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## **New light on old perspectives: The SNSF Project “16th Century Exegesis of Paul”**

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# Early Christianity

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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## New Light on Old Perspectives

The SNSF Project “16th Century Exegesis of Paul”

The sixteenth century witnessed an enormous production of exegetical commentaries on the Pauline epistles, and these commentaries had a profound influence on the development of biblical interpretation and theology in the various denominations. Modern scholarship, however, has increasingly distanced itself from this tradition since the middle of the twentieth century. Krister Stendahl’s essay “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West”<sup>1</sup> became famous as the initial spark of this “New Perspective on Paul.” Starting with Augustine and then reinforced by Martin Luther, Stendahl diagnosed a massive misinterpretation of Paul in Western, Protestant theology. As is well known, this approach was later combined with other aspects, especially a re-evaluation of ancient Judaism.<sup>2</sup> The Reformation interpretation of Paul is criticized in particular for reading Paul too “inwardly” and individualistically, for setting up a false opposition between righteousness by faith and righteousness by works, and for using a model of justification that is too strongly characterized by legalistic metaphors rather than by the idea of participation. In more recent currents of Pauline exegesis, this tendency has intensified: the “Radical New Perspective” or “Paul within Judaism”<sup>3</sup> seeks to interpret Paul programmatically within ancient Judaism and rejects a general Western Protestant interpretation of Paul as an anachronistic misinterpretation. The “Lutheran” or “Protestant” “Old Perspective on Paul” is thus a kind of

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1 K. Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” *HTR* 56 (1963), 199–215.

2 E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

3 Cf., e.g., P. Fredriksen, *Paul: The Pagan’s Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

ideal-typical counterpart to the several new perspectives from which they distance themselves.<sup>4</sup>

To create this ideal-typical counterpart, the new perspectives on Paul rely on relatively few interpretations of well-known Reformers such as Luther or Melancthon who serve as the negative point of reference. However: “there was never just one Paul.”<sup>5</sup> There is no such thing as “the Paul” of the Reformation era – not to mention the diverse interpretations of the following centuries. Late medieval traditions, humanistic awakenings, Reformation impulses, and Catholic reactions shaped the picture in the early modern period, as did the individual preferences of individual exegetes. In particular, Reformation interpretation is much more polyphonic than the label “Lutheran perspective” would suggest. In addition to the Wittenberg Reformation, which is diverse in itself, the Reformers in southern Germany have their own profile. They follow a hermeneutical approach that was characterized as the “Upper Rhine school of exegesis.”<sup>6</sup> Zwingli, Calvin, Bucer, Bullinger, Pellican, Musculus, Vermigli, and others approached the Pauline texts independently and set their own accents in their sometimes extensive commentary works.<sup>7</sup>

The project “16th Century Exegesis of Paul,” an interdisciplinary cooperation of New Testament studies and Reformation history, aims to address this diversity. It is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (project no. 100011\_207696) from 2022 to 2026. The lead researchers are Stefan Krauter (University of Zurich, Faculty of Theology) and Ueli Zahnd (University of Geneva, Institute of Reformation history). The project consists of a common digital work-package (the creation and exploration of a database), and three individual PhD projects.<sup>8</sup>

4 W. Holder, “Romans in the Light of Reformation Receptions,” in *Reformation Readings of Romans*, ed. K. Ehrensperger and R.W. Holder, *Romans through History and Culture Series* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 1–9, at 1.

5 K. Froehlich, “Paul and the Late Middle Ages,” in *A Companion to Paul in the Reformation*, ed. R.W. Holder, *Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition* 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 15–40, at 39.

6 B. Roussel, “De Strasbourg à Bâle et Zurich: Une école rhénane d’exégèse (ca. 1525–ca. 1540),” *RHPR* 68 (1988), 19–39; B. Roussel and R.G. Hobbs, “Strasbourg et l’école rhénane d’exégèse (1525–1540),” *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 135 (1989), 35–53.

7 Cf. S. Krauter and M. Nägele, eds., *Reformatorsche Paulusauslegungen*, *History of Biblical Exegesis* 5 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023).

8 A description of the project with contact address, further information, new publications, and a link to the database can be found on the homepage of the Faculty of Theology in Zurich, [https://www.theologie.uzh.ch/de/faecher/neues-testament/Professur-für-neutes-tamentliche-Wissenschaft/16th\\_century\\_exegesis\\_of-paul.html](https://www.theologie.uzh.ch/de/faecher/neues-testament/Professur-für-neutes-tamentliche-Wissenschaft/16th_century_exegesis_of-paul.html).

## 1 RRP Database

The database RRP (Reformation Readings of Paul) intends to become the central repository of commentaries on the Pauline Epistles that were published in Latin between 1520 and 1600. The collection strategy is modular: the project starts with collecting the commentaries published within the territory of today's Switzerland (mainly Basel, Geneva, and Zurich), expands this to the broader geographical context of the Swiss Reformation (Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Tübingen, Freiburg im Breisgau, Constance, Lyon), and adds then further geographical areas according to the needs and interests of the project members. The database includes also historical introductions to Paul and his epistles, as well as paratexts (such as chronological tables, dedication letters, and indexes) in order to get an embracing picture of how Paul was read and taught in the sixteenth century. The records are immediately made accessible online (preliminary version of the database: <https://rrp.zahnd.be/>).

In addition, the project develops an analytical tool to digitally explore this commentary tradition. Biblical commentaries of the Reformation era are often voluminous, and they do not necessarily treat theological topics at the expected places, so that modern researchers might miss important discussions for want of precise indexes. At the same time, the discussions brought forward in the commentaries are often much more revealing about an author's motifs and the context in which he developed a doctrine so that, also from the perspective of historical theology, exegetical commentaries prove more interesting than the polished systematic works of the same authors. Using digital tools of optical text recognition, topic modeling, and automated detection of intertextuality, the project aims to create a tool that will be integrated into the database to identify not only the commentaries that exist but also the questions they deal with and, possibly, the specific position an author adopted within a commentary.

## 2 The Role of Rom 12–15 in Sixteenth-Century Commentaries on the Letter to the Romans

The subproject of Benjamin Manig (University of Zurich) investigates the reception of the Epistle to the Romans. Unsurprisingly, the sixteenth

century turns out to be the age of the exegesis of Romans.<sup>9</sup> Luther's "Reformation discovery" was found in Rom 3:28, and the newly read Paul of the Epistle to the Romans became the spearhead of Reformation exegesis against the papal church. From the breeding pond of humanist scholarship flew impulses for a study of the Letter to the Romans that is historically unique in its scope. In the period from 1532 to 1542 alone, at least fifteen exegetical works on the Epistle to the Romans were published (Caietan 1532, Melanchthon 1532, Titelmann 1532, Bullinger 1533, Gagny 1533, Sadoletto 1535, Bucer 1536, Haresche 1536, Lonicer 1537, Bonadus 1537, Pellikan 1539, Zwingli 1539, Calvin 1540, Grimano 1542, Guillaud 1542).

One criticism of modern New Testament scholarship raised against sixteenth-century exegesis relates to the paraenetic part of the Letter to the Romans. The classical interpretation of the Letter to the Romans is said to have understood chs. 12–15 merely as an appendix to the dogmatic presentation of the gospel in the first part of the letter.<sup>10</sup> This subproject takes up different perspectives of sixteenth-century exegesis and shows how scholars of the Reformation period integrated the paraenetic chapters into their reading of the Letter to the Romans.

*Whether* good works follow justification is not a question for the Reformers.<sup>11</sup> Rather, the focus is on *how* good works follow and what role the law plays in the process of sanctification. Paul's exhortation to the believers in Rome is thus anything but an appendix for sixteenth-century exegesis: it is the immediate consequence of justification and requires theological evaluation.

On the basis of a selection of commentaries on Romans from the early decades of the Reformation, the subproject will present and systematize their interpretations of the text, following three thrusts of study. A first consists of analyzing their methodological approach to the Letter to the Romans, which – under the influence of humanist philology – was mostly done in terms of classical rhetoric.<sup>12</sup> No exegete in the sixteenth century could avoid Melanchthon's approach of viewing Romans from a rhetorical

<sup>9</sup> W. Holder, "Romans in the Light of Reformation Receptions," in Ehrensperger and Holder, *Reformation Readings of Romans* (see n. 4), 1–9, at 1.

<sup>10</sup> S. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 316.

<sup>11</sup> Cf., e.g., P. Melanchthon, *Commentarii in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos M.D.XL: Der Kommentar zum Römerbrief aus dem Jahr 1540; Lateinisch – Deutsch*, ed. and trans. M. Wolter (Bonn: bonndoc, 2021), 232v.

<sup>12</sup> T.H.L. Parker, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans, 1532–1542* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 205.

point of view,<sup>13</sup> and Bullinger even propagated this method as “the Reformation way” of biblical interpretation.<sup>14</sup> The rhetorical classification of the individual pericopes as well as their stylistic evaluation shaped thus the interpretation to a great extent.

Next, the classification of Rom 12–15 as “paraenesis”<sup>15</sup> will have to be examined in the face of its supposed understanding as an appendix. How did sixteenth-century scholars reconstruct what Paul said in these chapters, did they confront it with his own historical background, and how did their perception of the textual genre affect their interpretation?

Third, Rom 12–15 raises several systematic questions that were very heavily debated in the Reformation era. One is the question of the relationship between works and law. Theological debates such as the Majorist or Antinomian controversy shaped the exegetical discourse of these chapters but were also driven by exegetical considerations.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, the debate about the *tertius usus legis* was both negotiated in and influenced by the exegesis of Rom 12–15 (often with reference to Rom 6). The competing positions within the Protestant camp underline thus the diversity of their image of Paul. Nevertheless, they all used the metaphors of “rebirth,” “new life,” or “sanctification,” to describe the status of a Christian according to faith. The reconnection of these concepts to the text and the exegeses of Romans will lead, therefore, to a deeper understanding of the sixteenth-century conception of Paul. The subproject thus contributes to the study of the exegetical diversity of the sixteenth century and its hermeneutical approach.

### 3 Receptions of Paul in the Reformation Exemplified by the Letter to the Ephesians

“Nullibi in scripturis fit mentio alterius cuiusdam capitis, vicarii. Nam Christus semper praesens est suo corpori, ideo vicarium non habet, alioquin

13 T.J. Wengert, “The Rhetorical Paul: Philip Melancthon’s Interpretation of the Pauline Epistles,” in Holder, *Companion to Paul* (see n. 5), 129–164, at 130.

14 S. Vollenweider, “Paulus in Zürich: Zur Briefauslegung von Heinrich Bullinger,” *ZTK* 114 (2017), 1–20, at 4ff.

15 Cf. T. Engberg-Pedersen, “The Concept of Paraenesis,” in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, ed. J. Starr and T. Engberg-Pedersen, BZNW 125 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 47–72, on the problematic nature of this term as a genre concept.

16 I. Dingel, ed., *Der Majoristische Streit (1552–1570)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); ead., ed., *Der Antinomistische Streit (1556–1571)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).



absens esset,” writes the Bernese Reformer Benedictus Aretius (1522–1574) with reference to Eph 1:22, criticizing the concept of a *vicarius Christi* in the Catholic Church.<sup>17</sup> Aretius’s discussion of Ephesians illustrates the Reformers’ preoccupation with Paul’s letters.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, the Epistle to the Ephesians was commented on by numerous less studied commentators of the sixteenth century (Bugenhagen 1525, Bucer 1527, Megander 1534, Bullinger 1537, Lonitzer 1540, Bèze 1556, Musculus 1561, Marlorat 1561, Hemmingsen 1565, Hyperius 1582, Hunnius 1587, Olevian 1588, Rollock 1590, and Zanchi 1594). Ephesians was also central to influential Reformation figures such as John Calvin (1509–1564), who used it in his *Institutio* to formulate the doctrine of predestination.<sup>19</sup>

The subproject of Noemi Schürmann (University of Zurich) attempts to trace the reception of the Letter to the Ephesians in Reformation discourse. She takes the perspective of the history of religions, accounting to the fact that the question of the reception of Paul meets a research desideratum not only in theology but also in history. Elaborating a historically contextualized understanding of the image of Paul in the Reformation, her project will prove productive for a wide range of disciplines and contribute to an interdisciplinary illumination between church history, exegesis, cultural history, and study of religion. Based on theological as well as secular sources and studying some of the lesser-known theologians of the Reformation era, she aims to understand the historical evolutions of the period as a multi-layered process of transformation and continuity beyond the “great” Reformers.

Therefore, the role of the Letter to the Ephesians in Reformation will be studied in selected commentaries written not only by theologians belonging to the magisterial Reformation but also by defenders of the traditional church and Anabaptist theologians. The project covers a wide range of research questions, such as the historical knowledge of the Reformers and their understanding of history.<sup>20</sup> It will undertake a text-based historical-critical analysis of the predominantly Latin exegetical com-

17 Benedictus Aretius, *Commentarii in Epistolam D. Pauli ad Ephesios, facili & perspicua methodo conscripti* (Lausanne: le Preux, 1579), 35, <https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/details:bsb10176448>: “There is no mention in Scripture of a specific head, of a substitute. For Christ is present in his body, so he has no substitute, otherwise he would be absent” (trans. Noemi Schürmann).

18 R.W. Holder, “Introduction – Paul in the Sixteenth Century: Invitation and a Challenge,” in Holder, *Companion to Paul* (see n. 5), 1–12.

19 B. Pitkin, “Calvin’s Reception of Paul,” in Holder, *Companion to Paul* (see n. 5), 267–296.

20 I. Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation (1378–1615)*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 390.

mentaries, taking into account the complex textual history and exegetical tradition of the Letter to the Ephesians. In addition, other historical sources (e. g., sermons, pamphlets, works of art) will be included as examples for the history of reception and the influence of Ephesians in the early modern period. From a historical and religious studies perspective, the examination of religion in society encompasses its various functions, such as its role in ensuring stability and promoting change. Moreover, it involves understanding how religion is expressed through norms and contributes to the formation of identity among different social groups by fostering a sense of community. In addition to focusing on specialized discourses, this approach also places emphasis on exploring the material aspects, embodiment, and ritualistic elements of religious expression.

Recent research consciously breaks away from rigid boundaries between epochs and the narrative of ruptures and perceives the Reformation as an intellectual-historical movement in its multifaceted richness and complexity.<sup>21</sup> The premise of this study is therefore to understand the church reform in interaction with the humanistic educational reform as a multi-layered “driving force.”<sup>22</sup> In order to be able to describe these processes of change, for example, in laicization, but also the long-term continuities, the historical knowledge of early modern exegetes, their methodology and hermeneutics, to a lesser extent with regard to the patristic and medieval tradition of interpretation, are taken into account. The dissertation inquires thus into the narratives and discourses in which the Letter to the Ephesians is used for argumentation and aims to capture the mobility of thought and action in the Reformation years 1520 to 1600. The references to Ephesians to be studied will not be limited to specific verses but are intended to illuminate the different modes of argumentation of the Reformation authors. In this way, guiding ideas present in Ephesians can be worked out, such as the Pauline image of *caput et corpus* (Eph 1:22), to which the Reformers referred in their ecclesiology and which was further developed in great interpretational diversity.

In the light of the new perspectives on Paul, historical scholarship can contribute to broadening the scholarly discourse on the apostle by examining not only the theological core issues debated by the new perspectives but by researching beyond them. With a historical-critical and history of religions approach, the corpus of sources is opened up and ex-

21 F. Loetz, ed., *Gelebte Reformation* (Zurich: TVZ, 2022), 9.

22 C. Christ-von Wedel et al., eds., *Basel als Zentrum des geistigen Austauschs in der frühen Reformationszeit, Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation 81* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 4.

panded, and in so doing, this subproject will lead to the dissolution of the previous schematic perception of individual main texts of the Reformation.

#### 4 Paul in Print: Early Modern Strategies of Printing Paul in the Context of the Swiss Reformation

The subproject of Matteo Colombo (University of Geneva) aims to focus on early modern printing strategies and to specify the historical approach to Paul in the Swiss Reformation. Combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, this subproject tries to order the universe of the Swiss printed material on Paul. It provides a first list of the traditions, literary genres, contents, and paratexts that characterize the reading of the apostle through early modern printed books in the Swiss area. Looking beyond exegesis, the goal of this study is to understand how Paul and his testimony of early Christianity became the engines of the theological positions to be established in the Reformation era. In so doing, this subproject aims to rediscover the role of the reading of Pauline printing in the Swiss Reformation, showing how the embodiment of the apostle's example, embedded in historical context information, helped the Reformers to establish their community.

During the first part, this subproject intends to tackle the universe of Pauline printing before the Reformation (1450–1517). The aim is to create a list of editions, which expands the RRP database, from a chronological point of view as well as with regard to literary genres.<sup>23</sup> This list records most of the non-academic material on Paul available in print in pre-Reformation times, such as Bibles, *evangelia*, patristic sermons, *lectiones*, *declamationes*, *vitae*, and *specula*. This vast and diverse literary corpus provides evidence of a general historicizing revival of Paul as it is also present in Lorenzo Valla's, Desiderius Erasmus's, and Lefèvre d'Étaples's commentaries on Paul. The subproject will help to clarify to what extent these humanists integrated or broke with their medieval context.<sup>24</sup> An

<sup>23</sup> This supplement to the common database will take the Universal Short Title Catalog (USTC) as a starting point and complete it with national catalogs (VD16; EDIT16; GLN15-16).

<sup>24</sup> See G.G. Kroeker, *Erasmus in the Footsteps of Paul: A Pauline Theologian* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011); Holder, *Companion to Paul* (see n. 5); J.B. Payne, "Erasmus and Lefèvre d'Étaples as Interpreters of Paul," *ARG* 65 (1974), 56–85; S. Lyonnet, "À propos de Lefèvre d'Étaples et de son commentaire sur les épîtres de S. Paul," *Bib* 62 (1981), 116–120; J.D. Tracy, "Humanists among the Scholastics: Erasmus, More, and Lefèvre d'Étaples on the Humanity of Christ," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society*

unconventional letter Erasmus wrote to Jonas Justus on 13 June 1521 offers a case in point for the kind of historical revival of Paul they operated.<sup>25</sup> Combining rhetoric and synchronic thinking, this letter encourages to re-embrace the spiritual and historical enthusiasm of the church fathers and to conduct an “apostolic life” by embodying Paul’s model.<sup>26</sup> Indirectly addressing Luther’s entourage, this letter suggests that the recovery of the patristic Pauline exegesis and a thus inspired imitation of the apostle were the better paths to the reformation of the church. Luther on the other hand, while rejecting any infallible authority other than Scripture, understands Paul as a means to directly reach the forms and the contents of Christian doctrine. Erasmus’s historical use of Paul against Luther is thus an example of the multifaceted understanding of the apostle in the wake of the Reformation.

The second part focuses on the Pauline printing in the Swiss area of the Reformation period. From 1518 on, Johann Froben and Andreas Cratander published in Basel most of the Pauline commentaries available: Erasmus’s *Paraphrases* and *Annotationes*, Luther’s, Melanchthon’s, and Œcolampadius’s commentaries, but also patristic *explanationes* or homilies. As early as 1522, Christoph Froschauer in Zurich complemented these Latin editions with a German translation of Erasmus’s *Paraphrases*. These books usually consisted of a dedication, an *argumentum*, and the paraphrasis or commentary organized along the epistle’s chapters. In addition, the commentaries were published together with introductory speeches such as Melanchthon’s *Declamantiuncula in divi Pauli doctrinam* and Martinus Dorpius’s *Oratio in praelectionem*.<sup>27</sup> With their paratexts, these editions presented a new genre of handbooks. This part of the subproject will first seek to identify what image of Paul they promoted, how much historical information they provided, and to what extent the paratexts complemented the information given about Paul in the main texts. This will allow to analyze, in the next step, how the appearance of this literature shaped the

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*Yearbook* 5 (1985), 30–51; E. Rummel, *A Companion to Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*, Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

- 25 Desiderius Erasmus to Jodocus Jonas, 15 June 1521, in *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, vol. 4, ed. P.S. Allen et al. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1922), 507–525.
- 26 S. Cartwright, ed., *A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages*, Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 39 (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
- 27 P. Melanchthon, *Declamantiuncula in divi Pauli doctrinam* (Basel: Andreas Cratander, 1520); M. Dorpius, *Oratio in praelectionem epistolarum divi Pauli* (Basel: Johann Froben, 1520).

reading of Paul and promoted the image of the apostle throughout the Swiss region.

The third part aims thus at explaining how the humanistically inspired printing of Paul left an imprint on the Swiss Reformation. For the moment, it is intended to shed light on the historical perspective given on Paul, provided that humanists understood history as an example for life. Most prominently, Philipp Melanchthon revives the Pauline example in his edition of the *Chronicon Carionis*, where he reexamines the church history from the apostolic era to Luther's Reformation.<sup>28</sup> In the footsteps of Jerome, he embeds the new history of his "true church" in the universal history of the "Christian reformation."<sup>29</sup> In the same perspective, this part will investigate speeches of Heinrich Bullinger and Theodore Beza, trying to find out whether they also adopt an historical perspective on Paul, re-enacting the words of the apostle: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1).

Through the study of this embodiment of the apostle's example and of this ethical actualization of his history, this subproject explores a central aspect of the "introspective conscience of the West." In so doing, however, it will contribute to identify different types of readings of Paul, and hence of the historical understanding or misunderstanding and, in the end, of the reception or misreception of his historical model.

## 5 Conferences within the Project

In addition to these PhD projects, three conferences will examine the medieval background of sixteenth-century exegesis ("The Many Faces of Paul: Pauline Exegesis in Pre-modern Times," Geneva 2024), its persistence in the history of modern exegesis ("Pauline Interpretations of the 17th–

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28 P. Melanchthon, *Chronicon Carionis Latine expositum et auctum multis et veteribus et recentibus historiis, in narrationibus rerum Graecarum, Germanicarum et ecclesiarum* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau [Heirs of], 1558); U. Zwingli, *Christianae fidei a Huldrycho Zwinglio praedicatae, brevis et clara expositio* ([Zurich: Christoph Froschauer (I)], 1536); H. Bullinger, *In omnes apostolicas epistolas commentarii* (Zurich: Christoph Froschauer [I], 1537).

29 R. Hennings, "Hieronymus zum Bischofsamt und seine Autorität in dieser Frage bei Luther, Melanchthon und Zwingli," in *Neue Beiträge zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert/New Contributions on the Reception of the Church Fathers in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, ed. L. Grane et al., *Auctoritas patrum* 2 (Mainz: Zabern, 1998), 83–101.

19th Centuries,” Zurich 2025), and its relationship to contemporary theology (“Exegesis and Theology,” Zurich 2026).

Scientific progress comes about through breaks and deliberate demarcations. However, this carries the danger of a schematic juxtaposition of old and new research paradigms. It is pointless and anachronistic to examine in a schoolmasterly manner whether the interpreters of the Reformation period understood Paul “correctly” according to today’s standards. But equally unsatisfactory remains a kind of postmodern reception history that collects all kinds of approaches to biblical texts without asking the question of their appropriateness.<sup>30</sup> In no way does the project want to prove in an apologetic fashion that the Reformers were “right after all” – just as it does not want to justify the new perspectives. The aim of the project is rather a historically contextualized and differentiated picture of a significant and productive theological practice of the early modern period. Only after and on the basis of such descriptive and hermeneutical work can a meaningful comparison be made with today’s approaches to Paul.

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**Project website**

[https://www.theologie.uzh.ch/de/faecher/neues-testament/Professur-für-neutestamentliche-Wissenschaft/16th\\_century\\_exegesis\\_of\\_paul.html](https://www.theologie.uzh.ch/de/faecher/neues-testament/Professur-für-neutestamentliche-Wissenschaft/16th_century_exegesis_of_paul.html)

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. on these issues R. Burnet, *Exegesis and History of Reception: Reading the New Testament Today with the Readers of the Past*, WUNT 455 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021).