongest point that commends philosophical influence upon the letters of Paul has emerged from research on Pauline paraenetic material. Most recent treatments of Pauline paraenesis attempt to establish a connection between Paul's letters and the paraenetic

¹² Porter, "Paul," p. 561.

¹³ Cf. Porter, *Paul*, p. 106.

letter-essays of the Hellenistic moral philosophers.¹⁴ Although many Cynics and other philosophers did not progress through the advanced stages of Greco-Roman education, the authors responsible for the letters that are typically compared with Pauline material did (e.g. Seneca, Pliny). And although it was not as prominent as rhetoric in Hellenistic education, philosophy was still a live option for advanced education in the first century.¹⁵ Given their literary quality, evidence that Paul had the ability to compose paraenetic letter-essays could serve, therefore, as an indication of higher education in philosophy. Malherbe has suggested for most of his career that 1 Thessalonians is a paraenetic letter in this sense and has recently put forward the same contention for Titus.¹⁶ Fiore has made similar claims regarding all of the pastoral epistles. More general suggestions along these lines are offered by Berger as well.¹⁷ The letter-essays of Isocrates, Seneca and Pliny are usually put forward as the basis for comparison in these studies. However, as shown in Chapter 6, the form, structure and style of the Pauline letter mitigates against comparisons with philosophical letter-essays. Paul's letters take the private letter form, are often structured with both exposition and exhortation and employ the formulaic language and style of the documentary papyri. We have no testimony of a philosophical letter that incorporated the four part structure of the private letter with a formalized body, including a *body opening, middle and closing*. While Paul's letters do reveal literary influences, Paul nevertheless appears to begin with the private letter form and expands and modifies the form of

¹⁴ For recent bibliography and commentary on research on Pauline paraenesis, see A.K. Petersen, "Paraenesis in Paul," in J. Starr and T. Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (BZNTW 125; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 267-95.

¹⁵ On higher Greek education in philosophy, see Clarke, *Higher Education*, pp. 55-108.

¹⁶ See for example A.J. Malherbe, "Paul: Hellenistic Philosopher or Christian Pastor?" *ATR* 68 (1968), pp. 3-13; A.J. Malherbe, "Paraenesis in the Epistle to Titus," in Starr and Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis*, pp. 297-318.

¹⁷ K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," in Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini (eds.), *ANRW* 25.2 (Religion [Vorkonstantinisches Christentum: Neues Testament]; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 2-12, 67-71; Dormeyer suggests that they are christianized literary letters. Dormeyer, "Hellenistic Letter-Formula," p. 71.

the letter in order to suite his purposes by utilizing literary skills he seems to have attained in his formal education. Unlike Seneca and Isocrates, Paul does not describe his writings as “paraenetic” which should function as a warning for projecting a technical definition or literary model from moral philosophy onto Paul.¹⁸ Further, paraenetic sections as we find in Paul have absolutely no parallel among the philosophers. Philosophical letters are either entirely ethical or entirely exposition, not a combination of both as we find in many Pauline letters. It must be concluded, therefore, that Hellenistic philosophy seems to have had at best very minimal impact upon the composition of Paul’s letters and there seems to be no other strong indication that Paul attended a philosophical school.

3. Conclusions: Paul’s Relationship to Advanced Hellenistic Education

Advanced Hellenistic education meant training in rhetoric for most, although a few others pursued philosophy, and still others—a more ambitious group—both. New Testament scholars who espouse that Paul did attain a higher education in the Hellenistic schools typically do so on the basis of purported rhetorical influence upon epistolary composition. Several recent works, however, have undermined the validity of applying ancient rhetorical categories to Pauline epistolary literature due on the one hand to the theoretical distinction between epistolary and rhetorical categories and on the other, the inconsistencies arising from the imposition of rhetorical structures on individual Pauline letters. No responses to these objections have been forthcoming from rhetorical critics so there remains no solid literary basis for positing a formal education in rhetoric for Paul. Although philosophy remained largely in the shadow of rhetoric in higher Hellenistic education, it was still a live option in the first century. Paul’s letters, however,

¹⁸ Cf. Petersen, “Paraenesis,” p. 269.

contain little evidence of influence from Hellenistic philosophy, at least not to the degree that we would be justified in supposing that he attended a school of philosophy.

CONCLUSIONS: Hypothesis and Verification

This thesis has argued that the available evidence for Paul's Hellenistic education points to a birth and formal education in Tarsus, where Paul probably attended a liberal school and spent time studying Greek language, literature, letter writing and elementary compositional and rhetorical exercises, before moving to Jerusalem to study with Gamaliel. My analysis considered two types of evidence, in particular: historical and literary. Each of these bodies of evidence contribute important components to the picture of Paul's education suggested in this thesis. The historical evidence allows for the construction of an educational and socio-historical chronology whereas the literary evidence serves the function of confirming this picture. In the terms of hypothesis and verification, the historical evidence provides enough data for the formation of an adequately informed hypothesis while the literary evidence provides a means of verification.

Part One sought to bring together a variety of historical threads in order to provide a plausible reconstruction of the socio-historical circumstances under which Paul grew up and received his education. Chapter 1 attempted to show that the traditional three-tiered, non-segmented structure for Hellenistic education is inadequate since it does not take into consideration socio-economic and geographical constraints upon various expressions of Greek education. I proposed that Kaster's revision of Booth's two-phase, socially and geographically segmented account of Hellenistic education, provided a more suitable model. In Chapter 2, I considered evidence from Acts and Paul's account in his letter for constructing an educational chronology. I argued that only a syntactically and lexically restrictive reading of Acts 22:3 unambiguously situates Paul in Jerusalem for his entire adolescence and education. When the literary and linguistic structure of the passage is considered, the text actually seems to point to an upbringing (and possibly an education) in Tarsus. This argument is confirmed by various other

passages in Acts that seem to imply a youth in Tarsus and while Paul's own account in his letters does not contain many of the Hellenistic themes of the account of Paul in Acts (e.g. Roman citizenship), this exclusion must be weighed in light of the rhetorical purposes and polemic contexts in which Paul's biographical statements in his letters occur. Beginning from the chronology favored by Acts 22:3, which seems to situate Paul in Tarsus for a good portion of his adolescent years, I attempt in Chapter 3 to set Paul in proper relation to the educational milieu of first-century Tarsus. In this chapter I suggest that Paul's progression through the liberal school, posited on the two-phase model of Hellenistic education, while in Tarsus, fits nicely with the chronology suggested by Acts 22:3 and related material, the attitude of Diaspora Jews concerning Greek education, the ages of a man mentioned by *Pirke Aboth* and Strabo's remarks that Tarsians typically studied within the city for their formal education and traveled abroad to complete it. Paul's family seems to have had a productive business that would have allowed them to fund Paul's education and a good Greek education would have aided Paul in business relations and in traveling as a tentmaker. Although it is possible that he remained in Tarsus and attended a rhetorical school, this situation seems very unlikely given Strabo's remarks that Tarsians usually left the city for advanced education and in light of the statements of both Paul and his critics concerning his rhetorical abilities and training in the Corinthian correspondence. The best fit with the structure of Hellenistic education in Tarsus, Strabo's account, and the relevant historical evidence related to Paul has Paul completing his formal education in a Tarsian liberal school before leaving for Jerusalem. The final chapter of the historical analysis (Chapter 4) addresses the opportunities for Hellenistic education that Paul would have had while in Jerusalem. My chronology positions Paul arriving in Jerusalem after having completed his Greek education, but had he moved to the city at an earlier time there would have at least been plenty of

opportunities to acquire Greek literacy at an elementary school, and possibly some form of liberal schooling. Hengel's suggestion, however, that schools of Greek rhetoric would have been present in Jerusalem as well does not seem likely. As an attempt at weaving together these diverse strands of data I put forward the hypothesis that Paul received a Hellenistic education at a liberal school in Tarsus, before moving to Jerusalem to study rabbinic wisdom, and did not sit under a rhetor in either city.

Part Two seeks to provide verification for this hypothesis through literary analysis. In Chapters 5 and 6 I argue that Paul's Greek is good, employing a number of impressive literary elements, and his letters are long and complex approaching the literary epistle in important respects, but neither rivals the literary achievements of the Hellenistic intellectuals. Paul seems to exhibit the qualities of a person who had acquired more than a basic literacy education, but had not perfected the use of the Greek language and literary forms in a school for advanced instruction in rhetoric (and/or philosophy). Paul's implementation of the *progymnasmata* and other localized rhetorical devices seem to indicate a liberal education with a *grammaticus* in Tarsus before traveling abroad to study oral Torah with Gamaliel. In Chapter 7, I show that Paul's use of Greek literature supports this hypothesis further. Numerous citations of Greek authors can be located in Paul's speeches and letters and all come from the Greek poets or standard educational texts in the curriculum of Hellenistic liberal schools, but we find no quotations from the philosophers or rhetoricians. Although all evidence up to this point has mitigated against an advanced education for Paul, in Chapter 8, I briefly consider the possibility of rhetorical and/or philosophical influence upon epistolary composition. I conclude that rhetorical critics have failed to respond to a number of significant literary and exegetical obstacles to sustained rhetorical analysis of Pauline letters and that correlating philosophical

letters with Pauline epistolary material is problematic since Paul did not use the form or style of the Greek letter-essay. This literary analysis provides reasonably strong verification for the hypothesis that Paul probably never attended a rhetorical school, but was likely educated in Greek language, literature, letter writing, and elementary compositional and rhetorical exercises at a liberal school in Tarsus.

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