

PAUL AND THE *TESTIMONIA*: QUO VADEMUS?

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For well over a century, various scholars have proposed that Paul and other NT authors may have made use of collections of excerpted quotations or topically arranged *testimonia* rather than having direct recourse to the OT. Though the theory has been set forth in varying forms, one recent proponent has suggested that “[t]he core of all *testimonia* hypotheses is the claim that early Christians did not use the Jewish scriptures as an undifferentiated whole, but rather selected, shaped, and interpreted certain passages in support of emerging Christian beliefs.”¹ Clearly, then, such hypotheses form a *prima facie* challenge to any attempt to consider the NT authors as significantly engaged in holistic biblical interpretation. Some account of this nexus of theories is therefore germane to the question of Paul’s engagement with the OT. In this brief article, I shall offer a short review of the history of the question and set forth the *testimonia* hypothesis in its most promising form. Ultimately, however, such approaches are not able to provide a sufficient context for Paul’s scriptural engagements. A concluding attempt, therefore, is made to articulate an account of what alternative approaches must accomplish in order to successfully defend themselves against the challenge posed by such theories.²

I. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE TESTIMONY BOOK HYPOTHESIS

The *testimonia* hypothesis received an early and sustained investigation at the hands of the industrious J. Rendel Harris.³ Building on the work of his predecessors,⁴ Harris took as his point of departure the observation that a number of oddities appear in the scriptural citations of the NT and the patristic period: shared variant readings (“peculiar texts”), recurrent

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¹ Martin C. Albl, “*And Scripture Cannot Be Broken*”: *The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (NovTSup 96; Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 1999) 65.

² For a fuller history of the discussion of the *Testimonia* hypothesis see Robert Hodgson, “The Testimony Hypothesis,” *JBL* 98 (1979) 361–78; Albl, “*And Scripture Cannot Be Broken*” 7–69.

³ J. Rendel Harris, with Vacher Burch, *Testimonies* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916–20). While most of the work is from Harris, Burch wrote two short chapters in the first volume, and three more substantial chapters and an appendix in the second. On Harris’s work, see especially the excellent and sympathetic treatment of Alessandro Falcetta, “The Testimony Research of James Rendel Harris,” *NovT* 45 (2003) 280–99.

⁴ *Testimonies* 1:1–4; 2:1–11. See further below.

sequences of quotations, erroneous ascriptions of authorship, editorial comments repeated by various authors, and polemical or “controversialist” themes.⁵ For example, 1 Pet 2:6–8 presents a merged citation of Isa 28:16, Ps 118:22, and Isa 8:14, all connected by an emphasis on the word “stone”; in Rom 9:32–33, the conflation of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 again presents itself. Cyprian’s *Testimonia* (2.16) contains Isa 28:16 with Ps 118:22, but not Isa 8:14, and the reference to Christ as the “stone” continues throughout patristic literature.⁶ The best way to account for this phenomenon and for others like it, according to Harris, is to posit the existence of a primitive Testimony Book from the hands of a versatile and creative theologian of the first century.⁷ This book underwent various editorial adaptations and recensions, and Harris ultimately thought he could trace it all the way to a sixteenth-century manuscript in Mt. Athos.⁸

Despite the excesses of Harris’s fanciful reconstruction of the afterlife of the Testimony Book,⁹ his central contention had more to do with its existence and use in antiquity, even in the period of the formation of the NT. He concludes that “the *Testimony Book* is one of the earliest Christian documents, and . . . the earliest books of the New Testament must be interpreted in the light of such a document as we have shown, by so many considerations, to exist.”¹⁰ When Harris applied his Testimony Book to the Epistle to the Romans, he found that Paul had made extensive use of it: “It is surprising to find how little is left of scriptural quotation in the Epistle after this test is applied, and we may affirm, at all events for Romans, that St Paul was a traditionalist, operating with conventional and approved matter, to a degree far beyond what we should *a priori* have expected.”¹¹

Reaction to Harris’s sweeping proposal, both positive and negative, was immediate.¹² Daniel Plooij fully endorsed and built upon the work of Harris:

We find the Testimony Book quoted over and over again in the pages of the New Testament, and if duly studied, it spreads a flood of light on many passages otherwise only very imperfectly understood. The importance of the discovery is

⁵ *Testimonies* 1:8; see 1:1–20 for a broad overview of his thesis.

⁶ *Testimonies* 1:18–19.

⁷ According to Harris, this theologian was probably Matthew, and the Testimony Book should be identified with the *logia* ascribed to Matthew by Papias (see *Testimonies* 1:118–123; 2:1–11). In this, he follows a suggestion of F. C. Burkitt, *The Gospel History and Its Transmission* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906) 127–28. Burkitt was not, however, as is sometimes stated, the first to speak of an early Christian (i.e. pre-NT) “collection of *Testimonia*” on analogy with that of Cyprian (ibid. 126–27). Rather, that distinction belongs, apparently, to Harris’s earlier work (so Falcetta, “Testimony Research” 283–84).

⁸ *Testimonies* 1:100–117; 2:109–121.

⁹ Of these reconstructions, C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet & Co, 1952) 25, wrote, “This final stage of the argument, I fancy, no one, perhaps not even Harris himself, took very seriously.”

¹⁰ *Testimonies* 1:25.

¹¹ *Testimonies* 2:29.

¹² Contrast the positive review of T. Herbert Bindley (*JTS* 22 [1920–21] 279–82) with the more skeptical reviews of Charles Guignebert (*RHR* 81 [1920] 58–69) and M.-J. Lagrange (*RevB* 30 [1921] 612–14). On reaction to Harris, see further Albl, “*And Scripture Cannot Be Broken*” 23–25.

still greater when we realize, as I think we should, that the Testimony Book was extant and in use in the primitive Aramaic speaking Church of Palestine.¹³

Others reacted against Harris and his followers like Plooij.¹⁴ But it was perhaps C. H. Dodd who offered the most widely accepted counter-proposal to account for the evidence Harris adduced. While acknowledging Harris's "immense and curious learning,"¹⁵ Dodd confessed, "I have come to think that his theory outruns the evidence, which is not sufficient to prove so formidable a literary enterprise at so early a date."¹⁶ The evidence, he argued, is not strong for shared variant readings and merged citations within the NT.¹⁷ If such a book existed, it should have been preserved, possibly even in the canon, or at least explicitly mentioned before the third century.¹⁸ Ultimately, "[t]he composition of 'testimony-books' was the result, not the presupposition, of the work of early Christian biblical scholars."¹⁹

Rather than isolated quotations, Dodd thought that the NT authors "often quoted a single phrase or sentence not merely for its own sake, but as a pointer to a whole context."²⁰ Dodd then sought to identify contexts of Scripture from which repeated citations were drawn by various authors, and to group such contexts together as "the Bible of the Early Church" under four main headings: apocalyptic-eschatological scriptures; scriptures of the

¹³ Daniel Plooij, *Studies in the Testimony Book* (Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, Literature Sect. 32/2; Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgivers-Maatschappij, 1932) 31.

¹⁴ See N. J. Hommes, *Het Testimoniaboek: Studiën over OT Citaten in het NT en bij de Patres. Met Critische Beschouwingen over de Theorieën van J. Rendel Harris en D. Plooy* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgivers-Maatschappij, 1935) (for this reading I am indebted to Falchetta, "Testimony Research," 297–98). Of Paul, Hommes concluded: "With a Testimony Book, as it has been construed by Rendel Harris and Plooy [i.e., D. Plooij], he has not worked—just like the other NT writers" (p. 370); cf. Otto Michel, *Paulus und seine Bibel* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1929; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972) 52. See further the literature referenced in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "4QTestimonia and the New Testament," *TS* 18 (1957) 513–37; repr. in *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971) 59–89; esp. 71 n. 36.

¹⁵ Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* 25.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 26.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* See further the remarks of Merrill P. Miller, "Targum, Midrash and the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament." *JSJ* 2 (1971) 29–82; here 54–55. Miller ("Targum," 55) points out that "[a]ccording to our present knowledge, peculiarities of text form may be related to the fluidity of the Hebrew text in the 1st cent., i.e., the existence of families of texts differing from the MT."

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Dodd might also have mentioned that in almost every case the coincidence in citation between Paul and patristic writers can be ascribed to their reliance on Paul and/or on revised septuagintal texts. Note Harris's concessions (*Testimonies* 2:38), although he does not really follow through on these consistently. See further Krister Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament* (2d ed.; Lund: Gleerup, 1968) 210–11. Cf. his ultimate rejection of the Testimony Book hypothesis, at least for Matthew, on p. 217.

¹⁹ *According to the Scriptures* 126. See further E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003; orig. 1957) 98–107.

²⁰ C. H. Dodd, *The Old Testament in the New* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963 [orig. 1952]); repr. in G. K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 167–81, here 176.

New Israel; scriptures of the Servant of the Lord and the Righteous Sufferer; and a series of unclassified scriptures that did not fit neatly in the other categories (e.g. Psalms 2, 8, 110; Deuteronomy 18).²¹ Though Dodd's own reconstruction of "the Bible of the Early Church" has rightly been criticized, his critique of Harris has endured.²² The Testimony Book hypothesis, it seemed, had been dealt a resounding blow.²³

II. THE *EXCERPTA* COLLECTION THEORY²⁴

Then, in 1956, with John Allegro's preliminary publication of two documents from Qumran, 4QFlorilegium (= 4Q174) and 4QTestimonia (= 4Q175),²⁵ the testimony hypothesis received new life. As Allegro himself predicted,²⁶

²¹ Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* 61–110. As these headings serve to indicate, Dodd's study was perhaps too limited to the prophetic element of the NT appropriation of the OT, without due concern for the abiding moral and more broadly theological authority of the latter. This is reflected in the space his study assigns to texts from Isaiah and Psalms, with a relative neglect of Genesis and Deuteronomy, even though these two books are also frequently cited in the NT.

²² For further reactions against and for Dodd, see respectively, A. C. Sundberg, "On Testimonies," *NovT* 3 (1959) 268–81; and I. Howard Marshall, "An Assessment of Recent Developments," in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF* (ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 1–21. Both of these are conveniently reprinted, together with Dodd's *The Old Testament in the New*, in Beale, ed., *Right Doctrine?* 167–216. See further, contra Dodd, Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHT 69; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1986) 253–55.

²³ Other authors also distanced themselves in this period from Harris's hypothesis of a solitary Testimony Book. For example, Robert Kraft ("Barnabas' Isaiah-Text and the 'Testimony Book' Hypothesis," *JBL* 79 [1960] 336–50), compared the Isaiah quotations in the *Epistle of Barnabas* with other extant citations of the same citations from Isaiah in other early Christian literature. He notes a bewildering array of textual variants, such that reliance on a common source (e.g. a "Testimony Book") is improbable. Rather, he asserts, "Barnabas may represent one early stage in the adaptation and modification of late Jewish testimony literature by Christian authors, and in the transition of that literature toward its later, more developed anti-Judaic forms" (p. 349). Jean Daniélou, *Études d'exégèse judéo-chrétienne (Les Testimonia)* (Théologie Historique 5; Paris: Beauchesne, 1966) also distances himself from the "single testimony book" theory of Harris (p. 9). Note T. W. Manson's modification to include oral traditions in "The Argument from Prophecy," *JTS* 46 (1945) 129–36, here 132: "The phenomena just considered seem to me to suggest that we should think of the 'Testimony Book', not as something that was turned out in written form in the earliest days of the Church, but rather as a collection of proof-texts assembled in the course of preaching, and forming part of the primitive *kerygma*." Plooi, *Studies in the Testimony Book* 11, also allows for an oral form of the Testimony Book; cf. A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935) 6–8, 12.

²⁴ The shift from "*testimonia*" to "*excerpta*" is some indication of the change in focus away from traditional polemical text collections (so Harris) to more neutral collections of excerpted texts. The distinction, however, has by no means been systematically observed in the literature.

²⁵ John M. Allegro, "Further Messianic References in Qumran Literature," *JBL* 75 (1956) 174–87; here, see, respectively, 176–77 and 182–87; cf. for 4Q174 *idem.*, "Fragments of a Qumran Scroll of Eschatological Midrashim," *JBL* 77 (1958) 350–54. See now the definitive edition of the two texts in *idem.*, *Qumrân Cave 4: I (4Q158–4Q186)* (DJD 5; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 53–57 with pls. XIX–XX and 57–60 with pl. XXI, respectively. This should be read with the important remarks of John Strugnell, "Notes en marge du volume V des 'Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan,'" *RevQ* 7/26 (1970) 163–276; here, 220–29.

²⁶ Allegro, "Further Messianic References" 186 n. 107.

the existence of apparently pre-Christian *testimonia* in Hebrew reopened the discussion of the viability of some form of the testimony hypothesis. In effect, this removed the objection from the chronological separation between the earliest extant *testimonia* collections (ca. 3d century) and the time of NT formation,²⁷ thus making the supposition more historically plausible. While Harris's proposal was still regarded as outrunning the available evidence, new interest was shown in his predecessors' work, and in some suggestions of Edwin Hatch in particular.

In the course of lectures published in 1889, Hatch examined the composite quotations from the Septuagint in the NT and early Christian literature.²⁸ Speaking of pre-Christian Judaism, he suggested,

It may naturally be supposed that a race which laid stress on moral progress, whose religious services had variable elements of both prayer and praise, and which was carrying on an active propaganda, would have, among other books, manuals of morals, of devotion, and of controversy. It may also be supposed, if we take into consideration the contemporary habit of making collections of *excerpta*, and the special authority which the Jews attached to their sacred books, that some of these manuals would consist of extracts from the Old Testament.²⁹

He went on to say, "[t]he existence of composite quotations in the New Testament, and in some of the early Fathers suggests the hypothesis that we have in them relics of such manuals."³⁰

This more modest proposal of Hatch's seemed to acquire hard evidence in the Qumran finds.³¹ What else were 4Q174 and 4Q175 if not pre-Christian *excerpta* collections from the OT? Time revealed that 4Q174 is probably better explained as a fragmentary eschatological midrash than as a florilegium or a witness to the genre of *testimonia* per se.³² The second document, however,

²⁷ As voiced, e.g., by Michel, *Paulus* 52.

²⁸ Edwin Hatch, *Essays in Biblical Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1889), esp. the essay "On Composite Quotations from the Septuagint" 203–14.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 203.

³⁰ *Ibid.* Note Albl, "And Scripture Cannot Be Broken" 9–10 for pre-cursors to Hatch; contra Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew* 208, who suggests that Hatch was the first to propose such an idea. While Hatch did have some immediate successors (e.g. Hans Vollmer, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate bei Paulus textkritisch und biblisch-theologisch gewürdigt nebst einem Anhang Ueber das Verhältnis des Apostels zu Philo* (Freiburg i. B. und Leipzig: Mohr-Siebeck, 1895) 43, took up Hatch's suggestion to account for LXX-deviant and composite quotations, though Vollmer conceived of the compilations as in Hebrew, deriving from rabbinic circles, rather than Hatch's Hellenistic Jewish Greek), the more grandiose theory of Harris overshadowed his suggestion.

³¹ Evidence which, in 1900, Henry St. John Thackeray had found lacking: "The existence of such an anthology is by no means improbable, but it must be said that no very convincing proofs have yet been brought forward" (*The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought* [London and New York: Macmillan, 1900] 184).

³² As almost all acknowledge. See esp. Fitzmyer, "4QTestimonia and the New Testament" 81–82; Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge* 247 n. 6. As Fitzmyer notes, Allegro referred to 4Q174 as an "eschatological midrash," even though the poorly suited name the latter chose, "Florilegium," has remained attached to the text. George J. Brooke (*Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* [JSOTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985] 82–83) notes the disagreements of scholars over the name and characterization of the fragmentary document, but retains the title "Florilegium" as "less restrictive a title than any other" (p. 83). In the course of his study, however, it is clear that Brooke regards 4Q174 as a midrash rather than a mere collection of *excerpta* or *testimonia*. Annette Steudel prefers the name 4QMidrEschat³; see her *Der Midrasch zur Eschatologie aus der*

4Q175, with its stand-alone character,³³ lack of interpretive comments, and the potential of a central organizing theme, has a much stronger claim to represent such an *excerpta* collection.³⁴ As more of the Qumran finds have been brought to light through publication, further excerpted text collections have emerged.³⁵

Qumrangemeinde (4QMdrEschat^{a,b}). Materielle Rekonstruktion, Textbestand, Gattung und traditions-geschichtliche Einordnung des durch 4Q174 („Florilegium“) und 4Q177 („Catena A“) repräsentierten Werkes aus den Qumranfunden (STDJ 13; Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1994). Timothy H. Lim (*Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1997] 157), however, regards 4Q174 as an example of an *excerpta* collection.

Admittedly, the distinction between midrash and *excerpta* may be a fine one, and the two should probably be thought of as on a sliding scale rather than as rigid opposites. Nevertheless, the volume of interpretive comments within the text is inversely proportionate to the heuristic usefulness of the term *excerpta*. See also Albl, “*And Scripture Cannot Be Broken*” 38–42 for an attempt to distinguish the two, although his contention that midrash “takes scripture as its starting point and seeks to draw out further meaning” while the testimony genre “takes an extra-biblical subject as its starting point and refers to scripture as a witness to this subject” (p. 40) has the simultaneous effect of implausibly restricting the definition of “midrash” (p. 40 n. 174 acknowledges the criticism, but Albl persists in the distinction) and defining the testimony genre too broadly (not distinguishing it from other approaches, e.g., typology or allegory, that also have starting points outside the text). As Renée Bloch (“Midrash,” in *DBSup* 5:1263–1281, reprinted in W. S. Green, ed., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice* [Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1978] 29–50) points out, “When midrash consults the past, it is thinking of the present, and even, in a veiled manner, of the future” (p. 46). Albl follows A. G. Wright, *The Literary Genre Midrash* (Staten Island, NY: Alba, 1967) = *CBQ* 28 [1966] 105–38, 417–57), against whom see esp. Roger Le Déaut, “A propos d’une définition du midrash,” *Bib* 50 (1969) 395–413 [ET in *Int* 25 (1971) 259–82]; note also the comments by E. Earle Ellis, “Midrash, Targum and New Testament Quotation,” in E. Earle Ellis and Max Wilcox, eds., *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honour of Matthew Black* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969) 61–69, here 64 and n. 21. On the diverse types and aims of midrash, see further the brief but informed account given by Jacob Neusner, *What Is Midrash?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

³³ Allegro, “Further Messianic References” 182, says “it is clearly not part of a scroll, for there is none of the close stitching at the left-hand side one associates with a scroll page.”

³⁴ See esp. Fitzmyer, “4QTestimonia and the New Testament” 82–89. If this is to be characterized as an *excerpta* collection, it is striking that lines 21–30 apparently quote from a rewritten Joshua (formerly called 4QPsalms of Joshua but now 4QApocryphon of Joshua^{a,b} [4Q378, 4Q379]).

³⁵ Not all the excerpted texts are directly relevant to the discussion at hand, though they do provide a fascinating glimpse into the ways in which Scripture was encountered during this period. While some texts may have been excerpted for ideological or argumentative purposes, others were excerpted for devotional or liturgical reasons (among which should also be placed the phylacteries [i.e. *tefillin*] and *mezuzot* from Qumran; cf., e.g., J. T. Milik, “II. Tefillin, Mezuzot et Targums (4Q128–4Q157),” in Roland de Vaux and J. T. Milik, *Qumrân Grotte 4.II* [DJD 6; Oxford: Clarendon, 1977] 33–89, esp. 48–85 and Plates VI–XXVII). See esp. E. Tov, “Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts from Qumran,” *RevQ* 16/64 (1995) 581–600; also note Sidnie Ann White, “4QDtⁿ: Biblical Manuscript or Excerpted Text?,” in H. W. Attridge, John J. Collins, and Thomas H. Tobin, eds., *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday* (College Theology Society Resources in Religion 5; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990) 13–20; Julie A. Duncan, “Excerpted Texts of Deuteronomy at Qumran,” *RevQ* 18/69 (1997) 43–62. Duncan (“Deuteronomy, Book of,” in *EDSS* 1:198–202; here 201) adds the important consideration: “In the phylacteries it was not considered necessary to write passages out in their entirety, whereas in the excerpted texts it is apparent, despite their fragmentary state, that the selections were written out fully and continuously. . . . This difference probably reflects the more symbolic function of the phylacteries, as opposed to some more practical function of the excerpted scrolls as texts for study and/or for prayer services.” Tov (“Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts” 583; cf. 584–86) draws

How, then, does the existence of such excerpted text collections play into a discussion of Paul's appropriation of Scripture? In short, the possibility is created to think less in terms of Paul's use of pre-formulated traditional *testimonia*, and more in terms of his adaptation of a conventional literary practice to suit his needs in the light of the practical exigencies brought about by the *realia* of books and reading in the ancient world. One of the most suggestive recent authors to examine Paul and the OT, Christopher Stanley,³⁶ elaborating a proposal by Dietrich-Alex Koch,³⁷ proposed that Paul, in the course of his personal reading of Scripture, would have taken notes and so formed a collection of *excerpta* for use in his mission and letter-writing. Stanley's description is worth quoting in full:

This growing collection of biblical excerpts would then have become his primary resource for meditation and study in those times when he was traveling or staying in a private residence and had no immediate access to physical rolls of Scripture. When the time came to compose a letter to one of his churches, many of the points that he wishes to make would have been framed already around one of the excerpts contained in this by now well-worn and highly familiar anthology. While other verses not included in this collection may occasionally have found a place in one of his letters in the moment of composition, the great majority of Paul's quotations would have come directly from this Pauline anthology.³⁸

In forming such a collection of notes, Paul would be conforming to a widespread practice in antiquity of making *excerpta* from one's reading³⁹—a practice shared, the Qumran finds suggest, by his Jewish near-contemporaries.⁴⁰

the further distinction between excerpted texts and rewritten Bible texts: "Excerpted texts should be regarded as biblical texts, excerpted for a special purpose, and presented without a commentary, while rewritten Bible texts, whose contents are often very close to what we are used to calling biblical manuscripts, do not pretend to present the text of the Bible." *4QTest* is the only "exegetical-ideological anthology" of strictly biblical passages listed by Tov, who suggests that most were for liturgical purposes or personal devotional reading (pp. 598–99).

³⁶ Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS 74; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 73–79.

³⁷ "Paulus im Zuge seiner eigenen Schriftlektüre sich selbst geeignete Exzerpte von Schriftstellen angefertigt hat, auf die er dann bei der Abfassung der Briefe zurückgreifen konnte" (Koch, *Schrift als Zeuge* 253; cf. pp. 98–99).

³⁸ *Paul and the Language* 74. Contra J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten (*JSJ* 25 [1994] 127), however, this is not to be construed as Stanley's "central thesis."

³⁹ For analogues in the classical world, see H. Chadwick, "Florilegium" *RAC* 7:1131–60; Stanley, *Paul and the Language* 73–78; idem., *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004) 43 n. 15; idem., "The Importance of *4QTanhhumim* (*4Q176*)," *RevQ* 15 (1992) 569–82; Abl, "And Scripture Cannot Be Broken" 70–81. Stanley points especially to Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.6.14; Aristotle, *Top.* 1.14; Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 8.336d; Plutarch, *Mor.* 464F [in his *Paul and the Language*, this is given as *Peri Euthumias* 464F]; Cicero, *Inv.* 2.4; Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 3.5, 6.20.5; Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.*, 17.21.1. For the continuation of the practice in the patristic period, note esp. Robert Devreesse, "Chaines Exégétiques Grecques," *DBSup* 1:1084–1233.

⁴⁰ For an insightful overview of Jewish practice seen in light of the broader Greco-Roman environment, see Lutz Doering, "Excerpted Texts in Second Temple Judaism. A Survey of the Evidence," in Rosa Maria Piccone and Matthias Perkams, eds., *Selecta colligere, II: Beiträge zur*

Positing such a theory explains at least six types of difficulties, according to Stanley. (1) This would account for the evidence that Paul favored a written text.⁴¹ (2) The physical availability of Scripture would have been limited in terms of both the prohibitive cost of scrolls and their large dimensions, so it is unlikely that Paul would have owned many such scrolls himself, if any at all.⁴² It is no stretch of the imagination to think of Paul studying and taking notes during his visits to synagogues or fledgling churches that might have the benefit of a rich patron to provide them with a copy of (at least some of) the Scriptures.⁴³ (3) “The close integration of many of Paul’s biblical citations into their present argumentative contexts becomes more comprehensible if the verses were selected from the start for their value in addressing a recurring problem than if they simply sprang to mind in the moment of composition.”⁴⁴ (4) The diversity of text-types in his citations might be better explained if “Paul copied his excerpts from a variety of manuscripts housed at sites all around the eastern Mediterranean world, where he was a constant traveler.”⁴⁵ (5) Moreover, “even the rather loose links between some of Paul’s quotations and their original contexts might be due in part to his having copied them out of a personal anthology in which the only connection with the original passage is the one that appears in the mind of the compiler.”⁴⁶ (6) Finally, perhaps even the intrusion of interpretive elements into the wording of his citations may have been a result of Paul’s meditation on the verses contained in his anthology.⁴⁷

III. PAUL AND THE *TESTIMONIA*: QUO VADEMUS?

A full response to this theory is beyond the scope of this article. It is crucial to note, however, that the testimony hypothesis has been transformed into a significantly different excerpted text collection theory.⁴⁸ Both contain a

Technik des Sammeln und Kompilierens griechischer Texte von der Antike bis zum Humanismus (Alessandria: Edizioni dell-Orso, 2005) 1–38; my thanks to the author for drawing this article to my attention.

⁴¹ *Paul and the Language* 69–71, 77.

⁴² Though Stanley does note the positions of Ellis and Michel (and, more hesitantly, Koch) that Paul may have owned scrolls (*Paul and the Language*, 73 n. 27); cf. 2 Tim 4:13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ “The Importance of 4QTanhhumim” 582; cf. *Paul and the Language* 73.

⁴⁵ *Paul and the Language* 78. So also Lim, *Holy Scripture* 149–60.

⁴⁶ “The Importance of 4QTanhhumim” 582; cf., very similarly, *Paul and the Language* 78.

⁴⁷ *Paul and the Language* 78.

⁴⁸ This is not to say that the testimony theory has been completely eradicated. For a recent example applying the testimony theory to Paul, note Albl, “*And Scripture Cannot Be Broken*” 159–79. Albl acknowledges Koch’s and Stanley’s theory, but goes on in persisting with a more traditional notion of a loose collection of *testimonia* that Paul inherited and incorporated into his writings. To note only his conclusions most relevant to one Old Testament book, Deuteronomy, he suggests (*ibid.* 167–70) that Paul may have used *testimonia* for his citations of Deut 5:17–21 in Rom 13:8–10; Deut 19:15 in 2 Cor 13:1; and Deuteronomy 32 in both Rom 12:19 and Rom 15:10. He says (*ibid.* 178), “Jewish traditions have been incorporated into Paul’s parenesis (Rom 12:19), his versions of the Decalogue (Rom 13:9–10), and his church orders (2 Cor 13:1).” Unfortunately, many of Albl’s conclusions are simply asserted without any clear criteria to determine the presence of a testimony, so it is at times difficult to evaluate his judgments.

common emphasis on texts isolated and removed from their original contexts, though, admittedly, more stress is placed on this in the former. But either form of the theory might be seen to challenge the attempt to see Paul (or other authors) as engaged in some form of holistic biblical exegesis or strategic reading. For if Paul primarily relied on either a traditional collection of excerpted citations or on his own anthology of notes culled from the Scriptures in lieu of direct engagement with the sacred text, to claim that Paul engaged with, say, Isaiah or with Deuteronomy as a book becomes less plausible.

Clearly, to deny that Paul incorporated traditional materials into his letters (e.g. 1 Cor 11:23–26; 15:3–5, etc.) can only have the effect of alienating and insulting Paul from the early Christian movement in a historically implausible manner. No doubt some of Paul's quotations of the OT were traditional in nature (possibly Isa 28:16/8:14 in Rom 9:33), but positing a primitive book or books of *testimonia* insufficiently accounts for the manifold number and nature of Paul's scriptural engagements.⁴⁹ Likewise, in order to affirm Paul as a reader of Scripture it is not essential to deny that Paul used excerpt collections or notes of some kind; rather, it must simply be shown that Paul's engagement with Scripture in general, and any one book in particular, cannot be reduced to reliance upon such a collection.⁵⁰

Several factors suggest that such totalizing explanations (at least in the forms in which they are most often encountered)⁵¹ for Paul's interpretive activity should be resisted and that Paul's encounter with Scripture would have been multi-faceted. To proceed initially by way of engaging Stanley's six points enumerated above: First, it is unlikely that his numbers 3, 5, and 6 present issues that can be resolved exclusively by recourse to an *excerpta* collection theory; rather, each of these admits of various alternative explanations.⁵² What is more, the diversity of text types in Paul's citations

⁴⁹ That the concept of traditional *testimonia* is useful in the study of the patristic period is beyond doubt; here I simply claim that it is less helpful in studying the apostolic period which gave rise to the later *testimonia*.

⁵⁰ Cf. the position of J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 24: "I do not wish to deny that Paul may have had frequent recourse to written texts of scripture; neither do I dispute that the apostle may have compiled notebooks of scriptural excerpts, carried them along on his travels, and consulted them when composing his letters. However, the conclusion Stanley wishes to draw from all of this, that Paul knew Israel's scriptures *primarily* through the medium of written texts, simply does not follow." He goes on to argue (ibid. 25–26): "Rather than posing the question in terms of mutually exclusive alternatives—*either* memorization *or* use of written texts and anthologies of excerpts—we should imagine Paul interacting with scripture in a *variety* of modes, including meditation on memorized passages, hearing of spoken texts, personal reading of written texts, and collection of and reflection on excerpts from larger texts. Such a multi-faceted approach . . . is absolutely necessary to capture the complex reality of books and readers in the first century." This is precisely the position of the present study.

⁵¹ It is instructive to note the escalation inherent in the long quotation from Stanley adduced above: rather than Paul occasionally taking notes on his reading, the collection becomes the "primary resource" for meditation while traveling and "the great majority" of Paul's quotations would have derived from this collection.

⁵² For example, his (3) presents something of a false dichotomy: either the texts were included beforehand in an *excerpta* collection *or* they "sprang to mind in the moment of composition." Rather, the texts may have been selected beforehand without thereby being removed from their

may well be less far-reaching than Stanley has asserted, as Ross Wagner has recently shown for Paul's reliance on Isaiah in an Alexandrian text type.⁵³ Further, the cost of papyrus rolls in antiquity, though certainly expensive to our typographic mindset, would not have been as prohibitive as is sometimes alleged—especially for a prominent early Christian leader.⁵⁴ Finally, while some of the evidence for the use of written texts remains, in part this may be explained with an equal degree of satisfaction by consideration of quotation from memory—especially if this is allowed to do more work than serve as a convenient scapegoat for textual difficulties (the more appropriately named “memory-lapse” quotation theory).⁵⁵

Indeed, this last point enables us to proceed beyond Stanley's formulations and indicate further some potential historical *loci* for Paul's scriptural encounters alternative to the *excerpta* or *testimonia* hypotheses, areas in which further research will be needed to carry the discussion forward. It seems to me that at least three types of consideration provide a way beyond the impasse: study of ancient memory capacity and practices, of the liturgical *Sitz im Leben* of encountering Scripture, and of broader literary indications of Paul's contextual reading strategies. The last of these points has been pursued more systematically in recent years, thanks in part to the influence of Richard Hays's seminal work *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*,⁵⁶

original context or sequestered in a collection of notes. Stanley's (5) is certainly possible, but common experience suggests that one may disagree with an interpretation that someone offers of a text read *in* its context just as readily as one removed from its context. What is more, the degree to which Paul's citations are discordant with their original context is, of course, a matter of debate. Finally, his (6) is admittedly put forth with some hesitation, and it is unclear why such intrusions should necessitate an *excerpta* collection (though on the broader question of Paul's alterations to his quotations the rest of Stanley's book is the best treatment to date).

⁵³ Wagner, *Heralds* 24 n. 86 and *passim*.

⁵⁴ Cf. Naphtali Lewis, *Papyrus in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974) 133–34; *idem.*, *Papyrus in Classical Antiquity: A Supplement* (Papyrologica Bruxellensia 23; Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1989) 40–41; T. C. Skeat, “Was Papyrus Regarded as ‘Cheap’ or ‘Expensive’ in the Ancient World?,” in J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Collected Biblical Writings of T. C. Skeat* (NovTSup 113; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 88–105. The evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls suggests that biblical manuscripts were not yet confined to parchment, as later rabbinic halakhah mandated (on which, see C. Sirat, “Le Livre Hébreu dans les Premiers Siècles de Notre Ère: Le Témoignage des Textes,” in A. Blanchard, ed., *Les Débuts du Codex* [Bibliologia 9; Brepols: Turnhout, 1989] 115–24). Further, Catherine Hezser suggests that in the Second Temple and the Tannaitic periods, “Rabbis and their students are the most likely candidates with regard to private ownership of Torah scrolls, since Torah study was essential for them” (*Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* [TSAJ 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001] 147). Although she cautions against assuming that all students of rabbis owned scrolls and may have an inflated view of the prohibitive cost of individual rolls, it is striking that her suggestion indicates the social space in which Paul may have come to ownership of at least some scrolls (even if the office of “rabbi” had not yet been formalized). Hezser also points to evidence in the Talmud Yerushalmi of a distinction between privately and publicly-owned scrolls (y. *Ned.* 5:5–6, 39a).

⁵⁵ Stanley in part acknowledges this, but fails to take it into full consideration (*Paul and the Language* 17 and n. 49 citing Ellis, *Paul's Use* 14).

⁵⁶ New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. For some indication of the influence of Hays's work, see Kenneth D. Litwak, “Echoes of Scripture? A Critical Survey of Recent Works on Paul's Use of the Old Testament” *CR:BS* 6 (1998) 260–88.

so less space needs to be devoted to it here. The chief aspect of such work to note in connection with the issue at hand is that the more convincing such readings may be shown to be, the less likelihood there is that Paul was solely reliant upon a collection of *excerpta*.⁵⁷

The other two areas, however, have received considerably less attention in recent scholarly discussion. Perhaps understandably, the appeal to memory has loomed larger in study of the Gospels than in Paul.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, as indicated briefly above, there is a notable space within which memory could function in the study of Paul's recourse to the OT. Given the fact that the "cognitive cultures" of antiquity were far more imbued with a sense of the interpenetration of the oral and the written than we are today,⁵⁹ to think of Paul committing long stretches of text to memory is not beyond the pale of the imagination. The evidence for surprising feats of memory among both Greco-Roman philosophers and *literati* and among Jewish rabbis has often

⁵⁷ It is, of course, possible to construe such *excerpta* as simply providing the written records of Paul's own contextual reading of large sections of Scripture, but so to construe them effectively denies the force of at least some of the evidence from which they have been posited (e.g. the tenuous nature of a quotation's relation to its original context), and so renders the theory at once slightly more speculative and less objectionable.

⁵⁸ E.g. Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity with Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (BRS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998 [orig. 1961, 1964]); Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History—History as Story. The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (WUNT 123; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000); James D. G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, vol. 1: *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), on whose use of the concept of memory, however, see M. Bockmuehl, Review of *Jesus Remembered* in *JTS* n.s. 56 (2005) 140–49; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006). While these studies are chiefly concerned with the role of memory and eyewitness testimony in the preservation and eventual recording of the oral tradition about Jesus, attention has also recently been drawn to the function of memory of other texts in the composition of ancient works, including the Synoptic Gospels; see esp. R. A. Derrenbacker, Jr., *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* (BETL 186; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005) 1–49; more broadly, see Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1997) (on which, however, note the critical remarks of Nicholas Horsfall, "Methods of Writing, Memorisation, and Research," *JRA* 11 [1998] 565–71). I am grateful to an anonymous external reviewer for drawing my attention to the works by Derrenbacker Jr. and Small.

⁵⁹ Cf. Paul J. Achtemeier, "Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," *JBL* 109 (1990) 3–27; Shemaryahu Talmon, "Oral Tradition and Written Transmission, Or the Heard and Seen Word in Judaism of the Second Temple Period," in Henry Wansbrough, ed., *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (JSNTSup 64; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 121–58; Alan K. Bowman, "Literacy in the Roman Empire: Mass and Mode," in J. H. Humphrey, ed., *Literacy in the Roman World* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 3; Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1991) 119–31; Thomas E. Boomershine, "Jesus of Nazareth and the Watershed of Ancient Orality and Literacy," *Sem* 65 (1994) 7–36. This interpenetration of orality and literacy is not sufficiently accounted for in Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004); see esp. Brian J. Abasciano, "Diamonds in the Rough: A Reply to Christopher Stanley Concerning the Reader Competency of Paul's Original Audiences," *NovT* 49 (2007) 153–83.

been set forth, and we need not rehearse it here.⁶⁰ To consider the accounts of his upbringing found in both the Acts of the Apostles and in his own letters means that we must take seriously the possibility that Paul learned such texts as part of his education.⁶¹

The likelihood that Paul knew at least some parts of Scripture by heart is increased when we consider the third area, that of liturgy. Liturgical practice is surely anamnetic in its very essence, remembering the deeds of God by the mediation of the sacred text read aloud and received in hearing. The early synagogue, then, provides at least one more plausible *Sitz im Leben* for considering how Paul might have ingested large blocks of biblical text. Perhaps some have been wary of affirming this because of the excesses of overzealous attempts to link the Gospels to Jewish lectionaries in the previous generations. While it is true, however, that our knowledge of the lectionary cycle of first-century Palestine is hazy, the fact that at least the Torah was read in contiguous portions in sequential meetings seems beyond doubt. Greater acknowledgement of such practice could go some way toward explaining the widespread popularity a text like Deuteronomy enjoyed in the Second Temple period.⁶² The apostle Paul, after all, did not occupy an endowed chair of biblical studies in the proverbial academy of the ivory tower.

Ultimately, of course, this historical evidence will need to be judged alongside the strength of the readings of Paul's citations of and engagements with Scripture on offer: as the venerable axiom has it, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. This brief article has been able to do no more than to point out some of the possible ways forward. Nevertheless, that the apostle Paul's encounter with Scripture should not be seen primarily in terms of a written collection of *testimonia* or his own set of excerpted notes has much to commend it; that there is more to grasp in Paul's reading of Scripture than we have yet accomplished is beyond doubt.

⁶⁰ See, e.g., Small, *Wax Tablets*, and Gerhardsson, *Memory*, respectively. What is more, it should be noted that there is a certain asymmetry in comparisons drawn between the appeal of Greco-Roman authors to their sources and the appeal of Paul or other Jewish authors to Scripture: while historical sources may be important for the composition of a work at-hand, a knowledge of Scripture would have carried much more of an existential compulsion for all areas of life.

⁶¹ Cf. Joseph Bonsirven, *Exégèse Rabbinique et Exégèse Paulinienne* (Paris: Beauchesne et ses Fils, 1939) 292: "Nous nous contenterons d'une remarque obvie: un juif, sachant par coeur de longs passages des Écritures, les redisant et les méditant, avait-il besoin de recourir à des recueils méthodiques?" Also, Wagner has suggested that Paul may have had the book of Isaiah memorized (*Heralds* 22–27).

⁶² Sidnie White Crawford, "Reading Deuteronomy in the Second Temple Period," in Kristin de Troyer and Armin Lange, eds., *Reading the Present in the Qumran Library: The Perception of the Contemporary by Means of Scriptural Interpretations* (SBLSymS 30; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005) 127–40.