

"YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE A THRESHING OX"
PAUL'S USE OF THE LAW OF MOSES IN 1 COR 9,8-12

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Resumen

En este artículo se arguye que Pablo añade al dicho "no pondrás bozal al buey que trilla" (Dt 25,4) —que él cita en 1 Cor 9,9— una explicación en la que amplía el alcance de esta regla para sí mismo y para Bernabé como fundadores de la Iglesia de Corinto. Filón, Josefo y la Mishnah tratan esta ley bíblica de modos similares a Pablo, pero, mientras su interpretación pretende reforzar la identidad judía, la interpretación de Pablo tiene un carácter definitivamente eclesiológico y pretende, en última instancia, realzar la identidad de la iglesia en Corinto como la comunidad exclusiva del único Señor.

Summary

In this article it is argued that Paul appends to the saying "You shall not muzzle a threshing ox" (Dt 25,4) —which he quotes in 1 Cor 9,9— an explanation in which he enlarges the scope of this rule in view of himself and Barnabas as founders of the Corinthian church. Philo, Josephus and the Mishnah treat this biblical law in ways similar to Paul but, whereas their interpretation exhibits a definitely ecclesiastical character and ultimately intends to enhance the identity of the church in Corinth as the exclusive community of the one Lord.

In the middle of an argument, in which Paul holds up his practice of renouncing the apostolic right to a living as an example to the Corinthians addressed (1 Cor 9,1-18)¹, he appeals to the Law of Moses by quoting

¹ The interpretation that in this passage Paul does not defend his apostolate but, as

Dt 25,4: "You shall not muzzle a threshing ox" (1 Cor 9,9). His reading of this rule is easily guessed for, in the direct context, he adduces five examples in order to prove that a labourer has a right to live by his work. Paul quotes Dt 25,4 as an authoritative confirmation of this social norm. So, by not accepting support from the Corinthians he, of his own free will, has renounced a right to which, as their apostle, he is entitled. To this appropriate quotation, however, a difficult commentary is attached, on which experts hold widely divergent views. Scholarly discussion concentrates on two problems namely the course of Paul's argument and the character of his comment.

In determining the function which Paul's comment on Dt 25,4 fulfils within his argument, the clause: "it was written that (ἐγράφη ὅτι)" apparently holds a key-position. In scholarly commentaries three conflicting views of ὅτι are proposed. Most scholars prefer ὅτι-*recitativum* and consider the next clause as a new quotation.² A smaller group defends ὅτι-*argumentativum* and contends that Paul continues by giving the reason why the quotation was written "for us".³ In particular scholars of a former generation plead for ὅτι-*explicativum* after which, in their view,

an apostle, holds himself up as an example for imitation to the Corinthians is argued in J. F. M. Smit, "The Rhetorical Disposition of First Corinthians 8:7-9:27": *CBQ* 59 (1997) 478. 484-489. For this interpretation see also M. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation. An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (HUT 28; Tübingen, Mohr, 1991) 243-250. Contra J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEK; Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977) 234; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987) 393.

² Among the authors holding this view are Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 237; W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Kor 6,12-11,16)* (EKK; Düsseldorf-Neukirchen-Vluyn, Benziger Verlag-Neukirchener Verlag, 1995) 285-286. 302; D. A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums. Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHT; Tübingen, Mohr, 1986) 41-42; D. M. Smith, "The Pauline Literature", in D. A. Carson / H. G. M. Williamson (eds.), *It is written. Scripture citing Scripture* FS B. Lindars (Cambridge, University Press, 1988) 270; R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1989) 165 and 230 n. 34; C. D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture. Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge, University Press, 1992) 196-197. Also the text-edition Nestle-Aland²⁷ treats 1. Cor 9,10b as a quotation.

³ C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London, Black, 1968) 206; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 408-409.

Paul gives a further explication of the preceding quotation.⁴ The dominant opinion, to the effect that Paul introduces a new quotation but that we do not know where that quotation comes from, clearly betrays the aporia of the research into this matter. In the first part of this article I intend to answer the question as to which line Paul's argument in 1 Cor 9,8-12a follows. I intend to demonstrate that the vexed $\delta\tau\iota$ -clause should be taken as further explaining the quotation from Dt 25,4. In order to reach this goal I shall analyse successively the grammar, the semantics and the pragmatics of this passage.

The question as to the character of Paul's interpretation of Dt 25,4 is also very much in dispute. Most scholars hold that Paul interprets the quotation in an allegorical manner.⁵ Others prefer to label his exegesis as typological.⁶ Allegory and typology are somewhat elastic and vague notions so that the discussion on this matter tends to be rather shadowy. One scholar proposes the view that Paul's exegesis corresponds to the exegetical rules of the rabbis as applied in Mishnah and Talmud.⁷ In the second part of this article I intend to answer the question regarding the character of Paul's interpretation of Dt 25,4. In order to reach this goal I shall examine three other, Jewish interpretations of the prohibition to muzzle a threshing ox, namely that of Philo, of Josephus and of the Mishnah. Within this framework the character of Paul's exegesis of Dt 25,4 will be further elucidated.

Finally it is my intention to demonstrate that the position which Paul assigns to the Law of Moses in 1 Cor 9,1-18 as well as the peculiar manner in which he interprets Dt 25,4 disclose the place which, according

⁴ Ph. Bachmann, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (KNT; Leipzig, Deichert, 1905) 324; A. Robertson / R. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh, Clark, 1914) 184; E. B. Allo, *Saint Paul. Première Épître aux Corinthiens* (Ebib; Paris, Gabalda, 1934) 218; D. L. Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1971) 11, n. 1.

⁵ Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 236; Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 202-204; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 299-300; D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew. Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, 1994) 155; Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 407-408) sharply rejects this.

⁶ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 161, 165-166.

⁷ D. I. Brewer, "1 Corinthians 9.9-11: A Literal Interpretation of 'Do not muzzle the ox'": *NTS* 38 (1992) 554-565.

to Paul, the church of God in Corinth ought to take between Jews and Gentiles, cf. 1 Cor 1,2; 10,32.

I. ANALYSIS OF FIRST CORINTHIANS 9,8-12A

1. Grammar

a) Syntax

The six sentences this section consists of are, by means of parallelism, closely connected with each other. The structure they form together enables us to solve some grammatical questions. The principal connections are like this:

Bipartite rhetorical question:	Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ ἢ καὶ ὁ νόμος ταῦτα οὐ λέγει;
Answer:	ἐν γὰρ τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ γέγραπται...
Bipartite rhetorical question:	Μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῷ θεῷ ἢ δι' ἡμᾶς πάντως λέγει;
Answer:	δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγράφη, ὅτι...
Bipartite rhetorical question:	Εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐσπείραμεν, μέγα εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῶν τὰ σαρκικὰ θερίσομεν;
Bipartite rhetorical question:	Εἰ ἄλλοι τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν, οὐ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς;

The two questions and answers are clearly connected with each other by means of a similar sentence structure, anaphora (μή), epiphora (λέγει) and the further use of identical words (γάρ, γράφειν).

The two conditional questions are also joined together by means of a similar sentence structure and anaphora (εἰ).

In its turn each of the first two questions (vv. 8 and 9b-10a) again consists of two questions. The first of those calls for a negative answer and serves as a preparation enhancing the second one which calls for a positive reply.⁸ In both cases this anticipation of an affirmative answer is further enhanced by means of an adverb, respectively καί in v. 8 emphasizing that "the Law too says those things" and πάντως in v. 10

⁸ Correctly analysed by Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 405, 407.

which, in this highly affirmative context, is used in the sense of "at all events, assuredly": "or is he, as he surely is, saying this for us?"⁹

The affirmative drift of the questions is continued in the answers. This is, more in particular, the function of γάρ, which occurs in the beginning of both answers (vv. 9a; 10b). Grammarians point out that γάρ, when used in replies, affirms what was asked in the sense of: "to be sure, just so".¹⁰ In both cases γάρ further strengthens the call for assent to the answer offered: "Yes indeed, in the Law of Moses it is written..." and "Yes indeed, because of us it was written..."

b) The quotation.

The future indicative κηρώσεις is employed to render the categorical prohibition of the legal language of the Old Testament. In such a case the negative is οὐ: "You shall not muzzle".¹¹ As to the verb the current text editions of the New Testament differ from the Septuagint and give κηρώσεις where LXX has φμώσεις. Whether this is the original reading remains uncertain. The weight of the manuscripts is more in favour of φμώσεις. But, on the other hand, it seems probable that a copyist has adapted the original κηρώσεις to the reading of the LXX.¹² While there is very little difference in meaning between the literary φμοῦν and the unliterary κημοῦν, we can leave the question undecided here.

Usually the animal threshing is identified as an "ox". When not further specified by means of a masculine or feminine article, the greek βούς

⁹ H. G. Liddell / R. Scott / H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968) s. v. πόντως, II; W. Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1988) col. 1232, s. v. 1.

¹⁰ F. Blass / A. Debrunner / R. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1961) § 452,2; Liddell / Scott / Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s. v. 1d; Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*, s. v. 4. With regard to v. 10 this affirmative meaning of γάρ is almost generally accepted. Notwithstanding that, the similar γάρ in v. 9 is without exception understood as a causal "for".

¹¹ Blass / Debrunner / Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, § 362.

¹² This is amply discussed in Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 142, n. 20; Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 195-196.

denotes the genus and should be understood as "cattle".¹³ For threshing animals of different sexes were used: bulls, oxen but above all cows.¹⁴

c) The sentence structure in verse 10c-d.

The construction of the sentence following after: "Yes indeed, because of us it was written that..." can be understood in two ways. Current opinion holds that this sentence consists of two parallel, independent subsentences, linked by καὶ as a connective. The subject of the first is "the plowing one", while "the threshing one" forms the subject of the second subsentence. This last one is elliptical and should be supplied with ὀφείλει ἄλοᾶν. In this case a literal rendering reads as follows: "... that in hope the one plowing ought to plow and the one threshing ought to thresh in hope of getting a share": This sentence, which is still rather obscure, is then further elucidated e.g. as follows: "Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest".¹⁵

However, a different understanding of the construction of this sentence is to be preferred. It is my conviction that it does not consist of two independent subsentences, but forms one single sentence with "the plower" as its subject. For the sake of emphasis "in hope" is repeated at the end of the sentence and provided with a further specification. In this case καὶ does not connect two sentences with each other, but has an additive function and, in the sense of "and likewise, together with", joins the thresher to the plower.¹⁶ Now, a literal translation of this sentence reads

¹³ The hebrew text has שׂרר, denoting an outgrown bull but, besides that, often also used in a generic sense for the collective "cattle", cf. Dt 5,14.21; 15,19; 22,1.4. See L. Koehler / W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden, Brill, 1953) s. v. In German as well as in Dutch the generic "Rind" ("rund") is to be preferred cf. M. Rose, *5. Mose. Teilband 1: 5 Mose 12-25. Einführung und Gesetze* (Zürcher Bibelkommentar; Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1994) 271-272.

¹⁴ G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina. Band III. Von der Ernte zum Mehl* (Gütersloh, Bertelsmann, 1932) 107-108.

¹⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 408-409. Cf. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 237; Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 206; Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 186; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 278, 302.

¹⁶ A similar sentence structure is found in Acts 16,15; 18,2. See Blass / Debrunner / Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, § 442. 10.

as follows: "Yes indeed, because of us it was written that in hope the one plowing ought to plow, just as the one threshing, namely in hope of getting a share". By means of "just as the one threshing" (καὶ ὁ ἄλοῶν) Paul reminds one of the preceding quotation from Dt 25,4, to the effect that "the one threshing" has a right to eat. In the sentence as a whole Paul argues that, *mutatis mutandis*, the plower also has this right.

d) *"Your authority" in verse 12*

In v. 12 τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας μετέχουσιν forms a problem. Usually ὑμῶν is taken as an objective genitive in the sense of "authority over you".¹⁷ This, however, is not correct. In 1 Cor 8,9 Paul mentions "that authority of yours" (ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὐτῆ) and with that expression has the freedom in mind to keep taking part in pagan sacrificial meals, which the Corinthians according to their own conviction possess. Paul places the apostolic right to a living alongside this freedom and, with a view to comparability, dubs both of them as "authority to eat and drink" (1 Cor 9,4). In v. 12a he then emphatically concludes that he himself and Barnabas, —even more than the other apostles—, have the authority to eat and drink just as the Corinthians do. In v. 12b he comes to the end of his rhetorical strategy: he himself and Barnabas have made no use of their authority to eat and drink, i.e. their right to a living; their example obliges the Corinthians in their turn to renounce their authority to eat and drink i.e. their freedom to partake in sacrificial meals.¹⁸

2. *Semantic analysis*

a) *The quotation.*

The prohibition to muzzle a threshing ox holds an isolated position within Deuteronomy, detached as it is from the preceding regulations concerning the administering of whiplashes (Dt 25,1-3) as well as from the following instructions regarding the levirate (Dt 25,5-10). In the Torah regulations concerning animals more often stand isolated from their context. The prohibition to boil a lamb in the milk of its mother (Dt

¹⁷ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 410; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 304 n. 157.

¹⁸ This interpretation is justified more fully in Smit, "The Rhetorical Disposition of First Corinthians 8:7-9:27", 484-486.

14,21; Ex 23,19; 34,26) as well as the prohibition to plow with an ox and a donkey in one team (Dt 22,10) are in a similar position. These prohibitions demand a literal interpretation. There are no indications that they should be interpreted otherwise.

Paul has evidently linked the quotation from Dt 25,4 with the context. His introduction: "Do I say this on human authority, or does not the Law say that too?" (v. 8) associates the quotation with the three preceding social examples. The quotation is an authoritative pronouncement confirming the examples of the soldier, the vinedresser and the shepherd. From this it follows that for Paul the prohibition to muzzle a threshing ox also applies to human agricultural labourers. The quotation is also clearly related to the question which immediately follows: "Does God care about oxen or does he say that — as he certainly does — because of us?" In the light of 1 Cor 9,4-6.11-12 with "us" Paul unmistakably refers to himself and Barnabas.¹⁹ So, according to Paul, the prohibition to muzzle a threshing ox applies to threshing labourers and most specifically himself and Barnabas. This demands further elucidation.

b) Interpretation.

As noticed before, the meaning of v. 10b is very much in dispute: "Yes indeed, because of us it was written that in hope the one plowing ought to plow, just as the one threshing, in hope of getting a share". Most scholars assume that this is a quotation, but taken from a book about which we are in the dark in every manner. In order to corroborate their opinion they bring forward three arguments, which I, to begin with, shall critically examine now.²⁰

First argument: "It was written that (ἐγράφη ὅτι)" is a standard-formula announcing a quotation. There is much to be said against this.²¹ The usual quotation-formula in Paul reads: "It is written

¹⁹ So Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 165-166. Most commentators tend to this solution, see Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 205; Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 193-194; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 407, n. 53; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 301.

²⁰ The same arguments are constantly repeated: Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 237; Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 41-42; Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 196-197; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 302.

²¹ Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 194. Cf. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 302.

(γέγραπται)", as in verse 9. The expression: "It was written that" occurs only one other time in his letters, namely in Rom 4,23.²² There it functions as a connection between a preceding literal quotation and an ensuing interpretation to the effect that and in which sense this quotation was written "because of us (δι' ἡμῶς)". Rom 4,22-24 (cf. Rom 15,4) gives a strong indication that also in 1 Cor 9,10 the expression: "it was written that" forms a connection between the preceding quotation from Dt 25,4 and its further application.

Second argument: The text exhibits a poetic character by which it is distinguished from the context. It forms a bipartite parallelism. To me it seems exaggerated to attribute a poetic character to this verse. Besides, when my reading of the syntax is correct, there is no question of parallelism at all and that, then, does away with this argument.

Third argument: the plower, who suddenly appears only to disappear as suddenly, does not fulfil a function within the argumentation; this points to a quotation which does not entirely fit into its new surroundings. It is correct that the verse quoted from Deuteronomy only speaks about threshing and that Paul, in his conclusion, solely mentions sowing and harvesting. We shall see, however, that exactly the plower forms the indispensable bridge linking quotation and conclusion, threshing and sowing, with each other.

This discussion of the arguments in support of considering 1 Cor 9,10b as a quotation makes me subscribe to the following conclusion: "To take ἐγγράφη as referring to what follows, and introducing another quotation is a most improbable construction: there is no such Scripture".²³ Moreover, in view of Rom 4,22-25 ὅτι hardly has an argumentative function and should not be taken as a causal "because". Of the three ways in which ὅτι can be understood, videlicet as *recitativum*, *argumentativum* or *explicitivum*, the last one is definitely to be preferred. We should assume that the introduction: "Yes indeed, because of us it was written that..." is followed by a further explication of the prohibition to muzzle a threshing ox.

Having rejected the two most popular interpretations, I shall now positively demonstrate how 1 Cor 9,10c-d can be read as a further expli-

²² Cf. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 25.

²³ Robertson / Plummer, *The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 185, quoted and rejected by Koch, *Der Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 41, n. 31.

cation of the quotation from Dt 25,4. To that end I shall successively discuss the different elements of Paul's interpretation.

The introduction of the plower is a well-considered move. By adding the plower to the thresher Paul enlarges the scope of the prohibition quoted. This is a logical step: if the thresher, who cooperates in the final stage of the grain production, is entitled to a share in the yield, then this also holds for the plower, who begins the same process of production. This step is the more obvious for, together with threshing, plowing is among the regular tasks of oxen.²⁴ Paul argues that Dt 25,4 does not only hold for the threshing ox, but for the ox drawing the plow as well, on the understanding that the share of the latter has, for the time being, the form of legitimate hope.

In his explanation Paul transposes the prohibition of Dt 25,4: "You shall not" into a positive obligation: ὀφείλει, the best rendering of which is: "It ought to be so". This obligation originates with Moses, the lawgiver. The plower is not the one on whom the duty rests, but the one to whom the obligation is due. "The hope of getting a share" forms the content of the obligation.²⁵ So, according to the Law of Moses, the plower just as the thresher has a right to his share of the yield, be it at a later date.

Although only the participle "threshing" is repeated, in the wording of his explication Paul stays remarkably close to the original quotation. In both cases the obligation comes first: "You shall not (οὐ κημώσεις)"

²⁴ Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, II (1932) 164, VI (1939) 160. 169-170. As we shall see Philo (*De virtutibus* 145) as well as Josephus (*Antiquitates Iudaicae*, IV. 233-234) do the same as Paul: when mentioning the threshing ox from Dt 25,4 they, quite as a matter of course, link to this the communication that the oxen also draw the plow.

²⁵ Bachmann (*Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 324) has an excellent analysis of the meaning of this ὀφείλει: "ὀφείλει stellt die ganze Regel unter den Begriff der sittlich notwendigen, weil gottgesetzten Ordnung; nur liegt das von der Verpflichtung betroffene Moment hier nicht im Infinitiv, sondern speziell in dem diesen näherbestimmenden ἐπ' ἐλπίδι, und die Verpflichtung selbst haftet nicht, wie sonst, an dem Subjekt zu ὀφείλει, für welches hier vielmehr jene "Verpflichtung" eine ihm zugestehende Gebühr bezeichnet, sondern allgemein an der von den Menschen zu vollziehenden Ordnung ihrer Lebensverhältnisse." Also in 2 Cor 12,11 the subject is not the one on whom the duty rests, but the one to whom others owe something. As in 1 Cor 7,36; 11,7.10 ὀφείλει here denotes what ought to be so according to the law or the prevailing norms.

returns in the positive form of: "It ought to be so that (ὀφείλει)". The participle construction "a threshing ox (βούν ἀλοῶντα)" recurs in the form of two substantivized participles: "the plowing one (ὁ ἀροτριῶν)" and "the threshing one (ὁ ἀλοῶν)". These participles are deliberately ambiguous. For, by means of this ambiguity, an imperceptible transition is made from the plowing and the threshing ox to the plowing and the threshing labourer. The wording Paul uses is intended to give the impression that his explication is nothing more than a rewritten version of Dt 25,4 and therefore has the same authority.

It is Paul's avowed intention to elucidate that and in which sense the prohibition to muzzle a threshing ox in Dt 25,4 is written as referring to himself and Barnabas, "because of us (δι' ἡμῶς)". Shortly before, in 1 Cor 9,4-6, he has posited the proposition that he himself and Barnabas are entitled to a living as much as the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord and Cephas. In order to invest this thesis with the authority of Scripture he quotes and rewrites Dt 25,4 to the effect that not only the thresher, i.e. the other apostles, but also the plower, i.e. Paul and Barnabas, is entitled to a share in the yield.

In the previous part of his letter Paul already makes a sharp distinction between himself as the founder of the Corinthian church and other preachers, who worked in the city after him. He is the one who planted, Apollo watered the plants (1 Cor 3,5-8); he is the architect who laid the foundation, the others have built upon it (1 Cor 3,9-17); he is the father who has begotten the church, the others are "pedagogues", slaves who keep an eye on the children (1 Cor 4,14-15). Also in 1 Cor 9,1-2 this selfsame awareness of being the apostle who founded the church clearly comes to the fore. This distinction between Paul and Barnabas as founders of the local church on the one hand and the other apostles who followed after them on the other has no counterpart in Dt 25,4. For, this quotation only mentions threshing, the last stage of the work. By arguing in his explication that the plower is as much entitled to a share in the yield as the thresher, Paul introduces exactly this selfsame distinction. The, as yet, covered terms of the explication lead to unambiguous conclusions in vv. 11-12.

c) The conclusions.

By explicating Dt 25,4 Paul has prepared for two conclusions which he now frankly presents. Quotation and explication together are intended to invest these conclusions with the authority of the Law of Moses.

The statement that also the plower is entitled to his share leads to the conclusion that "we", Paul and Barnabas, who have sown among "you", the Corinthians, are entitled to reap a harvest from you (v. 11). Paul maintains the agricultural metaphors, but switches from plowing to sowing in order to bring out into stronger relief the status of himself and Barnabas as the founders of the community. He further enhances this conclusion by means of an argument *a maiori ad minus*: if we have sown the spiritual (τὰ πνευματικά), it is not asking too much if we reap the material (τὰ σαρκικά).

The statement that not only the thresher is entitled to a share in the yield but the plower as well, leads to the conclusion that not only others, who worked in Corinth following after them, have a right to eat and drink, but also Paul and Barnabas, for it is they who founded the community. This second conclusion is enhanced by an implicit argument *a minori ad maius*: if threshing, the final stage of the work, entitles one to a share, then plowing and sowing, the first stage of the work, do so even more.

3. Pragmatic analysis

The quotation from Dt 25,4 in 1 Cor 9,9 forms part of an extensive and rather complex argumentative network. With a view to determining the function of the quotation this network must to some degree be outlined.

The first context of the quotation is 1 Cor 9,4-18. This passage forms a coherent whole, in which Paul amply elaborates a bipartite thesis: (A) As apostle of the Corinthians he has a right to be supported by them; (B) However, of his own free will he has not made use of this right.^{26x} In his exposition he supports, by means of arguments, in particular the first part of the thesis in order to increase the weight of its second part. His

²⁶ V. K. Robbins (*The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse. Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* [London-New York, Routledge, 1996] 65-95) takes Paul's leadership for his point of departure and analyses 1 Cor 9 as an elaboration of the single proposition: "Am I not free?" (9,1). In my opinion the context does not allow for such a choice. 1 Cor 9 is undissolubly linked with the question of the idol offerings, which Paul discusses in 1 Cor 8,1-11,1. As a subordinate argument 1 Cor 9 is attuned to this principal argumentation. Treating 1 Cor 9 as an independent unit unavoidably results in a distorted picture of Paul as a leader.

argumentation twice follows the same pattern²⁷, as can be seen from the following survey:

4-12 *First part*

4-6 Thesis A:

Paul and Barnabas are just as the other preachers of the gospel entitled to a living.

7 Confirmation 1:

Three secular, social examples:
the soldier, the vinedresser, the shepherd.

8-12a Confirmation 2:

Proof from authority:
The Law of Moses confirms that Paul and Barnabas,
even more than the other preachers, are entitled to a living.

12b Thesis B:

Paul and Barnabas did not make use of that right
in order to prevent harm.

13-18 *Second part*

Thesis A:

13 Confirmation 3:

Two sacred, social examples:
the temple servants, the priests.

14 Confirmation 4:

Proof from authority:
The Lord himself confirms that preachers of the gospel
are entitled to a living.

15-18 Thesis B:

Paul did not make use of this right
neither will he do so in the present nor the future.
That is his boast and his reward.

This presentation of Paul's decision to renounce his right to a living in 1 Cor 9,4-18 does not stand on its own. In particular the notion of ἐξουσία (9,4.5.6.12.18) connects this passage to the warning in 1 Cor 8,9

²⁷ So also M. und R. Zimmermann, "Zitation, Kontradiktion oder Applikation? Die Jesuslogik in 1 Kor. 7,10f. und 9,14": ZNW 87 (1966) 90-91.

and, thereby, to the question of the idol offerings Paul discusses in 1 Cor 8,1-11,1. The believers in Corinth are apparently convinced that they are entitled to continue their participation in sacrificial meals as held within the precincts of the different temples and of vital importance for the social life of the city.²⁸ Paul contests "that authority (ἐξουσία) of yours" as a stumbling block for the weak (1 Cor 8,9 cf. 9,12). In this connection he adduces his own practice as a positive example worthy of imitation. He, their apostle, has of his own free will renounced a similar right to eat and drink in order, by doing so, to avert harm and to obtain honour and reward.²⁹ The entire presentation of Paul's decision is aimed at urging the Corinthians to take a similar step.

Within this framework the quotation from Dt 25,4: "You shall not muzzle a threshing ox" (1 Cor 9,9) fulfils the following function. This prohibition from the Law of Moses is proof from authority which confirms Paul's and Barnabas' right, as founders of the community, to receive material support from the believers in Corinth. This confirmation in itself is not the ultimate object, but does in its turn serve to emphasize that Paul and Barnabas have renounced of their own free will the use of this right. Finally, this presentation of Paul's self-chosen practice serves as an authoritative example urging the Corinthians now, in their turn, to renounce their presumed right of taking part in sacrificial meals.

Paul's discourse in 1 Cor 9,4-18 forms a climax.³⁰ The arguments adduced exhibit a distinct hierarchy: the secular and sacred social rules form the lowest step, the regulations of the Law of Moses are the interme-

²⁸ See J. Smit, "Paulus 'over de afgodsoffers': De kerk tussen joden en gricken (1 Kor. 8,1-11,1)": *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 37 (1997) 228-242.

²⁹ Many protestant commentators are very worried by the honour and the reward Paul mentions in 1 Cor 9,15-18, cf. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 319-328. In my opinion here Paul discusses in an unconcerned manner the praise and the reward which, at the judgement, he hopes to receive from God. He already does so in 1 Cor 3,8.14 (μισθός) and in 1 Cor 4,5 (ἐπαινος). The pursuit of the imperishable crown, honour and reward at one and the same time, to which he exhorts the Corinthians at the end of this round of argument (1 Cor 9,24-27), points in the same direction. See Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 248. Reward and honour, together with harm and blame, are motives belonging to the *genus deliberativum* which Paul uses here.

³⁰ Cf. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 301; M. und R. Zimmermann, "Zitation, Kontradiktion oder Applikation? Die Jesuslogien in 1 Kor. 7,10f. und 9,14", 90-91, 99.

diate one and the instructions of the Lord are the highest. These three legal systems are actually in force simultaneously, but as far as authority is concerned they relate to each other as the positive, the comparative and the superlative degree. Starting from this hierarchy a broad picture can be sketched of the position which Paul assigns to the believing community within the pluriform society of the city of Corinth.

Believers entertain an ambivalent relationship with the hellenistic society from which they originate. To be sure, for them many of the rules of this society remain in force, but the pressure not to partake any longer in sacrificial meals which Paul exerts on them, also brings with it a serious curtailment of their social life to the effect that they distinguish themselves as a separate group. Believers entertain an ambivalent relationship with the synagogue as well. On the one hand they apparently recognize the authority of the Law of Moses, on the other this Law ultimately does not determine their identity as is the case with the synagogue. For them the Law of Moses speaks about the envoys which the Lord has sent and about the church which they have founded upon his authority.³¹ They attach the highest authority to the instructions of their Lord.

Paul's argumentation mirrors the ambivalent status which he assigns to the believing community within its social context.³² Having been called by the Lord, the Jewish apostles Paul and Barnabas have preached the gospel of the Christ among the pagan population of Corinth and have, thereby, founded the local church. From that Lord the community of believers derives its specific identity.

³¹ See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 165-168.

³² See the stimulating sociological discussion of J. T. Sanders, "Paul between Jews and Gentiles in Corinth": *JSNT* 65 (1997) esp. 74-83.

II. THREE FURTHER INTERPRETATIONS OF DEUTERONOMY 25,4

1. *Philo* (c. 10 BCE-45 CE)

In his *De virtutibus*³³ Philo devotes a separate treatise to the virtue of humanity (φιλαφθρωπία).³⁴ He bases this exposition on the Pentateuch, so that it actually has the form of a commentary on the Bible.³⁵ Philo first presents the life of Moses, the prophetic lawgiver, as a model of humanity and communal sense (Virt. 51-79). Next he discusses a selection of his laws and demonstrates that these lay the foundation for moderation and gentleness in contacts with human beings, subdivided into fellow Israelites, proselytes, strangers, enemies and slaves (Virt. 82-124), with animals (Virt. 125-147) and with plants (Virt. 148-160). In the section on the treatment of animals we find the reference to Dt 25,4:

I also admire another law (νόμος) attuned to the harmonious choir of those above mentioned. This law forbids muzzling the ox, when it treats out the corn (διαγορεύει βοῦν ἀλοῶντα μὴ φμῶν). It is the ox who, before the deep soiled lowlands receive the seed, cleaves the furrows and sets the fields ready for heaven and the husbandman; for the husbandman that he may sow the seed in due season, for heaven that its kindly gifts of rain may be received in the deep hollows which store them up and deal them out part by part as rich nourishment of the crop, until it brings forth first the ear and then the consummation of the yearly fruit. And after that consummation the ox (βοῦς) is again necessary for another service, to purge the sheaves and sift the refuse from the genuine and useful material. But since I have mentioned the kindly and benevolent injunction on behalf of the oxen when treading the corn (τοῖς ἀλοῶσι βουσί), I will cite next the law enacted in behalf of cattle which plow the land" (Virt. 145-146).

³³ F. H. Colson, *Philo* (Loeb Classical Library; London, Heinemann; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1968) VIII, 158-305.

³⁴ Virt. 51-174.

³⁵ *De Virtutibus* forms part of one comprehensive work, usually called *The Exposition of the Laws of Moses*. See for this matter P. Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria" in M. E. Stone (ed.) *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT; Assen, van Gorcum; Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1984) 233-241; J. Morris, "The Jewish Philosopher Philo", in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)* (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1987) III.2, 840-853.

a) Form.

Philo quotes the greek version of Dt 25,4 to the letter, on the understanding that he reproduces this prohibition not in direct but in indirect speech. It is also worth noticing that he explicitly qualifies this pronouncement as law (νόμος).

b) Meaning.

Philo takes this law in its literal sense: the prohibition regards oxen while threshing. He rather extensively mentions the two tasks which oxen perform in agriculture, viz. plowing and threshing, and suggests that the right to eat while threshing is a reward for both services which the ox renders. At the same time Philo considers this law explicitly as a demonstration of kindness and gentleness with regard to animals.

c) Function.

Philo's treatment of Dt 25,4 belongs to a section in which he intends to show that Moses, in his laws, carries on the idea of moderation and gentleness even reaching out to the sphere of irrational animals (Virt. 125). To that end he selects a number of laws and provides each of them with and extensive commentary. In his exposition he shows with great pathos in particular how inhumane it is not to keep these commandments. In three cases he attaches to the regulations on animals certain consequences for the behavior of human beings among each other. In this section of his book Philo discusses the followings laws:

- Lev 22,27 A young shall stay with its dam seven days after birth.
Parents should not kill their infants. (Virt. 126-133)
- Lev 22,28 You shall not slaughter a cow or sheep on the same day
as its young.
Women should not be executed during their pregnancy
(Virt. 134-141)
- Ex 23,19; 34,26; Dt 14,21
You shall not boil a kid in the milk of its mother (Virt.
142-144)
- Dt 25,4 You shall not muzzle a threshing ox (Virt. 145)
- Dt 22,10 You shall not plough with an ox and an ass yoked together
Nobody should discriminate against members of other
nations (Virt. 146-147)

Within this framework Dt 25,4 functions as evidence of the outstanding philanthropy of the laws of Moses, which does not confine itself to human beings, but even encompasses irrational animals. Within Philo's *De virtutibus* it functions as part of a school in humanity, where on the basis of Moses' life and laws kindness and gentleness are taught.³⁶ This message seems intended mostly for use within the Jewish community itself.³⁷ Philo identifies with the Jewish *politeuma*³⁸ and strengthens his audience in the conviction that the criticism which is brought from the outside against the social seclusion of the Jews is quite irrelevant:

After this let those clever libellers continue, if they can, to accuse the nation of misanthropy and charge the laws with enjoining unsociable and unfriendly practices, when these laws so clearly extend their compassion to flocks and herds, and our people through the instructions of the law learn from their earliest years to correct any wilfulness of souls to gentle behaviour (Virt. 141).

2. Josephus (37/38 CE-c. 100 CE)

In the first ten books of his *Antiquitates Iudaicae* Josephus paraphrases the Bible. Book IV³⁹) contains his description of the Law of Moses, in which he follows, for the main part, Dt 12-26. In this compilation he is, according to his own information, guided by two principles (IV. 196-198). First of all he introduces a new thematic arrangement for the reason that Moses left the instructions in a scattered form, just as he received them from God. In addition he only mentions those laws which touch "our political constitution" (*πολιτεία*). He intends to discuss the other laws in a separate treatise. One of the subjects he broaches is agriculture (IV. 225-243). In this section of his paraphrase of the Law of Moses Josephus quotes Dt 25,4 as follows:

³⁶ Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria", 233.

³⁷ This matter is discussed by Morris, "The Jewish Philosopher Philo", 816-819, 878-879.

³⁸ Morris, "The Jewish Philosopher Philo", 818.

³⁹ H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus* (Loeb Classical Library; London, Heinemann; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1967) IV, 476-653.

Neither muzzle ye the oxen when they crush the ears of corn on the threshing-floor; for it is not just to exclude from the fruit your fellow-labourers who have toiled to produce it.

(Μηδὲ βοῶν ὅποτε τρίβουεν τοὺς στάχους ἀποδεῖν τὰ στόματα ἐπὶ τῆς ἄλωος· οὐ γὰρ εἶναι δίκαιον εἶργειν τοὺς συνειργασμένους τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ περὶ τὴν γένεσιν αὐτοῦ κινήσαντας) (IV, 233).

a) Form.

Josephus has entirely paraphrased Dt 25,4. The biblical pronouncement is rewritten in all its parts:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. οὐ | 1. μηδὲ |
| 2. φιμώσεις | 3. βοῶν |
| 3. βοῶν | 4a. ὅποτε τρίβουεν τοὺς στάχους |
| 4. ἀλοῦντα | 2. ἀποδεῖν τὰ στόματα |
| | 4b. ἐπὶ τῆς ἄλωος |

Josephus' rendering deviates among other points on the following: the sentence structure, the plural, the imperative infinitive⁴⁰, the temporal subordinate clause, the circumscription of the verbs. His version is thrice as long as the original text, proportionally twelve to four words.

b) Meaning.

Josephus correctly renders the meaning of the biblical prohibition. He takes the pronouncement in a literal sense. It is a matter of real oxen which actually do thresh. The explanation which he adds to the prohibition is of interest. It concerns a right which is due to oxen as reward for their work. Actually Josephus mentions two of their activities: their cooperation in threshing, but in addition to that also their efforts on behalf of the growth, by which he obviously refers to their drawing the plow. The commandment: "Use oxen to plough the ground (βουσὶν ἀροῦν τὴν γῆν) (IV. 228), which closely precedes, confirms this. So, according to Josephus, oxen have a right to eat from the grain they thresh not only on the ground of their cooperation in threshing, but also on the strength of their effort in plowing.

⁴⁰ Blass / Debrunner / Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, § 389.

c) Function.

Josephus includes Dt 25,4 in his compilation of the Law to demonstrate that this is a just ordinance under which even animals receive the reward to which they are entitled on the strength of their efforts. This regulation forms part of a brief series of instructions regarding the gathering of the harvest (IV. 231-239). This comprises:

- When gathering the crops one should leave something for the destitute (231-232): cf. Dt 24,19-21; Lev 19,9-10
- Oxen should not be muzzled while threshing (233): cf. Dt 25,4
- Passers-by, compatriots as well as strangers, should be entreated to take a share of the fruits of the season (234-237): cf. Dt 23,25-26
- Transgressors of these precepts should be severely punished (238-239): cf. Dt 25, 1-3

For Josephus the main idea of these directives is that the Israelites are obliged to give others a share in the abundance which they receive from God: "For it beseems you... after receiving such store of blessings through the mercy and providence of God, of that same store and from kindred feelings to impart to those in need" (239). In this strangers are explicitly included: "He (God) is desirous that by these means the special favour that He bears to the people of Israel and the bounty of his gifts may be manifested to others also, when out of all that superabundance of ours they too receive their share from us" (237). Here Josephus' apologetic interest shines through.⁴¹ His purpose is to evoke among the general, Greek speaking public understanding and sympathy towards the Law of Moses and the specific Jewish way of life (πολιτεία). From these laws any reader can understand the outstanding quality of Moses' virtue (ἀρετή) (IV. 331). The regulation, which entitles animals to a share in the God-given abundance, in its turn bears witness to this and, by doing so, serves the end intended.

3. *The Mishnah*

The tractate *Baba Metsia*, which belongs to the Seder Neziqin ("Damages"), the fourth division of the Mishnah, pays detailed attention to the

⁴¹ H. W. Attridge, "Josephus and his Works", in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, 210-227, 229-231; L. H. Feldman, "Josephus", in D. N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, etc., Doubleday, 1992) vol. 3, 986.

legislation on hiring, borrowing and leasing (B. M. VI-IX). Within these chapters the right of agricultural labourers to eat of the fruits they harvest is also discussed (B. M. VII. 2-8a).⁴²⁾ The two mishnayot⁴³ quoted hereafter form the beginning of this coherent passage:

These may eat [of the fruits among which they labour] by virtue of what is enjoined in the Law: he that labours on what is still growing after the work is finished, and he that labours on what is already gathered before the work is finished; [this applies only] to what grows from the soil.

These are they that may not eat: he that labours on what is still growing while the work is still unfinished, and he that labours on what is already gathered after the work is finished, and [he may not eat] of what does not grow from the soil.

If he laboured with his hands but not with his feet, or with his feet but not with his hands, or even with his shoulders only, he still may eat. R. Jose b. R. Judah says: Only if he labours both with his hands and with his feet" (B. M. VII. 2-3)

a) Form.

The Mishnah does indeed refer to the written Torah, but does not quote a specific text. The question is, therefore, which text is meant. Commentators usually follow the Talmud in this matter.⁴⁴ They assume that the right to eat originates from Dt 23,25-26, whereas the further instructions are derived from Dt 25,4. The reference to Dt 23,25-26, however, is most artificial. There the permission to eat is given to passers-by in general and not to labourers in particular. Moreover the restriction that nothing should be taken along with one does not occur in the Mishnah, while, conversely, harvest-time, which is of prime importance to the Mishnah, is not found in Dt 23,25-26.

Therefore it seems probable to me that also the right to eat is derived from Dt 25,4 and that the prohibition: "You shall not muzzle a threshing

⁴² For the delimitation of this section see W. Windfuhr, *Baba Metzia* (Die Mischna; ed. G. Beer und O. Holzmann; Giessen, Töpelmann, 1923) 81-85.

⁴³ H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford, University Press, 1933) 359.

⁴⁴ Danby, *The Mishnah*, 359; Windfuhr, *Baba Metzia*, 80; D. Hoffmann, *Ordnung Nesikin* (Mischnajot IV; Basel, Viktor Goldschmidt Verlag, 1968) 79-80; S. Hammelburg, *De Misjna. Babá-kamma/Babá-Metsiá* (Amsterdam, Nederlands-Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap, 1990) 162-163.

ox" should be considered as the sole original sourcetext of these two mishnayot. Commentators of a later date eventually do appeal to Dt 23,25-26 in order to justify, by means of that commandment, that a regulation concerning oxen is applicable to human beings as well.

b) Meaning.

In *Baba Metsia* VII.2-3 the prohibition to muzzle a threshing ox from Dt 25,4 is transposed to the situation of agricultural labourers, who may eat of the fruits reaped during harvesting. From: "while threshing" further regulations are derived in view of the agricultural labourers who gather the harvest.⁴⁵ Here three aspects are involved:

a. The space of time: the labourers may eat only during harvesting, after the gathering of what is tied to the soil starts and before the gathering of what is loose from the soil is finished.

b. The products: the labourers may eat only products which grow from the earth and not those which do not.

c. The activity: the labourers who work only with their hands or feet or shoulders and not with both their hands and feet at the same time have a right to eat of the fruit they get in. So, in these two mishnayot, in virtue of Dt 25,4 the rights of agricultural labourers who gather the harvest are regulated in more detail.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Sifre Deut.*, Piska 287 (R. Hammer, *Sifre. A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy* [New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1986] 278) uses similar distinctions in its exegesis of Dt 25,4: "When he treadeth out the corn (25:4): I conclude that this refers only to treading: what about other types of work? The verse states: Thou shalt not muzzle - whatever the work involved. But if so, why does Scripture say, when he treadeth out the corn? Since treading involves something which grows out of the soil and is plucked from the soil, and (the animal) eats of it as it performs the final stage of the work, the same rule applies to anything else which grows out of the soil and is plucked from the soil - (the animal) may eat of it as it performs the final stage of the work."

⁴⁶ Brewer ("1 Corinthians 9.9-11: A Literal Interpretation of 'Do not muzzle the ox'", 558) contends that in 1 Cor 9,10c-d Paul quotes or refers to the regulation of B. M. VII.2. His rendering and exegesis of both texts are, however, tendentious. Concerning Paul he passes by in silence "in hope" and concerning the Mishnah he does the same with "after resp. before the work is finished".

c) Function.

The two mishnayot discussed form part of a small collection of instructions in which the right of agricultural labourers to eat during the harvest is further elaborated. The following questions are treated in succession:

- VII.2 When and of what the labourers may eat;
- VII.3 Which activity gives a right to eat;
- VII.4 Further regulations concerning of what and when they may eat;
- VII.5 How much they may eat;
- VII.6 The buying off of their right to eat;
- VII.7 The eating of the produce of fourth-year plantings;
- VII.Xa The right of the guards of products to eat thereof.

In the last case it is decided that the guards may eat according to common law and not by virtue of the Torah. Apparently here again Dt 25,4 is at stake for from this commandment a right to eat can be derived only for labourers who actually cooperate in harvesting and not for guards who are not directly engaged in doing so. From this follows that, here in the Mishnah, Dt 25,4 "You shall not muzzle a threshing ox" functions as a principle of justice from which the rights of labourers during harvesting can be derived. The validity of the regulations which the Mishnah offers concerning this matter rests on this principle.

According to R. Brooks⁴⁷ "The Division of Damages (neziqin)" answers the following question "How does the unity and equality of God's holy people Israel demand special action in business, government and day-to-day dealings?" God has given to Moses the written Torah containing a basic rule of labour legislation. For the rabbis Dt 25,4 is the foundation on which they build a network of regulations with a view to bringing everyday mutual relations into conformity with their election and the task of being God's holy people.

III. CONCLUSION: PAUL'S USE OF DEUTERONOMY 25,4

Against the background of these three further Jewish interpretations of Dt 25,4 the special character of Paul's dealing with this text stands out

⁴⁷ R. Brooks, "Mishnah", in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 4, 872.

quite clearly. To conclude I shall briefly outline the principal similarities and differences between Paul and the three other interpreters.

a) Form.

All four texts we have studied clearly indicate that the prohibition to muzzle a threshing ox is a quotation from the Law of Moses. Introducing the quotation Paul states this in the most explicit manner: "Yes indeed, in the Law of Moses is written". Besides his reproduction of the quotation is the most literal of all four and he derives his explication most directly from the quotation itself by reformulating it.

The three other authors introduce Dt 25,4 in connection with other instructions from the written Torah or with further regulations from the oral Torah. Paul, however, presents this quotation as an isolated and independent legal rule, a command of God, which was recorded in writing by Moses in the Torah.

b) Meaning.

Paul's interpretation of Dt 25,4 corresponds, to a considerable extent, with the exegesis found in the three other writings. Paul widens the scope of the prohibition to the effect that it benefits not only the threshing ox, but the one plowing as well. Philo and Josephus extend the range of this law in the same manner, thereby confirming the reading of Paul's text as proposed in this article. The Mishnah transposes the prohibition concerning working oxen to the situation of human agricultural labourers. In this matter Paul and the Mishnah agree with each other. He too is of the opinion that this law not only covers oxen but also extends to agricultural labourers.

Paul alone, however, takes a still further step. From agricultural labourers in the literal sense, such as the plower and the thresher, he switches to agricultural labourers in the figurative sense. Finally this brings him to the preachers of the gospel, some of whom — he himself and Barnabas — have sown, while others have only threshed. In this part of his interpretation Paul goes his own way. Should we call this allegory or is typology to be preferred? None of these qualifications, however, defines exactly the procedure which Paul actually follows. His direct, ecclesio-

logical, application rather exhibits a striking resemblance to the *pesharim* of Qumran.⁴⁸

c) Function.

For Philo and Josephus Dt 25,4 is evidence of the superior quality of the Law of Moses, which in all its parts testifies to the outstanding virtue of the lawgiver, in particular his humanity and justice. For the Mishnah Dt 25,4 is a God-given legal rule, from which an entire network of commandments originates which regulates the life of Israel as the people of God and defines its distinctive character. Paul uses Dt 25,4 as argument from authority in order to corroborate his thesis that preachers of the gospel of Christ, first of all he himself and Barnabas, have a right to be supported by the community for which they work.

In Philo, Josephus and the Mishnah Dt 25,4 is part of a discourse promoting the acceptance of the Law of Moses as God's special rule for Israel inside as well as outside the Jewish community. Their ultimate object is to strengthen and make acceptable the Jewish identity distinct as it is from its hellenistic context. Paul appeals not only to the authoritative prohibition of the Law of Moses but, besides that, he adduces both a social, economic rule and an instruction of the Lord as arguments as well. In his view the last one even has the highest authority. In Paul's letter Dt 25,4 forms part of a discourse which ultimately intends to strengthen the identity of the church in Corinth as a community of the one Lord⁴⁹, which entertains an ambivalent relationship with the social life of the hellenistic society as well as with the Jewish synagogue.

⁴⁸ See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 160-173.

⁴⁹ The *κύριος* of 1 Cor 9,14 is the Lord Jesus Christ, on whom Paul, besides God the Father, confers the predicate "one" (*εἷς*) (1 Cor 8,6; 10,17). This implies, for the believers who are united with him, that any relationship is excluded with the many other, so-called gods and lords. See J. Smit, "1 Cor 8,1-6: A Rhetorical *Partitio*. A contribution to the coherence of 1 Cor 8,1-11,1)", in R. Bieringer (ed.), *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; Leuven, Peeters-Leuven University Press, 1996) 585-587; "'Do not be idolaters". Paul's rhetoric in First Corinthians 10:1-22": *NT 39* (1977) 45-46.