

# Paul, the Jews, and Well-Meaning Translation : At What Price Einheit?

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## Paul, the Jews, and Well-Meaning Translation: At What Price *Einheit*?

In recent years the notion of «Judaism» as relevant to antiquity has come under attack from two points of view. Some would claim that there was no such thing as «religion» in antiquity, and since our term «Judaism» denotes a type of religion it should not be used with regard to antiquity. Thus, in the most thoroughgoing formulation of this view, Steve Mason's, in the few ancient texts where *Ioudaïsmos* appears it means not «Judaism» but, rather, «Judaizing», the activity denoted by the verb *ioudaîzein* which he takes to be a transitive verb that refers to causing people to live as Jews.<sup>1</sup>

A less radical version of this approach, urged especially by Shaye J. D. Cohen and by Daniel Boyarin,<sup>2</sup> agrees to understand *Ioudaïsmos* as an entity, not (with Mason) as an activity, but insists that it is misleading to render it as «Judaism», because, for us, «Judaism» denotes a religion while in antiquity religion could not really be distinguished from other aspects of culture. Therefore, these scholars urge, it is better to speak of «Jewishness» or Jewish culture, rather than of «Judaism». These arguments have elicited a good bit of discussion.<sup>3</sup>

In this brief paper, in honor of a scholar who has made numerous and blessed contributions to Jewish-Christian relations, I would like to address an-other move that is sometimes made, that takes a third option. Namely, as opposed to Mason it does not argue that «Judaism» did not exist, but as opposed to Cohen and Boyarin it does not claim that *Ioudaïsmos* meant *more* than our «Judaism». Rather, it claims that *Ioudaïsmos* meant *less* than our «Judaism» – that it denoted only one particular aspect of Judaism, namely, the observance of Jewish law. It does so out of a motivation that can as ascertained, and respected, but it is nonetheless problematic.

<sup>1</sup> S. Mason: Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History, JSJ 38 (2007) 457-512. On Gal 1:13-14, upon which we shall focus, see *ibid.* 468-469.

<sup>2</sup> S.J.D. Cohen: The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties, Hellenistic Culture and Society 31, Berkeley 1999, 105-6; D. Boyarin: Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to which is Appended a Correction of my *Border Lines*), JQR 99 (2009/10) 7-36. For «Jewishness» see also Sanders' article cited below, n. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Including M.L. Satlow: Defining Judaism: Accounting for «Religions» in the Study of Religion, JAAR 74 (2006) 837-860, and S. Schwartz: How Many Judaisms Were There? A Critique of Neusner and Smith on Definition and Mason and Boyarin on Categorization, Journal of Ancient Judaism 2 (2011) 208-238.

Traditionally such texts as Galatians 3 and Romans 10, that pose a stark contrast between Judaism as a religion of law and Christianity as a religion of faith, often fostered Christian scorn or hostility toward Jews. Those Jews – so Paul was understood – persisted in following the old, legal, covenant, in the belief that observing the law would bring them salvation, and in doing so they depended upon Lev 18:5 (cited at Gal 3:12 and Rom 10:5) as if it promised that doing the law would bring them (eternal) «life». This was to be condemned, both because (1) the Jews should have learned from their own Bible, both from the example of Abraham (Gen 15:6, cited in Gal 3:6 and the backbone of an earlier chapter of Romans<sup>4</sup>) and from various other biblical verses (cited in Rom 10:6-13), that faith and not works would bring salvation, and because (2) they denied or ignored that, whatever the law was once good for, Christ was the end of the law and his atoning death brought an end to that earlier covenant.

Consequently, post-Holocaust study of Paul, which has sought to neutralize the anti-Semitic potential of New Testament texts,<sup>5</sup> has invested much effort into defusing these texts, with three main approaches: (1) post-Holocaust studies of Paul have placed a major emphasis upon his abiding love for Israel and feeling of belonging to it, an argument that undercuts the notion that Paul's stance on this or that topic, however important, could or should serve as a basis for anti-Jewish hostility;<sup>6</sup> (2) it has been emphasized that Paul was writing to Gentiles, not to Jews, and so his attempts to dissuade them from undertaking Jewish law should not be translated into attacks upon the notion that Jews should persist in observing Jewish law, or upon Jews who do so;<sup>7</sup> (3) it has been

<sup>4</sup> Rom 4:3, 9, 22.

<sup>5</sup> For the characterization of the search for a new understanding of Paul on the Jews as one pursued «on the part of those whose eyes have been shocked open», see L. Gaston: *Paul and the Torah*, in: A. Davies (ed.): *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, New York 1979, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Two of the major early works of this trend were: J. Munck: *Christus und Israel: Eine Auslegung von Römer 9-11*, Aarhus and København 1956, and K. Stendahl: *Der Jude Paulus und wir Heiden: Anfragen an das abendländische Christentum*, München 1978. For our Festschrift's incisive evaluation of Karl Barth's handling of Romans 9-11, see his *Romans 9-11* in *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election* (available on Internet; for a German version see his article: *Israel in Barths Erwählungslehre, Zur Auslegung von Röm 9-11*, KD II, 2, §34, in: E.W. Stegemann: *Paulus und die Welt*, Zürich 2005, 221-249).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Gaston: *Paul and the Torah* (n. 5), 48-71. On this approach, see esp. S.

argued, with great conviction, that it is a caricature to think that Jews viewed their observance of the law as the Jewish individual's means to achieving salvation; rather, it was the Jews' collective way of life,<sup>8</sup> and, with regard to Lev 18:5 it has been argued that Paul could not have taken Lev 18:5 to mean more than that<sup>9</sup> and that his argument was only that the doing of the law had to be supplemented by faith.<sup>10</sup>

There is, of course, much that can be said for all three of these approaches, although none is without its problems as well. In this short paper, I would like to refer to a fourth approach, one which, along with the second one mentioned above, seems to involve a measure of over-correction. To give the discussion a proper focus I will build it around a very prominent modern translation's treatment of two scriptural passages, and eventually bring in a third as well.

The *Einheitsübersetzung* (henceforth: *EHU*),<sup>11</sup> which appeared in the first half of the 1970s, is a particularly apt place to look for reflections of Christian attitudes toward Judaism. That is not only because it is a translation of the Bible meant for mass usage and not merely some academic publication. More important, in the present context, is the fact that, although the *Einheit* to which the translation aspired was between Catholics and Protestants, nevertheless, as a project born in the German-speaking world of the 1960s and produced as part of the same process that engendered Vatican II and *Nostra aetate*, it also had to grapple with the status of Jews and Judaism in a context

Ruzer: Paul's Stance on the Torah Revisited: Gentile Addressees and the Jewish Setting, in: T.G. Casey, J. Taylor (ed.): Paul's Jewish Matrix (Bible in Dialogue 2), Rome 2011, esp. 81-83.

<sup>8</sup> For a central expression of this assessment of ancient Judaism, along with the recognition of how the view it opposed fostered antisemitism, see especially E.P. Sanders: Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion, London 1977, 33-59. See also, for example, Gaston: Paul and the Torah (n. 5), 51: «the rabbis never speak of Torah as the means to salvation, and when they speak of salvation at all, the way of Torah, «which is your life» (Deut. 32:47), *is* that salvation» (original emphasis). For a Jewish version of this, see below, note 24.

<sup>9</sup> See, among others, N. Chibici-Revneanu: Leben im Gesetz: Die paulinische Interpretation von Lev 18:5 (Gal 3:12; Röm 10:5), NT 50 (2008) 108-112 («Wie könnte Paulus Lev 18:5 verstanden haben?»).

<sup>10</sup> J. Joosten: «Fais cela et tu vivras»: Un motif vétérotestamentaire et ses échos néotestamentaires, RevSR 82 (2008) 331-341 (339-340 on Paul).

<sup>11</sup> I used the following edition: Die Bibel: Einheitsübersetzung der Heiligen Schrift, Gesamtausgabe Stuttgart 2004.

that was all too aware of how hostility toward the Jews could have horrendous results.<sup>12</sup> Thus, for example, although a 1976 booklet of the papal Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, that offers guidelines concerning *Nostra Aetate*'s paragraph about the Jew, naturally insists that translators of the Bible should «selbstverständlich» not change the biblical text, it nevertheless emphasizes their obligation «den eigentlichen Sinn eines Textes herauszuarbeiten.»<sup>13</sup> That can entail some far-reaching moves, as the appended footnote illustrates with regard to the way John's «the Jews» and references to Pharisees should be handled. Concerning the former, it is explained that the translators should avoid the impression that «das jüdische Volk als solches» is meant, since in fact the text means only «die Führer der Juden» or «die Feinde Jesu.» That is, a translation that offers the «eigentlicher Sinn» of the Bible is one that minimizes, as best as possible, any basis the Bible might offer for hostility toward Jews.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, and more directly relevant to our issue, the booklet's chapter on «Lehre und Erziehung», which are of course based first of all upon the Bible, emphasizes that «Man darf das Alte Testament und die sich darauf gründende jüdische Tradition nicht in einen solchen Gegensatz zum Neuen Testament stellen, dass sie nur eine Religion der Gerechtigkeit, der Furcht und der Gesetzlichkeit zu enthalten scheint, ohne den Anruf zur Liebe zu Gott und zum Nächsten (vgl. Deut 6, 5; Lev 19, 18; Mt 22, 34-40).»<sup>15</sup> That is: although the Jewish religion includes such elements as *Gerechtigkeit*, *Furcht*, and *Gesetzlichkeit*, it has other important elements as well, such as *Liebe zu Gott und zum Nächsten*, which were set in the center of religion by Jesus too.

The latter guideline, which means that if one rejects the law one need not reject Judaism for there is more to Judaism than just the law, seems to be a very appropriate background for reading the *EHU* of Gal 1:13-14. Here Paul, in

<sup>12</sup> For the *EHU* in the context of Vatican II, see R. Steiner: *Neue Bibelübersetzungen*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1975, 116-117 and E. Ruckstuhl: *Die deutsche Einheitsübersetzung der heiligen Schrift*, in: U. Joerg and D.M. Hoffmann (ed.): *Die Bibel in der Schweiz: Ursprung und Geschichte*, Basel 1997, 307.

<sup>13</sup> Päpstliche Kommission für die religiösen Beziehungen zu dem Judentum, *Richtlinien und Hinweise für die Konzilerklärung «Nostra Aetate»*, Art. 4, Trier 1976, 36.

<sup>14</sup> No suggestion is made about how to handle the Pharisees, apart from the comment that today «Pharisäer» and «Pharisäismus» have «einen durchaus pejorativen Klang.»

<sup>15</sup> Päpstliche Kommission (n. 13) 37.

a rhetorical move meant to underline the extent of his turnabout in the wake of his experience on the way to Damascus, recalls just how devoted he had previously been to – to what? According to the *EHU*, Paul refers to his earlier devotion to the observance of Jewish law (my emphases):

(13) Ihr habt doch gehört, wie ich früher als *gesetzestreuer Jude* gelebt habe, und wisst, wie maßlos ich die Kirche Gottes verfolgte und zu vernichten suchte. (14) In der Treue zum *jüdischen Gesetz* übertraf ich die meisten Altersgenossen in meinem Volk und mit dem größten Eifer setzte ich mich für die Überlieferungen meiner Väter ein.

This is quite a clear translation. However, when one compares it to the Greek it turns out to be quite a puzzling one, because in both parts of vv. 13-14 that I emphasized Paul's Greek makes no reference to law. Rather, it refers to *Ioudaïsmos* – «in» which Paul formerly conducted himself properly (v. 13)<sup>16</sup> and at which he had outdone many fellow Jews of his age (v. 14). Other German translations regularly use «Judentum,»<sup>17</sup> just as English translations regularly use «Judaism.» Why, then, did the translators of the *EHU* deviate so radically from the Greek text and the obvious and traditional translation?

Before attempting to answer that, let us note that this deviation is not a fluke. For when *Ioudaïsmos* appears once more as something «in» which one can be, at 2 Maccabees 8:1, there too the translators of the *EHU* avoided it:

Judas aber, den man auch Makkabäer nennt, und seine Leute schlichen sich heimlich in die Dörfer und holten ihre Verwandten zu sich; auch gewannen sie die treu gebliebenen Juden, sodass sie etwa sechstausend Mann zusammenbrachten.

Where the Greek of 2 Maccabees refers to those «who had remained in Judaism» (τοὺς μεμενηκότας ἐν τῷ Ιουδαϊσμῷ), the *EHU* refers to Jews who remained faithful – but does not say to what it was that they remained faithful.

It therefore seems clear that the *EHU* has an issue with the translation of *Ioudaïsmos*: it does not want to give the impression that Judaism is something

<sup>16</sup> Not just «lived»; on *anastrophē*, see C. Spicq: *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, I, Peabody 1994, 111-114.

<sup>17</sup> Thus, for example: Luther, the Schlachter Bibel and the Elberfelder Bibel all have «Judentum» in both verses. The Zürcher Bibel has «Judentum» in v. 14 but «als Jude gelebt» in v. 13 – but even the latter is broader than the *EHU*, which refers specifically having lived according to Jewish law.

one can remain part of, or not. One can remain a loyal Jew, or be an unloyal Jew, but, if the formulation is taken seriously – as it should be, since it represents a willful deviation from the plain Greek text and from the tradition of translation (see n. 17) – even unloyal Jews are just that, unloyal Jews. They are not outside of «Judaism.» That is the exact same stance we saw concerning Paul in Galatians 1, where the *EHU* translators refused to let Paul say that formerly he was «in Judaism,» which would indicate that now he is not in it any more.<sup>18</sup> Rather, the *EHU*'s translation allows Paul still to be «in Judaism,» having only given up on one component of it that he once thought was worthy of his zeal.

This corresponds well, of course, to Paul's criticism of Peter and others in the next chapters of Galatians, where Paul distinguishes between being Jewish and living Jewishly (2:14 – Εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῇς). In context (v. 12 refers to Peter having eaten with Gentiles, v. 16 refers specifically to «works of law»), «living Jewishly» means living according to Jewish law; according to Paul, even those who *are Jewish* might not observe Jewish law.<sup>19</sup> And that is of course true: it is obvious that there are Jews who fail to observe Jewish law, and for Jewish tradition, as for the *EHU*, the standard teaching on the issue is «(An Israelite,) although he sinned, is still an Israelite» (b. *Sanhedrin* 44a). That goes well together with other passages in Paul, especially Romans 9-11, where he insists on his continued belonging to Israel. But in Gal 1:13-14, although Paul does refer to his allegiance to Jewish ancestral traditions, he does not refer specifically to «law» and he does refer, twice,

<sup>18</sup> True, one might imagine that Paul is referring to his earlier life in Judaism in contrast to his current life in Judaism. However, as long as the latter is not said explicitly the other reading seems more natural; see S.J.D. Cohen's paraphrase of Gal 1:13-14 in: A.-J. Levine and M.Z. Brettler (ed.): *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, New York 2011, 334: «Paul's earlier life was in Judaism, but his current life, after he received his revelation from God (1.15-16), is not». See also E. P. Sanders: *Paul's Jewishness*, in: *Paul's Jewish Matrix* (n. 7), 64 («In Galatians, «Judaism» appears to be an entity from his past, not the same as his own present in-group: in Gal 1:13-14 he speaks of «his earlier life in Judaism.») Indeed, it seems likely to interpret «in Judaism» as a contrast, in Paul's mind, to «in Christ» (e.g., Rom 8:1, Phil 1:1, and – of himself – 2 Cor 12:2); see Sanders, *ibid.* 65. And that is the contrast that Paul posits right after v. 14, as the *EHU*, just as all the other four translations mentioned in n. 17, recognizes by opening v. 15 with a heavy «aber».

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, as the end of Gal 2:14 shows, non-Jews too can «live Jewishly», and one could even contemplate forcing them to do so. The fact that Paul uses a separate verb for «forcing» there (ἀναγκάζεις) is an argument against Mason's case that *ioudaïzein* itself could have a transitive sense (leading or forcing others to live as Jews); see above, note 1.



to «Judaism»; I see no reason to limit the sense of «traditions» to law or the sense of «Judaism» to observance of law.<sup>20</sup> Rather, Paul means that he adhered to the Jews' ancestral traditions because – as a part of, an implication of – he was zealous for something he calls *Ioudaïsmos* which must have been broader than traditions (or law), namely «Judaism», the religion of which law is a part; otherwise, why mention it? True, one can well understand the *EHU*'s desire to limit Paul's statement, that his *Ioudaïsmos* was a matter of the past, to his former allegiance to Jewish law, and even appreciate the motivation that engenders this way of eliminating a gap between Paul – and his readers – and Judaism, in line with the spirit of *Nostra aetate* and the papal Commission's guidelines about seeking a friendly *eigentlicher Sinn*. But as stated above it seems to me that this entails a bit of over-correction, one which entails the risk of moving the Jews from the fire into a frying-pan.

Namely, that approach, insofar as it limits the significance of law-observance for Jews, goes very well with the second of the three summarized in the opening of this paper, the one that argues that, for Jews and Judaism, observance of Jewish law is a way of life, not a path toward salvation. In particular, and with regard to Lev 18:5, which plays such a prominent role in Paul's discussions of the issue, recent scholarship urges us to realize that when the Bible promises «life» to those who observe the Law, Jews took that to mean only that this is the way they should live, not as a promise of eternal life to those who observe it (see notes 9-10).

There is, of course, much to recommend that approach, and some biblical and later references to «life» and the law indeed seem to mean just that. Thus, for example, when Deut 32:47 or daily Jewish prayers that quote it (and conflate it with Josh 1:8)<sup>21</sup> say the Torah is «your life and the length of your days» it need mean no more than «this is the way you should live» or «it is with this that you should occupy yourselves.» Work by E. P. Sanders and others has done much to show how widespread this notion is – taught as it is, for example, by one of the very first apothegms assembled in the central collection of rabbinic ethical teaching:

<sup>20</sup> Here I would differ with S.J.D. Cohen's observation, that «*ioudaïsmos*» in Gal 1:13-14 means the observance of Jewish traditions» (Beginnings of Jewishness [n. 2], 182). While it entails such observance, that need not limit the term's meaning.

<sup>21</sup> See J.H. Hertz (ed.): The Authorised Daily Prayer Book, London 1947, 306-307.



«Do not be like slaves who serve their master in order to receive a reward, rather, be like slaves who serve their master not in order to receive a reward, and let the fear of Heaven be upon you» (m. *Avot* 1:3).<sup>22</sup>

However, the ancient rabbis taught many things. Moreover, in antiquity as today, we may assume that many Jews believed and valued many things whether or not the rabbis did. And it seems to me that the widespread assessment that the belief that observing the law would bring reward («salvation») characterizes a low and self-serving type of religion<sup>23</sup> has, when taken together with the desire to eliminate from the New Testament teachings that denigrate Jews and Judaism, gone a bit too far. Too often, I think, well-meaning Jewish and Christian scholars accept the assessment but deny that such a belief was, by and large, characteristic of Jews in antiquity. Whether or not those are correct moves is an involved issue, but in the present limited context I will simply note that, concerning Paul, the assumption that ancient Judaism or ancient Jews did not teach that observance of the law is the or a path to attaining eternal life requires us to adopt one of the following options: either (1) Paul, in presenting and rejecting the view that the observance of Jewish law is such a path, misunderstood Judaism or was arguing with a straw man; or (2) Paul did not present Judaism that way. For obvious reasons, the former option is frequently adopted by Jews,<sup>24</sup> while the latter is more congenial for scholars for whom Paul's writings are part of their Sacred Scriptures.

Within the context of this short essay, the problematic nature of the latter approach to Paul can well be illustrated by reference to the way the *EHU* handles one of the two central passages cited at the outset. Namely, at Romans 10:5, where Paul wrote Μωϋσῆς γὰρ γράφει τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου ὅτι ὁ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτῇ, the *EHU* offers:

<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note that Hertz, who knew well how this topic functioned in Christian attitudes toward Judaism, made this apothegm the pinnacle of his apologetic discussion of «Reward and Punishment in Judaism», *ibid.*, 121-123, just as in his commentary upon it (615-616) he is happy to quote Wellhausen in support of the opposite position, namely, that «it is not wrong to hope for God's reward of righteous living.»

<sup>23</sup> On just how widespread that assessment is, see E.P. Sanders: *Covenantal Nomism Revisited*, *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 16 (2009) 42.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, P. Lapide: *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Qumran: Fehldeutungen und Übersetzungsfehler*, Gütersloh 1993, 31: «Für das Rabbinat war ja die Torah nie und nimmer ein Heilsweg zu Gott. Die Torah ist überhaupt kein Heilsweg, weil das Judentum einen solchen gar nicht kennt. Ihm ist ein Lebensweg gegeben worden, für den die Torah Richtschnur und Wegweiser ist.»

Mose schreibt: *Wer sich an die Gesetzesgerechtigkeit hält in seinem Tun, wird durch sie leben.*

This translation, with the italics as reproduced here, is nothing less than amazing, not only due to the way it begins the quotation much earlier than is usual (which entails ignoring the ὅτι), but especially insofar as it has Paul characterizing the Mosaic way as «an Gesetzesgerechtigkeit halten» and, by turning off the italics, sidelines «in seinem Tun». This is just the opposite of the Greek text, which supplies «Tun» but not «hält». Depending upon how generally and how abstractly one understands the sense of «-igkeit» and of «halten» we might translate the *EHU* as meaning «believe in *Gesetzesgerechtigkeit*» or «adhere to *Gesetzesgerechtigkeit*», but in any case the use of that form of noun and that verb indicates a desire to make Paul condemn something more general than simply the doing of the law – thereby leaving room for him not to condemn the latter.<sup>25</sup>

That it was very important for the *EHU* to avoid suggesting that Paul condemns the observance of Jewish law per se, and to indicate that he condemns only the generalizing belief that it might allow the observer something similar to what Christian belief allowed Christians, is made very clear by its footnote on v. 4, where Paul says Christ is the end of the law: «Gemeint ist das Gesetz als Heilsweg.» That is: As long as the *Gesetz* is taken to be only a *Weg*, but not a *Heilsweg*, it's OK with Paul and with the *EHU*.

In light of the fact that this translation requires such legerdemain in order to reflect a putative *eigentlicher Sinn* that is congenial to Christian-Jewish relations, we might prefer to resolve the conundrum by questioning the basic premises that engendered it – the assessment that it is less than respectable to hold that Jews typically viewed the observance of Jewish law as a path toward salvation, and/or the concomitant assumption that they did not do so. True, Sanders reports that when, at a scholarly conference, he read out Philip Alexander's statement that «Tannaitic Judaism can be seen as fundamentally a religion of works-righteousness, and it is none the worse for that», «there was an audible gasp from the audience.»<sup>26</sup> But that shows only how deeply

<sup>25</sup> Note that this translation apparently adopts the reading of this verse without αὐτὰ after ποιήσας, and with the singular αὐτῇ, a reading which the Greek New Testament (second edition) grades only with a C. If one reads αὐτὰ and αὐτοῖς, as in the Septuagint of Lev 18:5 and Gal 3:12, it is all the clearer that the verse refers to the observance of laws, not to the holding of a belief concerning such observance.

<sup>26</sup> Sanders: *Covenantal Nomism Revisited* (n. 23), 42. The quotation is from P. Alexander: *Torah and Salvation in Tannaitic Literature*, in: A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, M. A. Seifrid (ed.):

ingrained the view is, as Sanders notes; it does not prove it is right, or the only alternative. And it would be interesting to measure such gasps against however we imagine that Paul might react if he were to read the *EHU*'s rendition of Rom 10:5.

For my part, I would argue, first of all, that it is a translator's obligation to render what the original text says, and that there is a heavy burden of proof upon on the shoulders of whomever proceeds on the presumption that there is a serious gap between what the words say and the text's *eigentlicher Sinn*. Sometimes that burden can be carried, but that must be shown. Secondly, whatever one thinks about being selfless, and whatever one thinks about Judaism in theory, in my experience as a person and as a Jew it is quite difficult to imagine that Jews (or anyone else) would, as a rule, stick to a regimen of law-observance that often entails difficulties and sacrifices of numerous sorts without the hope or conviction that it promised some boon in return, just as – as Sanders shows – there is plenty of room for such assessment of the New Testament's expectations from its believers as well.<sup>27</sup> But since for most people the boons are not readily visible in this world, such thoughts lead quite naturally to an other-worldly alternative.

Moreover, beyond such expectations it seems to be demonstrable that, beginning with Daniel, martyrdom, which constituted for Jews the ultimate proof that observance of Jewish law did not always bring boons in this world, came along with a belief in the afterlife.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, it seems to me that part of the trend in modern scholarship, to underestimate ancient Jewish appreciation of martyrdom, should be understood only as a pendant of the more general tendency, which I am questioning, to deny the notion that Jews expected their observance to the law to entail other-worldly boons for them.<sup>29</sup> Finally, and most directly relevant to our issue, however, I would note that specifically with regard to Lev 18:5 one can easily point to ancient Jewish texts that indeed took

Justification and Variegated Nomism, I: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism (WUNT II/140), Tübingen 2001, 300.

<sup>27</sup> Sanders: Covenantal Nomism Revisited (n. 23), 48-52.

<sup>28</sup> On the nexus of martyrdom and afterlife, see for example J.W. van Henten: The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People (JSJ.Sup 57), Leiden 1997, 172-182.

<sup>29</sup> See D.R. Schwartz: Martyrdom, the Middle Way, and Mediocrity (Genesis Rabbah 82:8), in: Z. Weiss et al. (ed.): Follow the Wise: Studies in Jewish History and Culture in Honor of Lee I. Levine, Winona Lake 2010, esp. 351-353.

it to mean what Paul took it to mean, namely, that observance of the law will bring life after death, what Paul would call «salvation», including:<sup>30</sup>

*Damascus Document* 3:12-20: «But out of those who held fast to God's ordinances, who remained of them, God established his covenant with Israel forever, revealing to them the hidden things...the desires of his will, «which a person shall do and live by them.» (These) he opened before them...But those who scorn them will not live... Those who hold fast to it are to have eternal life (*ḥayye neṣaḥ*) and all human glory is theirs....»

*Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 9, on Lev 18:5 (ed. Weiss, 85d): ««And live by them» – in the coming world. For if you were to say (it means) in this world (that cannot be, for) does he not die in the end?! So how shall I give meaning to «and live by them»? In the coming world. I the Lord may be depended upon to pay reward.»

*Midrash Deuteronomy Rabba* (ed. Lieberman, 44): [Moses speaking]: «You told me «that a man shall do and live by them,» and I did them, and You tell me «And die on the mountain» (Deut 32:50)?! The Holy One Blessed Be He said to him: «that a man shall do» in this world, «and live by them» in the world to come.»

Similarly, the ancient Aramaic *Targumim* of Lev 18:5 add «in eternal life» into the text. That seems to be a good guide to popular teaching.

It is true that, as Sanders wrote,<sup>31</sup> the citation of a few texts does not prove something was a dogma, and I would certainly agree with him that one can find a good bit of evidence for another, putatively more noble and selfless, point of view. My modest point here is that since we can find texts that bespeak the belief that fulfillment of the laws of the Torah will bring the individual Jew eternal life, what Paul would call «salvation», it is all the more problematic to deviate from the plain sense of texts and translate them so as avoid imputing to Paul the notion that Jews or Judaism held such a belief.

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<sup>30</sup> For the following texts, and others, see F. Avemarie: *Tora und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (TSAJ 55), Tübingen 1996, 377.

<sup>31</sup> Sanders: *Covenantal Nomism Revisited* (n. 23) 38.

To sum up, my argument is that: (1) when texts are clear and the target language offers a clear equivalent to the original text it ought to be used, unless some cogent reason urges us to do otherwise; (2) that in the case of *Ioudaïsmos* in Gal 1:13-14 the *EHU* avoided the clear equivalent («Judentum») and instead referred to something more limited out of a well-meaning desire, in the spirit of Vatican II and *Nostra aetate*, to prevent Paul from referring to his earlier life by something as general as «Judaism» as if he no longer lived in it; but (3) the path the *EHU* took, which both (a) allows someone to be a devotee of (to «live in») Judaism without observing Jewish law, and (b) justifies the Jews' continued observance of Jewish law at the price of understanding it as something Jews do in this world without the hope that it might be of relevance to their future wellbeing as well – a path the *EHU* explicitly takes in its translation and explanation of Rom 10:4-5 – is, on both counts, a matter of Christian *petitio principii*<sup>32</sup> that probably does not conform to what many Jews in Paul's day believed and, therefore, to that to which Paul was responding.

Rather, I would vote for translating *Ioudaïsmos* literally as «Judentum» or «Judaism» and allowing Paul, whose reference to «life in» it refers to something practical, to recognize the Torah's central importance for Judaism as a religion and say that it was no longer for him. Paul's insistence in Rom 9-11 upon his continued belonging to «Israel» need not push us into denying his reference to his life in Judaism as being in the past, for «Israel» is an ethnic category and, as we saw, the rabbis too noted that an Israelite remains a part of «Israel» even when, for whatever reason, he or she abandons «Judaism.»<sup>33</sup> To the extent such a reading of Paul leaves the gap between him and Judaism broader than well-meaning Christians and Jews of the post-Holocaust era want, the proper response should perhaps come more in the realm of learning to live with others

<sup>32</sup> With regard to the point of observing Mosaic law, it corresponds to the position taken in Acts 15 as well, that Jews (such as James) hold that Mosaic law is something Jews do but is not a condition for «salvation». See D.R. Schwartz: *The Futility of Preaching Moses* (Acts 15,21), Bib. 67 (1986) 276-281.

<sup>33</sup> Here I would respond in brief to Sanders' characterization of Paul's «self-identity» (in: Paul's Jewishness [n. 18] 68): «He was Jewish and regarded himself as the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles in the last days. He states his own identity explicitly in Rom 9:2-5.» In fact, however, those verses do not refer to «Jews» or «Jewish.» Rather, Paul refers to himself as having brothers who are «Israelites» (v. 4), just as at 11:1 he defines himself more closely by three genealogical categories: «Israelite, of the seed of Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin,» but not as a «Jew». So too Phil 3:5.

who are different. That might, in fact, correspond to the *eigentlicher Sinn* of religion even when it does not always conform to that of sacred texts.

### *Abstract*

In Gal 1:13-14 Paul twice refers to *Ioudaïsmos* as that which characterized his earlier life, making no reference to Jewish law. The *Einheitsübersetzung* does the opposite: it makes no reference to Judaism, and twice has Paul refer to his observance of Jewish law. Similarly, at 2 Maccabees 8:1 that translation avoids rendering the reference to *Ioudaïsmos* as that to which Judah Maccabees' recruits had remained faithful. Evidently, such post-Vatican II deviation from the plain text reflects a well-meaning desire to avoid the representation of «Judaism» as something that someone – like Paul – might abandon. Paul might abandon the observance of Jewish law, but he remained Jewish – as is shown by Romans 9-11. The same aim is served by the *Einheitsübersetzung's* translation of Rom 10:5, which emphasizes that Paul's complaint is not about the observance of the law, but only about the belief that such observance guarantees salvation; that leaves room for Jews to go on observing Jewish law. However, such well-meaning moves have their price: they tend to indicate that Jews' observance of Jewish law is a matter of practice alone, without religious significance: at Gal 1:13-14 such observance does not bespeak «Judaism» and at Rom 10:5 it does not promise anything. That neither conforms to ancient Jewish interpretations of Lev 18:5 nor points to a truly positive basis for Jewish-Christian relations. Rather, we should stick closer to Paul's wording and recognize that, according to his own testimony, he recognized that the observance of Jewish law was an important element of «Judaism», but when he became a Christian he abandoned «Judaism» although he remained an Israelite.

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