



TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

THE LESTER AND SALLY ENTIN FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Paul's Interpretation of Scripture and the (Pre-)History of Midrash

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY: Yael Fisch

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF Prof. Ishay Rosen Zvi, Prof. Paula Fredriksen

SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE OF TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

September 2018

Acknowledgements

The poet and classicist Anne Carson speaks of reading and writing as a painful separation from the world, a shutting down. A person who reads and writes learns “to close or inhibit the input of his senses, to inhibit or control the responses of his body, so as to train energy and thought upon the written words. He resists the environment outside him by distinguishing and controlling the one inside him. This constitutes at first a laborious and painful effort for the individual, psychologists and sociologists tell us. In making the effort he becomes aware of the interior self as an entity separable from the environment and its input, controllable by his own mental action.” (Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet: An Essay*, 63). But I have been luckier. I have never felt alone in my writing nor do I feel as resisting the world around me. And as I write these words now I am deeply aware of those in my life that have made reading, thinking and writing possible for me.

My intellectual home and alma mater is Tel Aviv University. I have seen Jewish Studies in Tel Aviv University grow from strength to strength and become a truly unique place of Torah. In a deep sense it is where I learned to read. My work has been encouraged and supported by several TAU grants over the years of my PhD, and mainly, a generous scholarship from the School of Jewish Studies that allowed me to dedicate myself to my research.

My deepest gratitude goes to my mentors. Prof. Ishay Rosen-Zvi’s commitment to my success, growth and learning has proven to be endless. Ishay taught me how to ask our ancient texts questions and what to listen for when they answer. In a way, I always think and write in conversation with Ishay. His intellectual energy and optimism saw me

through all the rough patches I met on this road, and I am privileged to have him as a mentor and friend. Prof. Paula Fredriksen taught me to read critically and write deliberately. She has opened my world to the possibilities and impossibilities of Paul scholarship, and I cannot imagine reading Paul and writing about him without her. Comparative studies are often overstated, exaggerated into linear models of dependency, and Paula has taught me caution and encouraged me to find new methodological pathways.

My years in Tel Aviv University have also allowed me the privilege to work closely with Prof. Vered Noam, who brought me in to work on the Josephus and the Rabbis book (Yad Ben Zvi, 2017). I am grateful to Vered for her wisdom, kind spirit and support. In the Josephus and the Rabbis project I grew from being a student to a full contributor of the book, and writing my chapters in that project has played a central part in my scholarly formation. My deepest thanks goes to my dear teachers at TAU, who have also given me work and financial support, Prof. Menachem Lorberbaum and Prof. Barbara Mayer. I thank them for our many conversations, they still echo with me.

I have thought out loud with many friends, colleagues and teachers about my Paul and Midrash, and I thank them all for their wisdom. Many of them have read different iterations of this text and I am thankful to them for their intellectual generosity: Prof. Daniel Boyarin, Prof. Jesper Svartvik, Dr. Yair Furstenberg, Dr. Yakir Paz, Dr. Yannai Israeli, Nadav Avruch, Yedidah Koren, Dr. Amit Gevaryahu, Dr. Avigail Manekin-Bamberger, Dr. Karma Ben Johanan, Prof. Nehama Verbin, Prof. Adam Afterman, Dr. Omer Michaelis, Ido Harrari, Dr. Yakov Z. Mayer, Dr. Smadar Brack and Dr. Yoni Brack. My special gratitude goes to my dearest friends Dr. Assaf Tamari and Dr. Ori Levin. The 'Human Rights and Judaism' program at the Israel Democracy Institute has not only

provided for me financially but has generated an outstanding community of young and engaged scholars. I thank my friends, colleagues and teachers there, who have read some chapters of this dissertation and commented on them profusely. I especially thank Prof. Hanoch Dagan for his encouragement and support. Lastly, special thanks to Prof. Hindy Najman, now my mentor at my postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Oxford. Our conversations in Jerusalem were formative for this project.

I thank my parents, Hanna and Menachem Fisch, for their boundless love and support. This journey could have not been possible without their presence, conversation and help, in more ways that I am able to express. My partner in everything, Yonatan, this work is ours. You attune me to what is meaningful and I have been blessed to have the possibility to always think with you. And last, I want to thank our son Meiri, the guiding light of my life. Since Meiri came into our life and filled it with happiness, I know that for me writing is never separation from the world.

Table of Contents

Abstract	7
Introduction	12
Review of Existing Scholarship: Paul and Midrash.....	13
Paul the Pharisee? A Critique of the Paul/Pharisees/Tannaim Continuum.....	16
Genealogy as Goal and Its Hermeneutical Limits.....	21
Why Should We Compare?.....	25
What Is to Be Gained from a Comparative Study of Paul, Midrash, and Qumran?.....	29
How to Move beyond Genealogy	44
Plan for This Study.....	52
Chapter 1: Midrash-Pesher in Romans 10, Qumran, and the Tannaim; Paul’s Notion of Double Torah	55
Part 1: The Scriptural Sources in Romans 10:5–13 and the Language of the Citations... ..	58
Part 2: Exegetical Form in Romans 10—‘Midrash-Pesher’ and its Uses	61
Midrash-Pesher Form: A Short History of its Functions in Qumran and Tannaitic Literature.....	71
Part 3: Hermeneutics in Romans 10	85
Midrash and Intertextuality.....	86
Unresolved Scriptural Contradiction and the Twofold Torah	88
The Twofold Torah, Oral and Written	101
Chapter 2: Hagar and Sarah—Midrash and Allegory	109
Galatians 4:21–5:1	110
Pauline Allegory and Rabbinic Midrash: The Central Scholarly Positions.....	145
<i>Dorshei Rashumot</i> and the History of Allegory	146
Precedents for Hebrew Allegory: Allegory in Qumran	160
Pauline, Qumranic and Midrashic Allegories: Relationship and History.....	169

Torah to the Gentiles.....	175
Chapter 3: Veiling and Unveiling—2 Corinthians 3 and Tannaitic Hermeneutics	178
2 Corinthians 3: A Close Reading.....	178
המגלה פנים בתורה שלא כהלכה.....	200
Modesty and Interpretation in Rabbinic Literature.....	208
Conclusion	214
Pauline Hermeneutics in Light of Qumran and Midrash.....	216
Midrash in Light of Paul and Qumran	233
The Hermeneutics of “Torah for the Gentiles”: Scripture beyond Ethnic Particularity in Late Antiquity—A Proposal for Future Study.....	248
Appendix A: Verses Cited in Romans 10:5–13	255
Appendix B: Midrash-Pesher in Tannaitic Literature—the Sources	259
Works Cited	284
תקציר העבודה.....	304

Abstract

Paul's interpretation of scripture and the question of its relationship to rabbinic midrash have greatly occupied scholars both of New Testament and of rabbinics. Many previous studies have focused on the relationship between Paul and midrash, and almost all of them have assumed or reified a genealogical connection between these literatures, most often seeking to reconstruct Paul's Jewish background from tannaitic sources. The present study criticizes and deconstructs this genealogical connection, while arguing that a critique of the genealogical assumption is no reason to abandon the effort to read Qumran, Paul, and the Tannaim together. The introduction explains why studying these literatures comparatively is both compelling and fruitful, and also lays out the methodological constraints on such an inquiry.

The comparative approach taken in this study considers Qumran, Paul, and the Tannaim as part of a complex matrix in which scripture was instated as a fundamental source for legal and normative guidance in late antiquity over-against traditions independent of scripture (*paradosis*). It contributes to our understanding of Paul's interpretation of scripture, which can be better understood in light of its parallels in tannaitic and Qumranic literature, with all their similarities and differences. The study of midrash also benefits from the comparative approach, which allows us (1) to trace a new history of midrashic exegesis, against existing descriptions that present it as teleologically stemming from Qumran exegesis; (2) to redefine and explain hermeneutic methods shared by these literatures; and (3) to reconsider a common understanding of midrashic hermeneutics as having

developed under Alexandrian Hellenistic influence. The present study shows that, at least with regard to allegory, a different Hellenistic trajectory should be preferred.

Qumran literature, Paul, and the Tannaim travail to build sacred communities based on a reworking of scriptural constructs, such as “Israel” or the “seed of Abraham.” The goal of Qumran literature is to define and negotiate membership in the *yahad*, an attempt to redefine the “seed of Israel” as an elite minority within the Jewish *ethnos*. The redefinition of community is based on eschatological convictions, argued and maintained by the reading of scripture as presented by the Teacher of Righteousness. Tannaitic hermeneutics can also be understood as an exegetical endeavor undertaken with a view to found and maintain a community on the basis of scripture, demarcating on scriptural grounds the true members of the community from those outside it and those on its borders. Paul interprets scripture with view to commune gentiles by generating reading practices that allow them to see themselves as being addressed directly by Jewish scriptures and to understand how they must live in order to be included in eschatological redemption. Formulated as such, the comparative approach this study takes allows us to step beyond the misconstrued assumptions of “influence” or “shared heritage” that dominated Paul and midrash studies in the past.

Focusing on scriptural hermeneutics as a fundamental facet of community building places two of Paul’s contemporaries—Philo and Josephus (who like Paul claimed a connection to the Pharisees)—on the margins of our study. Josephus does not work to build communities, but rather, mediates Jewish history to his Roman

readership.¹ Though his rewriting of scripture in the first eleven books of *Antiquities* could also be studied comparatively with Paul's interpretation of scripture, his work is of marginal relevance to the current study as he is not driven by the communal motivations central to it. Philo, similarly does not share the communal goals of Qumran, Paul, and the Tannaim, and so his work will be discussed only when immediately pertinent to the matter at hand, most prominently in our study of allegorical interpretations.

The present work features three case studies. The first (chapter 1) undertakes a comprehensive mapping of the *midrash-pesher* technique (also known as the "pronominal pesher"). It argues that the sectarian sources in the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), Romans 10:5–13, and rabbinic literature have in common this technique, which is unknown to us from other sources. The chapter analyzes the different uses of this exegetical tool, and shows how a common method of interpretation is utilized toward different ends by these different literatures.

The study of Romans 10:5–13 brings up another exegetical question: Paul constructs in Romans a contradiction between two passages (Lev 18:5 and Deut 30:12–14) which he ultimately does not resolve. This places Paul outside common exegetical practices in Jewish antiquity that display a thorough commitment to solving scriptural contradictions. Chapter 1 offers a new reading of Romans 3, which like Romans 10, also constructs the difference between righteousness by trust (*pistis*)

¹ Josephus presents his motivation to write *Antiquities*, so as to provide "all of the Greeks" with the possibility to study the history of the Jews, their origins, form of government, laws and customs. Josephus especially notes that the book is meant communicate the antiquities of the Jews to "others", see *Ant.* 1.1–9.

and righteousness by deeds as a scriptural difference, and shows it may be used to explain Paul's choice to leave the contradiction unresolved in Romans 10. The chapter argues that Paul has an idea of scripture as consisting of two *nomoi*: a *nomos* of trust (*pistis*) and a *nomos* of deeds. These two *nomoi* coexist in scripture, but they are not without contradictions, which are for Paul a scriptural fact. Paul's notion of Torah as two *Torot* is then compared to other notions of double revelation. Only in tannaitic literature do we find the notion of two *Torot*, and Paul is the first source to mention a similar terminology, though in different form and for a different end.

Chapter 2 also addresses hermeneutic method, and analyzes Paul's allegory of Hagar/Sarah in Galatians 4. Paul's allegory has often been presented as the binary opposite of midrash. The chapter presents a close reading of Paul's exegetical work in Galatians 4, retraces a history of allegory in Jewish antiquity (in both Hebrew and Greek literatures), and finally returns to analyze the homilies of *Dorshei Rashumot* in tannaitic literature. The analysis shows that the homilies of *Dorshei Rashumot*—identified in the early twentieth century by Jacob Z. Lauterbach as allegories, a reading that was ultimately rejected by Daniel Boyarin—are indeed midrashic-allegories. Paul's interpretation in Galatians, which we may call “genealogical allegory,” resembles that of *Dorshei Rashumot* on several counts and differs significantly from Alexandrian allegories. The chapter concludes that allegory should be thought of not as a hermeneutic in and of itself, but rather as a shift to a new denotation that is established and argued for on the basis of other exegetical arguments or assumptions. Midrash and allegory are thus not binary opposites but exist instead along a continuum.

Chapter 3 shifts from hermeneutic method to a consideration of hermeneutic narrative: Paul's hermeneutics of "unveiling" in 2 Corinthians 3. Paul brings together hermeneutics and eschatology, and claims that reading "in Christ" allows (for the first time) a full and complete understanding of scripture. This he presents through the depiction of the Christ community as (reading) with unveiled faces: "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory" (3:18). The chapter compares Paul's interpretation of the Veil of Moses (Exodus 34, the main text that Paul interprets in 2 Corinthians 3) with other interpretations of the text in Jewish antiquity. It then considers Paul's image of "unveiled faces" in the context of a parallel term that appears in tannaitic literature: "revelation of the face" (גילוי פנים). The term occurs several times in tannaitic literature in the context of scriptural interpretation, where it denotes a shameless reading of scripture. The chapter traces a counter-hermeneutics in tannaitic (and perhaps also earlier) sources, promoting a "veiled" reading of the scriptures. The possibility that the Tannaim are directly responding to Paul's usage in 2 Corinthians 3 is raised, and then complexified.

The final chapter presents the conclusions of this study, and synthesizes its implications for our understanding of Pauline hermeneutics as well as tannaitic midrash. It demonstrates the benefits of studying Paul's letters, Qumran literature, and tannaitic midrash together, despite the lack of literary dependence between them. The work concludes with a brief outline of a future project examining Paul's hermeneutics of *Torah for the Gentiles* in its Jewish matrix.