

“Temple” and “Holy Land” in 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

*Localising the Presence of God**

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Introduction

In 2 Cor 6:16 we can read “we are the temple of the living God.” On a conceptual level the community of believers—the “we” of the verse—constitute this “temple.” The following is an analysis of the textual and conceptual background of this socio-spatial concept as well as its structure and function. I will argue that the community of believers in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 not only constitutes a “temple,” but also a “holy land.” This “land” becomes holy because of the presence of God in its midst.

In the Hebrew Bible we encounter a more or less self-evident interconnection between God, people, and land:¹ God is the God of the people of Israel and of the land of Israel; Israel is the land of God and of the people of God; the people of Israel belong to the land of Israel and the land to the people.² God can be present in the centre of this land and of this people—which are his land and his people—in his sanctuary, the temple. The holiness proceeding from God’s presence extends to the boundaries of his land.

* Parts of this text have been published in German in J. C. de Vos, *Heiliges Land und Nähe Gottes: Wandlungen alttestamentlicher Landvorstellungen in frühjüdischen und neutestamentlichen Schriften* (FRLANT 244; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 139–158.

¹ This interconnection becomes even more evident in times of crisis in which one or more elements of the triad are not self-evident; for example, apostasy or the loss of the land.

² S. E. Grosby, *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002).

In the New Testament, the actual land of Israel plays a subordinate role and becomes a land on a different level, that is, a mentally conceived space.³ This phenomenon in itself is not new and many examples can be found in the Old Testament and Early Jewish literature.⁴ What is new, however, is that both the concepts of “land of God” and “the people of God” are redefined in the sense that salvation is not limited to the land and the people of Israel or to the peoples coming to Zion.⁵ There are two lines of thought in this: On the one hand, the “real” dwelling place of the believers is now actually “in” God, or in his vicinity. On the other hand, God can dwell “in” or with his people in his own particular way.

Examples for the first line of thought take on the following pattern: The “real” home of the believers is actually in heaven (and not on this earth).⁶

³ See among others W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); K. Haacker, “Ewiges Heil als ‘Gelobtes Land’: Die Urgeschichte Israels als Metapher der Verkündigung Jesu,” *Theologische Beiträge* 37 (2006): 301–312; de Vos, *Heiliges Land* (n. *), 101–199; see for the Epistle to the Hebrews K. Backhaus, “Das Land der Verheißung: Die Heimat der Glaubenden im Hebräerbrief,” *NTS* 47 (2001): 171–188; differently: M. Vahrenhorst, “Land und Landverheißung im Neuen Testament,” *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 23 (2008): 123–147, who overstates the significance of the land of Israel in the New Testament.

⁴ See the article of F.-L. Hossfeld who labelled most occurrences of “land” in the Old Testament as metaphors expressing the relationship of Israel and YHWH (“Die Metaphorisierung der Beziehung Israels zum Land im Frühjudentum und im Christentum,” in *Zion – Ort der Begegnung* [ed. F. Hahn et al.; Bonner Biblische Beiträge 90; Bodenheim: Athenäum, 1993], 19–33). See for the significance of the land of Israel in Exod LXX, Josh LXX, and Isa LXX J. C. de Vos, “Das Land Israel in der Sicht der Septuaginta: Beispiele aus Exodus, Josua und Jesaja,” in *Die Septuaginta und das frühe Christentum / The Septuagint and Christian Origins* (ed. T. S. Caulley and H. Lichtenberger; WUNT 277; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 87–105, and for other Early Jewish literature J. C. de Vos, “Die Bedeutung des Landes Israel in den jüdischen Schriften der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit,” *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 23 (2008): 73–96.

⁵ W. Kraus, “Das ‘Heilige Land’ als Thema einer biblischen Theologie,” in *Frühjudentum und Neues Testament im Horizont Biblischer Theologie* (ed. W. Kraus and K.-W. Niebuhr; WUNT 162; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 251–275.

⁶ Cf. J. C. de Vos, “Jerusalem: Why on Earth Is It in Heaven? A Comparison between Galatians 4:21–31 and 2 Baruch 4:1–7,” in *Exploring the Narrative: Jerusalem and Jordan in*

They have a heavenly *πολίτευμα* “citizenship,”⁷ are only on earth as *πάροικοι* “resident aliens,”⁸ they live “in” Christ,⁹ or their resting place is the realm of God.¹⁰

The second line of thought will be the main topic of this paper: the specific way in which God dwells “in” or with his people. I will concentrate on three ideas concerning the presence of God: first, the idea of the community as the temple of God;¹¹ second, the idea of God’s presence in his land and among his people as stated in Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 37; and third, the idea of the *Shekinah*, God’s dwelling usually being among his people and in his land, as found especially in rabbinic writings.

Text, Context, and Intertext of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

The point of departure for this article is the statement in 2 Cor 6:16b–g:¹²

ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν	16b	For we are the temple of the living
ζῶντος,		God;
καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς	16c	as God said,
ὅτι ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς	16d	“I will dwell in/among them
καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω	16e	and walk among/in [them],
καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεὸς	16f	and I will be their God,

the Bronze and Iron Ages, (ed. E. van der Steen, J. Boertien, and N. Mulder; London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 326–337.

⁷ Phil 3:20; cf. D. Schinkel, *Die himmlische Bürgerschaft: Untersuchungen zu einem urchristlichen Sprachmotiv im Spannungsfeld von religiöser Integration und Abgrenzung im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert* (FRLANT 220; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

⁸ Eph 2:19; 1 Pet 2:11.

⁹ The phrase occurs frequently in the Pauline and Deuteropauline writings as well as in 1 Peter.

¹⁰ Heb 3:7–4:11; see J. C. de Vos, “Hebrews 3:7–4:11 and the Pragmatic Function of Mental Maps,” in *The Bible and Sacred Space* (ed. J. C. de Vos, J. Øklund, and K. J. Wenell; vol. 3 of *Constructions of Space*; Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies 540; London: Bloomsbury, 2014) [forthcoming].

¹¹ I do not deal with the affiliate idea of the community as “house of God” or “Christ” in the Pauline letters; cf. among others D. G. Horrell, “From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος θεοῦ: Social Transformation in Pauline Christianity,” *JBL* 120 (2001): 293–311.

¹² See for the subdivision of the verses of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 table 1 at p. 150.

καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός. 16g and they shall be my people.”¹³

The first statement, “We are the temple of the living God,” is confirmed by the words of God “I will dwell in/among them and walk among/in [them], and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” The introductory statement in 6:14a, “do not be mismatched with unbelievers” (cf. 6:15b), makes clear that “we” are the believers as opposed to “they,” the unbelievers—which I consider to be Gentile unbelievers.¹⁴ Thus the text claims that the temple of God comprises the community of believers in some way.

Structure and Intention of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

The immediate and larger context of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 consists of Paul’s plea for himself and his office (6:11–13; 7:2–4; resp. 2:14–6:13; 7:2–4). He requests more space in the hearts of the Corinthians (6:13; 7:2). This plea is abruptly interrupted by the paraenetic section of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, in the middle of his appeal. The themes addressed in this pericope are the ideas

¹³ The biblical citations generally follow the NRSV. See to this verse in particular C. Böttrich, “Ihr seid der Tempel Gottes’: Tempelmetaphorik und Gemeinde bei Paulus,” in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel = Community without Temple: Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum* (ed. B. Ego et al.; WUNT 118; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 411–425; M. Hasitschka, “Wir sind Tempel des lebendigen Gottes’ (2 Kor 6,16): Bibeltheologische Skizze zur Tempelmetaphorik bei Paulus,” in *Volk Gottes als Tempel* (ed. A. Vonach and R. Meßner; Synagoge und Kirchen 1; Münster: LIT, 2004), 181–193; and to the theme more in general A. L. A. Hogeterp, “Paul and God’s Temple: A Historical Interpretation of Cultic Imagery in the Corinthian Correspondence,” (*Biblical Tools and Studies 2*; Leuven: Peeters, 2006).

¹⁴ There is a lot of discussion about the question who the unbelievers in 2 Cor 6:14 are; see for a discussion W. J. Webb, “Who are the Unbelievers (ἄπιστοι) in 2 Corinthians 6:14?” *BSacr* 149 (1992): 27–44. He lists the following possibilities: (1) untrustworthy persons; (2) Gentile Christians who do not keep the Law; (3) immoral people within the Church community; (4) false apostles; and (5) non-Christians. Webb favours the last possibility because it fits the material of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 best (*ibid.*, 43–44, here 44). I agree with him.

of separation from unbelievers and the preservation of holiness and purity, which are set in contrast to each other, in turn, by a series of antitheses.

The section begins with the admonition which stresses separation: μὴ γίνεσθε ἕτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις (6:14a) “do not be mismatched [actually: draw unequally/to be yoked in unequal partnership¹⁵] with unbelievers”¹⁶, and which is followed by five antitheses as a basis (γάρ) for the admonition (6:14b–16a). The five pairs are each introduced by a word from the semantic area of partnership/companionship: μετοχή “partnership,” κοινωνία “fellowship,” συμφώνησις “harmony,”¹⁷ μερίς “share,” and συγκατάθεσις “agreement.” These words are obviously meant as synonyms. Each introductory word is followed by an antithesis, whereby the first positive word refers to the realm of the believers and the second negative word to that of the unbelievers: δικαιοσύνη—ἀνομία “righteousness—lawlessness,” φῶς—σκότος “light—darkness,” Χριστός—Βελιάρ “Christ—Beliar,” πιστός—ἄπιστος “believer—unbeliever,” ναὸς θεοῦ—εἰδωλα “temple of God—idols.” The structure is concentric: At the periphery and in the middle, the sentences are introduced by τίς “what,” the second and fourth by ἢ τίς “or what.” At the centre, we find the statement: “What harmony does Christ have with Beliar?” Prior to this central statement, the fundamentals of faith are recalled: “righteousness” and “light.” After the central statement,

¹⁵ H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed. with revised supplement; Oxford: 1996 [furthermore: LSJ]), s.v. ἕτεροζυγέω; W. J. Webb, “What is the Unequal Yoke (ἕτεροζυγοῦντες) in 2Corinthians 6:14?” *Bibliotheca sacra* 149 (1992): 162–179. As an interesting side note: the prohibition to mingle with others (ἕτεροζυγέω), led to the tractate *Kil’ayim* in Mishnah and Talmud. *Kil’ayim*, “interminglings,” is based on Lev 19:19, which was translated in the Septuagint with the term ἕτεροζυγός; see [H. L. Strack and] P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (6 vols.; 4th ed.; München: Beck, 1965), 3:521.

¹⁶ See note 14.

¹⁷ It is a pity that the musical element of συμφώνησις has been lost in the translation “agreement” of the NRSV.

the believers and the temple of God are brought into play. As a conclusion,¹⁸ climax, and transition, the “we” of verse 16b occurs; that is, the believers are the temple of the living God—“living” in contrast to the idols, considered to be dead, not to a temple of idols—of 6:16a (“what harmony has the temple of God with idols?”).¹⁹

The whole passage is supported by a number of quotations from Scripture, in which God promises—note the future tense—that he will dwell among the believers and will be their God, and that the believers will be his people. This promise is followed—after an introductory *διό* (6:17a)—by admonitions that the believers are to be separate from the unbelievers (6:17a–b; just as in 6:14a); and then, not to touch anything unclean (6:17d). We find further promises of God (also in future tense) in 6:17e–18b which resemble those in 6:16d–g: God’s acceptance of his believers in 6:17e can be compared with the nearness of God in 6:16d–e, and God’s role as father in 6:18a–b resembles the theme of the people of God in 6:16f–g.²⁰

The section has a well-shaped concentric structure, within which descriptions of the current state of affairs take up alternating positions with admonitions and promises.²¹ In 7:1 the author urges the readers to be pure and holy in the light of such promises and therewith closes the section thematically.

¹⁸ Is *γάρ* here reinforcement after the antitheses or does it introduce a causal clause dependent on 6:14a?

¹⁹ See for the first person plural J. Gnllka, “2 Cor. 6: 14–7: 1 in the Light of the Qumran Texts and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *Paul and Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis* (ed. J. Murphy-O’Connor; Chicago: Priory, 1968), 48–68, at 51: “The sudden change to the plural (*ἡμεῖς . . . ἔσμεν*) means that the honour of being a spiritual sanctuary does not pertain to an individual but to the community.”

²⁰ It is unclear to me why J.-N. Aletti, “Le statut de l’Église dans les lettres pauliennes: Reflexions sur quelques paradoxes,” *Bib* 83 (2002): 153–174, separates these two themes.

²¹ See, among others, W. O. Walker, “2 Cor 6.14–7.1 and the Chiastic Structure of 6.11–13; 7.2–3,” *NTS* 48 (2002): 142–144; F. Wilk, “Gottes Wort und Gottes Verheißungen: Zur Eigenart der Schriftverwendung in 2Kor 6,14–7,1,” in *Die Septuaginta – Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (ed. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; WUNT 219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 673–696, here 675–677; J. M. Scott, “The Use of Scripture in 2 Corinthians 6.16c–18 and Paul’s Restoration Theology,” *JSNT* 56 (1995): 73–99, here 97.

The Community of Believers as “Temple” of God

As outlined, the statement in 6:16b “We are the temple of the living God” is related for the most part to the last pair of the antitheses, in which the temple of the living God is contrasted with dead idols. The question is, however, in what way the community can constitute a “temple” of God. Are they or do they become a “temple” under the condition that they are just and believe; or do they become a “temple” as soon as God’s presence is in the temple and the community is ontically within the realm of the light and of Christ?

Although this distinction is made by some scholars,²² these kinds of alternatives are not really appropriate to our text. Instead, it is better to speak of the concept of holiness. Holiness is the act of keeping oneself spatially separate for God and by living in a way pleasing to God—both in a moral (6:14b; 7:1b [?]) and in a ritual-cultic sense (6:16a; 17d; 7:1b).²³ Holiness, in turn, proceeds from the presence of God. God sees this separate group as his people (6:16f–g), his children, sons and daughters²⁴ (6:18b); He is their God (6:16f). The separation becomes manifest in the demand not to plough together with a stranger (6:14a), the demand for separation from unbelievers (6:17a–b), and in the term ἁγιοσύνη “holiness” at the end of the pericope (7:1c). Holiness is directly related to purity in the sense that by polluting oneself, and thus that which is holy, holiness itself is defiled. This can be seen in 6:17d: “and touch nothing unclean” and 7:1b: “let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect . . .”

From 6:17 it becomes clear that God accepts his people (καὶ γὰρ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς) only under the condition that they are separate and pure. It is this

²² See the remarks of Scott, *ibid.*, 84–85.

²³ G. Saß, “Noch einmal 2Kor 6,14–7,1: Literarkritische Waffen gegen einen ‘unpaulinischen’ Paulus?” *ZNW* 84 (1993): 36–64, excludes a cultic interpretation of the text in favour of a moral interpretation, because he connects 2 Cor 6:16 with 1 Cor 3:16 which he perceives as ethical (p. 58). However, a connection with 1 Cor 3:16, which is surely extant, does not exclude a cultic interpretation of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1. Besides that, it is questionable if 1 Cor 3:16 is only to be interpreted ethically.

²⁴ On the rare occurrence of the term “daughters” cf. J. W. Olley, “A Precursor of the NRSV? ‘Sons and Daughters’ in 2 Cor 6.18,” *NTS* 44 (1998): 204–211.

context, in which the statement “we are the temple of the living God” appears. The precondition for God’s dwelling in the temple—for that is one of the functions of a temple—is the holiness of his people which at the same time becomes holy by the presence of God. This is an exact representation of a concept well known from the Hebrew Bible. Holiness is a dynamic concept; it is simultaneously present and only conditionally there or not yet there. There is an obvious tension between the statement that the community is the temple of the living God in the present (6:16b) and God’s promises and the striving for holiness in the community in the following verses which point to the future.

In our text, holiness is bound to the people themselves. This, however, retains a spatial connotation, because holiness needs a spatial separation from the unholy and because God will “dwell ‘in’ them” and “walk ‘in’ them” (6:16d–e).

The Old Testament Background of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 refers to many biblical texts (see the full list in table 2, p. 151).²⁵ For this contribution I will concentrate on the Old Testament background of verse 16. This verse cites Lev 26:11 and Ezek 37:27.²⁶ In Lev 26:11 God promises to erect his *משכן*, his habitation among the Israelites. The author of 2 Cor 6:16 refers back to the Masoretic Text by rendering *ונתתי משכני בתוכם* “and I will place my dwelling in your midst” as *ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς* “I will dwell in/among them.”²⁷ He does not refer back to the

²⁵ See for the most detailed analysis of the Old Testament echoes Wilk, “Gottes Wort” (n. 21).

²⁶ According to J. D. M. Derrett (“2Cor 6,14ff: A Midrash on Dt 22,10,” *Bib* 59 [1978]: 231–250) this verse contains a midrashic allusion to Deut 22:10, but his arguments are unconvincing, as Deut 22:10 LXX and 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 do not have a single word in common.

²⁷ Against Wilk, “Gottes Wort” (n. 21), 694, who considers the Septuagint as the sole basis for the quotations.

Septuagint which translates מִשְׁכָּן “habitation” here with διαθήκη “covenant”²⁸—maybe under the influence of Lev 26:9, where ברית “covenant” is mentioned twice.²⁹ The scope of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 is not the making of a covenant but God’s actual dwelling—whether spiritual or not—in/among his people.³⁰ This idea extrapolated to the idea of God walking in/among his people. The “in/among” is stressed by using ἐν three times: ἐνοικήσω “I will dwell in,” ἐν αὐτοῖς “in/among them,” and ἐμπεριπατήσω “I will walk in.”

Back to Leviticus 26: verses 11–12 could apply to the habitation of God in the mobile tabernacle. The narrative context in Leviticus 26 is that the people of Israel are on their way to the land of Canaan. Nevertheless, Leviticus 26 deals, prospectively, with life in the land of Canaan, so that it becomes probable that the habitation of God applies to his habitation in a stationary temple in that land.

The statement in Lev 26:12, “I will walk among you,” is hard to understand. Does it refer to God’s walking in the tabernacle together with his people or does it refer to God’s walking “in” his people, thus making the people themselves some sort of sanctuary?³¹ Given that Leviticus 26 contains many declarations and regulations concerning the land,³² it seems quite reasonable to assume that the phrase “I will walk among you” should

²⁸ More precise: LXX^{BA}. Other manuscripts read σκηνή, the latter also being the version in J. W. Wevers and U. Quast, *Leviticus* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graece 2.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

²⁹ P. Harlé and D. Pralon, *Le Lévitique* (Bible d’Alexandrie 3; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1988), consider this rendering to be influenced by Gen 17:2; Exod 34:10, 12, 15, 27.

³⁰ In the New Testament ἐνοικέω always has a divine subject which settles in human beings: spirit of God (Rom 8:11); God (2 Cor 6:16); word of Christ (Col 3:16); the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 1:14); cf. 2 Tim 1:5. In the Old Testament this occurs less frequently; cf. R. Dabelstein, ἐνοικέω, *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (2d ed.), 2:1114–1115, here 1115; J. Goetzmann, “Haus, bauen,” *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* (5th ed.), 1:636–645, here 640.

³¹ Cf. 2 Sam 7:4–7 for the topic of the mobility of God; and in the New Testament its reception in Acts 7:45–50.

³² אֶרֶץ referring to the land of Israel is encountered explicitly 15 times in Leviticus 26: vv. 1, 4, 5, 6 (3x), 19, 20 (2x), 32, 33, 34 (2x), 42, 43; and many times implicitly. Israel in a strange land (8x): vv. 13, 34, 36, 38, 39, 41, 44, 45.

also be connected to the land identified with the people: God lives among his people, in the land of this people, which is also his land.

Just as in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 God’s blessing, which includes his habitation, is given some moral conditions in Leviticus 26. If Israel does not please its God, the blessing will be turned into a curse. This is all based, as in the rest of the Holiness Code, on the holiness of God: “because I, the Lord am holy” or simply “because I am the Lord.”³³

In 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 we find four of the five elements from Leviticus 26: (1) the habitation of God, (2) the people of God and the God of the people, (3) the moral conditions, and (4) the emphasis on holiness. Only the concept of the land does not occur. But the threefold ἐν in 2 Cor 6:16de, however, brings in a spatial connotation of God’s habitation, strengthened by the meaning of the verbs ἐνοικέω and ἐμπεριπατέω, “to dwell in” and “to walk in/among.” Has the concept of the land from Leviticus 26 been consciously transformed? The question as to whether the author of our section was thinking, not only of the verse cited from Leviticus 26, but of the whole of that chapter is hard to answer, but it is likely. It is clear that the whole pericope fits smoothly into the conceptual world of Leviticus 26. If one accepts that Leviticus 26 is recalled or even rewritten here, the community in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 also becomes some sort of land. The “temple of the living God” consisting of the community is then central to the land

³³ Lev 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8. In Lev 25:23, one reads that the land belongs to God: “the land is mine, with me you are but aliens and tenants” (cf. E. Noort, “Denn das Land Gehört mir, ihr seid Fremde und Beisassen bei mir’ [Lev 25,23]: Landgabe als eine kritische Theologie des Landes” *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 23 [2008]: 25–45). The holiness of God, connected with the concept that the land belongs to God, leads to the so-called model of the *lex terrae* (cf. Grosby, *Nationalities* [n. 2], 25–27, and *passim*). This means that a code of laws pertains exclusively to a particular geographic region and can only be put into effect in that region. This also means that if one breaks the law, one not only pollutes oneself, but also the land. A striking example can be found in Num 35:33–34: “You shall not pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell; for I the Lord dwell among the Israelites.” For that reason the land is submitted to purification rituals in Leviticus 25 and 26.

which consists of the same community; both are socially constructed spaces.³⁴

This also applies to Ezekiel 37, and verse 27 which has been cited here. In the pericope Ezek 37:15–28, a passage about the restoration of northern and southern Israel,³⁵ we encounter many parallels to our pericope. To quote verse 21, a parallel to the theme of separation from the unbelievers in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1:

Thus says the Lord God: I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land.

Ezekiel 37:23 reads:

They shall never again defile themselves with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. I will save them from all the apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

This represents a parallel to the demand for purity and links back to the topic of the people of God. Furthermore, verse 27 is quoted almost directly. This verse deals with the habitation of God among the Israelites; and, once again, the people of God. Here too it is worth asking the question whether the author of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 only had Ezek 37:27 in mind, or whether the whole text of Ezek 37:15–28 played a role in his thinking. If, which appears likely, the latter is the case, then he must have transformed the land, which plays a prominent role in Ezek 37:15–28, into the new people of believers and the community into the temple of God.

³⁴ See for three aspects of space, first/physical, second/mental, and third/social space H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*: (trans. D. Nicholson-Smith; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005); E. W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989); J. L. Berquist, “Introduction: Critical Spatiality and the Uses of Theory,” in *Theory, Geography, and Narrative* (ed. J. L. Berquist and C. V. Camp; vol. 1 of *Constructions of Space*; New York: T&T Clark International, 2007), 1–12.

³⁵ G. K. Beale (“The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5–7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1, *NTS* 35 [1989]: 550–581, here 566–576) sees restoration of Israel as the common theme of the quotations from Lev 26:11–12, Ezek 37:27; Isa 52:11, and Ezek 20:34. I agree, however, with that difference that the land to where the people return is not the land of Israel in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1.

I would like to point out one aspect, which connects Ezek 37:27 with 2 Cor 6:16. In Ezek 37:27 *משכן* “habitation/dwelling” has been translated by the Septuagint with *κατασκήνωσις*, meaning literally something like “to set down a tent,” in paraphrase: “God makes his dwelling among the Israelites.” The idea of actually pitching a tent does not play a role at all, only the agreement of the consonants *s-k-n* in *שכן* and *σκηνώω* and its derivatives. Whenever possible, the translators of the Septuagint tried to find assonant terms.³⁶ In this case this was possible because in Greek *σκηνώω* in addition to the meaning “to pitch a tent,” also had the general meaning “to settle” and transitively “to inhabit.”³⁷ Consequently, the term *σκηνώω* corresponds with the Hebrew verb *שכן* “to dwell” not only regarding the consonants but also with respect to its meaning.³⁸ It is known that this also provides the background for John 1:14 *καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν*, where the Word makes its dwelling among us, as well as in Sir 24:8, where Wisdom descends to earth;³⁹ using, in this instance, the verb *κατασκηνώω*, comparable with the usage of *κατασκήνωσις* in Ezek 37:27.

The Jewish Background of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

The question of Pauline origin of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, which is also a significant consideration for this argument, is highly debated.⁴⁰ My opinion is that the

³⁶ F. Siegert, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament: Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* (Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 9; Münster: LIT, 2001), 135; W. Michaelis, “*σκηνή* κτλ.,” *TWNT* 7:369–396, here 372–373: “. . . weil *משכן* und *σκηνή* die drei gleichen Konsonanten *skn* in gleicher Reihenfolge enthielten, schien den Übersetzern *σκηνή* als Wiedergabe auch von *משכן* prädestiniert zu sein” (p. 372); see also W. Michaelis, “Zelt und Hütte im biblischen Denken,” *EvT* 14 (1954): 29–49.

³⁷ LSJ, s.v. *σκηνώω*.

³⁸ Out of the circa 435 occurrences of *σκηνή* in the Septuagint 93 occurrences are translations of *משכן*. In 2 Sam 7:5–6, where *משכן* and *אהל* appear next to each other, *משכן* is translated by *σκηνή*, not *אהל* (Michaelis, *σκηνή* [n. 36], 372).

³⁹ Cf. Prov 8:22–31.

⁴⁰ See the list with advocates and opponents of a Pauline authorship in C. Heil, “Die Sprache der Absonderung in 2 Kor 6,17 und bei Paulus,” in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. Bieringer; BETL 75; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 717–729, here

text cannot have come from Paul, given the language (New Testament *hapax legomena* and Pauline *hapax legomena*), context, as well as for reasons of content and theology, as outlined below:

- (i) New Testament *hapax legomena*: The amount of *hapax legomena* is conspicuous: Ἐτεροζυγέω (6:14a) does not occur in the New Testament and neither in the Septuagint except for the corresponding noun, which can be found in Lev 19:19. Μετοχή (6:14b): the corresponding verb is used more often by Paul (1 Cor 9:10, 12; 10:17, 21, 30). In 1 Cor 10:16–17, μετέχειν and κοινωνία appear together, just as in 2 Cor 6:14.⁴¹ In the Septuagint μετοχή only occurs in: Ps 121 (122):3 and Pss. Sol. 14.6. Συμφώνησις (6:15a): the adjective συμφώνος can be found in Pauline writings (1 Cor 7:5), not the corresponding verb (Matt 18:19; 20:2, 13; Luke 5:36; Acts 5:9; 15:15) nor the noun συμφωνία (NT: Luke 15:25; LXX: 4 Macc 14:3; Dan 3:5, 7, 10, 15). Βελιάρ (6:15a): the only other occasion is Judg^A 20:13 as a variant of Βελιάλ. Συγκατάθεσις (6:16a): only three occurrences in the Septuagint (Exod 23:1, 32, and DanTh 1:2). The corresponding verb can be found once, but not in the writings of Paul (Luke 23:51). Ἐμπεριπατέω (6:16e): cf. in the Septuagint Lev 26:12 (one of the verses cited in our pericope); Deut 23:15; Judg^A 18:9; 2 Sam 7:6; Prov 30:31; Job 1:7; 2:2; Wis 19:21. Μολυσμός (7:1b): cf. in the Pauline writings μολυνέσθαι in 1 Cor 8:7 and otherwise: Rev 3:4; 14:4; 1 Esd 8:80; 2 Macc 5:27; Jer 23:15. The fact that Paul uses similar words is for many the demonstration that this text could have been written by Paul.⁴² In my opinion, however, the accumulation of *hapax legomena* and un-Pauline thoughts makes a Pauline authorship unlikely.⁴³

727–729; as well as the exhaustive article on the state of research by Reimund Bieringer (“2 Korinther 6,14–7,1 im Kontext des 2. Korintherbriefes: Forschungsüberblick und Versuch eines eigenen Zugangs,” in *Studies on 2 Corinthians* [ed. R. Bieringer and J. Lambrecht; BETL 12; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994], 551–570).

⁴¹ Cf. A. Schlatter, *Die Korintherbriefe: ausgelegt für Bibelleser* (Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament 6; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1987), 580–581.

⁴² See for example Saß, “Noch einmal” (n. 23), 38–39.

⁴³ With M. E. Thrall, “The Problem of II Cor. VI.14–VII.1 in Some Recent Discussion,” *NTS* 24 (1978): 132–148, here 138, who, however, changes her mind later in her article. Cf. also the detailed analysis of Victor Paul Furnish (*II Corinthians* [The Anchor Bible 32A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984], 361–365, 371–383). Furnish also points to the accumulation of un-Pauline elements (*ibid.*, 382).

- (ii) Pauline *hapax legomena*: The term παντοκράτωρ occurs only here in the Pauline writings; beyond them we find it in the book of Revelation within the New Testament.⁴⁴ Finally, θυγάτηρ⁴⁵ is equally a *hapax legomenon* in the letters of Paul.
- (iii) Context: It is clear that the pericope abruptly breaks up the train of thought and the tone of 6:11–7:4 or even 6:1–7:4. On the other hand 6:13 and 7:2 fit seamlessly together.
- (iv) Content and theology: Some words are used in a non-Pauline way.⁴⁶ By means of the antithesis δικαιοσύνη—ἀνομία (6:14b) δικαιοσύνη acquires a nomistic character and points to the doing of the law. However, some traces of a nomistic use of δικαιοσύνη can be found, according to Gnllka,⁴⁷ in Rom 6:13–19 and 2 Cor 6:7. Πιστοί in an absolute sense and as a designation for Christian believers does not occur in the genuine Pauline writings. This use does not occur until 1 Timothy (4:3, 10, 13; 5:16; 1 Pet 1:2). The citation formula καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεός (6:16c) is untypical for Paul—his only other use of it is in 2 Cor 4:6. The un-theological use of body and spirit (7:1b) seems at first untypical for Paul, although it is not unknown for him to use it (cf. 1 Cor 5:3; 7:34). However, he never combines this pair of terms with impurity. It is true that Paul uses the word ἁγιωσύνη (Rom 1:4; 1 Thess 3:13), but never in combination with ἐπιτελεῖν “to strive” or a similar word. Furthermore, aside from one exception (Rom 3:10–18; genuinely Pauline⁴⁸), Paul never quotes a series of texts without separate introductory phrases. And besides that, the texts in question are not otherwise quoted by Paul. The topic of the community as temple does occur in Pauline texts (1 Cor 3:16–17 and 1 Cor 6:19), but not in connection with the demand for separation. Moreover, the call for separation from pagans is untypical for Paul (cf. 1 Cor 7:12–15; 10:26–27; Gal 2:7–8 etc.⁴⁹). We do not encounter similar demands for separation prior to

⁴⁴ See R. Feldmeier, “Vom ‘Herrn der Heerscharen’ zum ‘Allmächtigen’: Die Septuaginta als Wegbereiterin einer christlichen Gotteslehre II. Der neutestamentliche Befund,” in Caulley and Lichtenberger, *Die Septuaginta* (n. 4), 140–152.

⁴⁵ See n. 24.

⁴⁶ Cf. Gnllka, “2 Cor. 6: 14–7: 1” (n. 19), 56–61.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁸ Cf. D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 69; Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), 179–184, esp. 182–184. S. also T. Schmeller, *Der Zweite Brief an Die Korinther: 2Kor 1,1–7,4* (EKKNT 8.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2010), 471.

⁴⁹ Cf. also Gnllka, “2 Cor. 6: 14–7: 1” [n. 19], 63–64; Heil, “Absonderung” (n. 40). In 1 Cor 5:9–13 Paul calls for separation; however, only from the “fornicators” (πόρνοι; v. 9) within the community, not from the “fornicators of this world” (v. 10).

Eph 5:7–14.⁵⁰ Dualism does occur in the Pauline writings but not at this level of frequency.⁵¹ Finally, Paul does not often make use of apocalyptic topics. Franz Zeilinger’s argument “the obviously intentional use of apocalyptic language ultimately emphasises the profundity of this theological debate . . .” is rather unconvincing.⁵²

In addition, if the reference to Christ is taken out of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, nothing, except perhaps 7:1, betrays the pericope to be Christian. That, of course, can be applied to many parts of the New Testament, and equally so to the anachronistic term Christian, but here we have the opposite case: “un-Pauline” Jewish words and ideas are massively predominant. Four explanations can be postulated for this *Fremdkörper*:⁵³ (i) the text does not stand in its original context and does not stem from Paul; (ii) the text does not stand in its original context, but stems from Paul; (iii) the text stands in its original context, but does not stem from Paul; (iv) the text stands in its original context and stems from Paul.⁵⁴ I favour the third possibility. It might very well be possible that Paul incorporated an extant tradition into his letter.⁵⁵

This extant tradition, however, has its source in Jewish, non-Pauline (as Paul was also a Jew) tradition.⁵⁶ All the elements in this pericope that can

⁵⁰ S. J. Hultgren supposes that an interpolator who was responsible for the insertion of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 is the same as the one responsible for the insertions of Rev 21:1–8 and Ephesians 5 (“2 Cor 6.14–7.1 and Rev 21.3–8: Evidence for the Ephesian Redaction of 2 Corinthians,” *NTS* 49 [2003]: 39–56).

⁵¹ More on dualism below.

⁵² F. Zeilinger, “Die Echtheit von 2 Cor 6:14–7:1,” *JBL* 112 (1993): 71–80, at 79: Die offenbar bewusste Einbeziehung apokalyptisch gefärbter Sprache verdeutlicht schließlich die Tiefendimension der theologischen Auseinandersetzung . . .”

⁵³ See for these explanations and its defenders Heil, “Absonderung” (n. 40), 718–721; Cf. also C. Wolff, *Der zweite Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THKNT 8; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1989), 146–147.

⁵⁴ Bieringer (“2 Korinther 6,14–7,1” [n. 40], 557–558) also points to authors who cannot or do not want to decide in this question.

⁵⁵ See de Vos, *Heiliges Land* (n. *), 145–149 and 153–155, for details.

⁵⁶ It remains unclear where, by whom, and when the text was inserted here. Potential explanations for the question why this text was interpolated are explored in the article below.

be regarded as non-Pauline do occur in Qumran writings, and within these writings they have a more natural Sitz im Leben. Georg Klinzing even adds an exclamation mark to his statement: “There is quite probably no section of the New Testament that presents so many Qumran parallels in so small a space!”⁵⁷ Within a dualistic framework pairs of terms are set in opposition to each other: justice and sin, light and darkness, God or Michael and Belial.⁵⁸ As Jörg Frey points out, not all Qumran texts are dualistic and not all dualistic patterns are the same.⁵⁹ There are texts which contain pure cosmic dualism and texts in which “cosmic, ethical, and psychological levels of dualistic expression are woven together.”⁶⁰ 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 has parallels with the second group but without psychological dualism. But

⁵⁷ “Es gibt wohl kein Stück im Neuen Testament, in dem auf so knappem Raum eine solche Fülle von Qumranparallelen begegnet!” (G. Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im Neuen Testament* [Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971], 172); cf. also K. G. Kuhn, “Qumran. 5: Bedeutung für das Neue Testament,” *RGG* (3d ed.) 5:751–754; J. A. Fitzmyer, “Qumrân and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2Cor 6,14–7,1,” *CBQ* 23 (1961): 271–280 (German: “Qumran und der eingefügte Abschnitt 2 Kor 6,14–7,1,” in *Qumran* [ed. K. E. Grözinger et al.; Wege der Forschung 410; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981], 385–398), Gnilka, “2 Cor. 6: 14–7: 1” (n. 19); and B. E. Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (SNTSMS 1; Cambridge: University Press, 1965).

⁵⁸ Cf. H. W. Huppenbauer, “Belial in den Qumrantexten,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 15 (1959): 81–89; Gnilka, “2 Cor. 6: 14–7: 1” (n. 19), 54–56; P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Dualismus in den Texten aus Qumran* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969). According to Joachim Gnilka, the concept of Belial evolves in the writings of Qumran from a non-personal entity (Hymns, Rule) to a personal one (1QM XIII 11–12; CD IV 13; V 18; XII 2; 4QFlor [4Q174] VIII–IX).

⁵⁹ J. Frey, “Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library: Reflections on Their Background and History,” in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge, 1995. Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten* (ed. M. J. Bernstein, F. García Martínez, and J. Kampen; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 275–335; see for definitions of ten different kinds of dualism, *ibid.*, 280–285.

⁶⁰ Frey, “Dualistic Thought” (n. 59), 331.

what are the differences? Cosmic dualism means that the world and humanity is divided into opposing forces:⁶¹ light and darkness, Christ and Belial in 2 Corinthians and Michael and Belial in Qumran texts.⁶² Ethical dualism, in contrast, refers to “two mutually exclusive groups according to virtues and vices.”⁶³ The Qumran community saw itself on the right path, but this moral purity had to be defended. Purity was considered to be present and—as in our pericope—it was morally and liturgically conditioned. The *Rule of the Community*, for example, shows a multitude of stipulations as well as possible offences against those stipulations. There was a continuous striving for holiness and purification of flesh and spirit. The concept of the community as the temple of God, which is a form of spatial dualism,⁶⁴ can also be found in the Qumran writings⁶⁵ and seems to find its natural Sitz im Leben there:

The community was in opposition to the temple at Jerusalem and this confrontation may have helped contribute to its transferring the spiritual dignity of the sanctuary, which had fallen into the hands of unworthy rebels, to itself. And at this point the special feature of the understanding of the metaphor community/temple in the Qumran texts becomes apparent. For it is linked with the call to separation from the other sinful people who have turned away from God. The men are to separate a holy house for Aaron (cf 1QS 9:5f.)⁶⁶

Ezekiel 20:34–35, cited in 6:17e, is never cited or alluded to by Paul,⁶⁷ but is evoked in 1QM I 2–3.⁶⁸ There are many parallels in Qumran literature, for example to list only two, the fact that the community of Qumran considered itself to be the people led by God out of the desert into the Promised

⁶¹ Ibid., 283.

⁶² In contrast to the Bible, the name Belial occurs frequently in the Qumran writings—most often in 1QM and 1QH.

⁶³ Frey, “Dualistic Thought” (n. 59), 284.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 283.

⁶⁵ 1QS V 6; VII 5–6; IX 5–9; XX 10, 14.

⁶⁶ Gnllka, “2 Cor. 6: 14–7: 1” [n. 19], 62.

⁶⁷ See the arguments in de Vos, *Heiliges Land* (n. *), 147 n. 231.

⁶⁸ For 1QM see J. Duhaime, “War Scroll,” in *The Dead Sea scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English translations*. Volume 2: *Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 80–203.

Land; and that they are urged to remain vigilant against the still active Be-lial, to safeguard purity and holiness.⁶⁹ What we do not find in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 is psychological dualism. Psychological dualism refers to “principles or impulses waging battle within man.”⁷⁰ Instead we have soteriological dualism, faith in salvation⁷¹—see the opposing positions “believer–unbeliever” in 2 Cor 6:15b; the promises spoken by God in 6:16d–g, 17e–18b; and “the promises” in 7:1a.

There are other Early Jewish parallels. We encounter motives in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,⁷² the writings of Philo of Alexandria, in *Jubilees* 1.15–25, and in many more writings.⁷³ Instead, I would like to point to the same sequence of quotations from Lev 26:11–12/Ezek 37:27 and 2 Sam 7:14 as in 2 Cor 6:16–18 that occurs in *Jub.* 1.17 and 24.⁷⁴

In my opinion the pericope 6:14–7:1 is clearly un-Pauline Jewish and has a traditionally Jewish origin. Specifically, it has many similarities with words and thoughts occurring in the Qumran tradition,⁷⁵ although a direct dependence has yet to be proven. Through the “Christian” reworking of the text, the community of believers in Christ is now seen as the temple of

⁶⁹ To mention a few other points: The theme of separation has a natural place in the Qumran writings (cf. 1QS V 13–20). Cf. Gnllka, “2 Cor. 6: 14–7: 1” (n. 19), 63: “The community understands uncleanness not merely in a cultic–levitical sense but principally in an ethical sense, because priestly cleanliness and the fact of being pleasing to God merge for into one inseparable unit.” “Flesh and spirit” mean as combined terms “human being,” which can be polluted and/or purified (CD V 11; cf. VII 3, 1; 1QS III 8–9; 1QH XIII 13–14; XV 21–22; XVII 25; 1QM VII 5–6. Cf. also *T. Jud.* 18.4 (ibid., 58–59). And then there is the striving for holiness (1QS VIII 20; CD VII 5).

⁷⁰ Frey, “Dualistic thought” (n. 59), 285.

⁷¹ Ibid., 284.

⁷² See Gnllka, “2 Cor 6: 14–7: 1” (n. 19), and Frey, “Dualistic Thought” (n. 59), 275–276 and 276 n. 5.

⁷³ See for a detailed comparison Saß, “Noch einmal” (n. 23), 45–47, and the notes in Furnish, *II Corinthians* (n. 43), 361–365.

⁷⁴ See also *Barn.* 1.1 for the collocation “sons and daughters” and 4.11; 6.15; and especially 16.6–10 for the imagery of Christians as a spiritual temple of God.

⁷⁵ Not *anti*-Pauline as H. D. Betz claims (“2Cor 6:14–7:1: An Anti-Pauline Fragment?” in idem, *Paulinische Studien, Gesammelte Aufsätze III* [Tübingen: Mohr, 1994], 21–45).

God, which means that they must strive for holiness in purity and separation, because the second Exodus (cf. Ezek 20:34) is about to come, with which God will lead his people into the “New Land.”⁷⁶

The Concept of Shekinah

I have already used the term “habitation” a few times for the *משכן* of God among the people of Israel as well as for the phrase *ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς* “I will dwell in/among them.” “Habitation,” however, is also the translation of the *terminus technicus* *שכינה*, *šekîṇâ*, the habitation, or dwelling of God among his people on earth.⁷⁷ In the rabbinic literature Shekinah is a clearly distinctive theologoumenon, although with many forms and variations.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ W. J. Webb, *Returning Home: New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6.14–7.1* (JSNTSup 85; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) on the basis of an intertextual analysis.

⁷⁷ A. Unterman et al.; “Shekhina,” *EncJud* (2d ed.) 18:440–444 at 440: “The *Shekhina* is God viewed in spatio-temporal terms as a presence, particularly in a this-worldly context.” This even leads Bernd Janowski to claim that there is a theology of Shekinah in the Hebrew Bible; see B. Janowski et al., “Shekhina,” *RGG* (4th ed.) 7:1274–1276. Clemens Thoma considers the Shekinah to be the centre of Jewish religion: “Als Zentrum der jüdischen Religion gilt das Verweilen des einen Gottes mitten in der Gemeinschaft seines erwählten Volkes, in seinen Institutionen, in seinen geschichtlichen Entwicklungen und in jedem einzelnen Mitglied des Volkes” (“Geborgen unter den Fittichen der Schekhina,” *Freiburger Rundbrief* 11 [2004]: 162–170, at 162); cf. also A. M. Goldberg, *Untersuchungen über die Vorstellungen von der Schekhina in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur, Talmud und Midrasch* (Studia Judaica 5; Berlin: 1969), 533–535; R. J. Z. Werblowsky and G. Wigoder, “Shekinah,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish religion*, 629–630; P. Birnbaum, “Shekinah,” in *A Book of Jewish Concepts* (ed. P. Birnbaum; New York: 1975), 599–600; and M. Görg, *שכינה*, *TWAT* 7:1338–1348.

⁷⁸ I refer here to the excellent work of Arnold M. Goldberg (*Schekhina* [n. 77]), who lists and systematises all the occurrences of the term Shekinah.

A Methodological Problem

I think that the concept of Shekinah underlies the pericope in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1. This raises the question, of course, of whether this use of anachronistic theological concepts from rabbinic writings is methodically correct.⁷⁹ With respect to the source dates, the answer is no, although the Tannaitic period is almost contemporary with the New Testament. The answer is yes, however, with respect to the concept of the Shekinah. Going back to the Hebrew Bible, we find traces of a debate about the nature of the presence of God among his people and in the temple—as a real presence or a mere “mail address”?—the latter becoming even more problematic after the destruction of the First Temple, and later, of course, after the fall of the Second Temple.

“Shekinah” in the Hebrew Bible

Although the word שכינה “habitation” itself does not occur in the Hebrew Bible, its concept is present.⁸⁰ There are texts in the Hebrew Bible which indicate that God lives among the Israelites—regardless of whether this is expressed with the aid of the verb שכן “to live/to inhabit” or derivatives such as משכן. These texts have been interpreted in Judaism as the Shekinah of God. The earliest more or less explicit witness of the concept appears to lie in the Greek book of Sirach (120 B.C.E.), as this work could have already played with the consonants *s-k-n* (Sir 24:4, 8, 10: σκηνή, κατασκηνόω; cf. 24:15).

In the Hebrew Bible itself, this concept of Shekinah is usually bound to the people of God and/or to the temple in the land. Only where the people are *not yet in the land*, does God dwell among his people, and not in the land.⁸¹

⁷⁹ See for the methodological question of a comparison of New Testament and rabbinic writings in general G. Holtz, “Rabbinische Literatur und Neues Testament: Alte Schwierigkeiten und neue Möglichkeiten,” *ZNW* 100 (2009): 173–198.

⁸⁰ Janowski et al., *Schekhina* (n. 77).

⁸¹ See, for example, B. Janowski, “‘Ich will in eurer Mitte wohnen’: Struktur und Genese der exilischen *Schekhina*-Theologie,” *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 2 (1987): 165–193, and B. D. Sommer, “Conflicting Constructions of Divine Presence in the

A problem with the presence of God on earth occurs when the land is defiled or when the people are not in the land any more. In the book of Ezekiel, for example, the glory of God leaves the temple, because the temple and the land have been polluted by the sins of the people;⁸² a feature that recurs in the Babylonian Talmud in which we can read that the Shekinah leaves Israel because of the people’s sins. In both texts the Shekinah presupposes morality.⁸³

“Shekinah” in the New Testament

If this is the case, then we can also propose, with all due caution, that some passing resemblance to the theology of Shekinah can be found in the New

Priestly Tabernacle,” *BibInt* 9 (2001): 41–63. In particular, in priestly texts, God accompanies his people as glory, כבוד, in the cloud or in the Tent of Meeting or as משכן, the tabernacle, with the people. The glory of God comes to rest in the land. Here he chooses a place, a מקום, in which he lets his name dwell; Deut 12:5, 11; 14:23; 16:2, 11; 26:2; Neh 1:9; cf. S. L. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: leshakken shemo sham in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (BZAW 318; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), and M. Geiger, *Gottesräume: Die Literarische und theologische Konzeption von Raum im Deuteronomium* (BWANT 183; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010). We find this concept mainly in the deuteronomic–deuteronomistic parts. It is in 1 Kings 8, the temple prayer of Solomon, that the theology of the habitation of God’s name comes to its full development. The name of God lives in the temple and, at the same time, God lives in heaven, because the temple cannot contain his full glory (1 Kings 8:27). We find a similar reflection in Isa 66:1: “Thus says the Lord: Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting–place?” (cf. M. Albani, “Wo sollte ein Haus sein, das ihr mir bauen könntet?” [Jes 66,1]: Schöpfung als Tempel JHWHs?” in Ego et al., *Gemeinde ohne Tempel* (n. 13), 37–56. This, in turn, was taken up in the New Testament, in the speech of Stephen (Acts 7:48–49).

⁸² Ezek 11:22–23.

⁸³ Cf. *b. Šabb. 33a*: “Through the crime of bloodshed the Temple was destroyed and the Shechinah departed from Israel, as it is written, *So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood, it polluteth the land . . . And thou shalt not defile the land which ye inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell* [Num 35:33f, JcDv]: hence, if ye do defile it, ye will not inhabit it and I will not dwell in its midst” (trans. H. Freedman, “*Shabbath: Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices* [The Babylonian Talmud London: Soncino Press, 1938], 152).

Testament. The most obvious allusion can be found in John 1:14,⁸⁴ but Rev 21:3 also belongs to the list: “See the tent of God is among mortals. He will pitch his tent with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them . . .” Here, both the noun σκηνή as well as the verb σκηνώω occur. There are more texts where the idea of the Shekinah could play a role, for example Rev 7:15: “and the one who is seated on the throne will dwell (σκηνώσει) on them;” 2 Cor 12:9: “So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell (ἐπισκηνώση) in me.” It is possible that John 7:2 also contains an allusion to the Shekinah. Jesus is summoned to travel to Jerusalem, because the Jewish Festival of Booths is near. In Greek this Festival of Booths is referred to as σκηνοπηγία, the pitching of a tent. The text material which follows is faintly reminiscent of the Shekinah, because the σκηνοπηγία is connected to the revelation of that which is hidden to the world.⁸⁵

Shekinah in Rabbinical Literature

The proper concept of Shekinah, however, occurs in rabbinic literature. An example of this is a commentary on Zech 2:14 (NRSV 2:10). The biblical text reads: “Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the Lord.” In *Pesiqta Rabbati* 35, a midrash from the sixth or seventh century C.E. on this text (and Zech 2:9),⁸⁶ we can read: “the Holy One, blessed be He, brings his presence [שכינתו] down from the heavens on

⁸⁴ With, among others, F. Siegert, *Das Evangelium des Johannes in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt: Wiederherstellung und Kommentar* (Schriften des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 206–207; and J. Moltmann, Art. “Shekhina IV: Systematische Theologie,” *RGK* (4th ed.) 7:1276. The objections of Charles K. Barrett, that שכ״ה does not point to the “glory of God” (John 1:14: “and we saw his glory”) but to his presence and that שכן is generally not translated as (κατα)σκηνοῦν (*Das Evangelium nach Johannes* [KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht], 192) cannot convince me. Presence among men of the Logos does not exclude that his glory can be seen. See for critique on the second objection n. 36.

⁸⁵ Cf. also Mk 9:5 parr.

⁸⁶ See the introduction into this midrash in G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* (9th ed.; Munich: 2011), 328–335.

high and causes it to dwell on earth.”⁸⁷ In this midrash the Shekinah is bound to the whole of Israel. It did not dwell in the Second Temple, because not all of the people of Israel returned from exile. Only when the whole of Israel returns, will the Shekinah return. Additionally, the whole of Israel, in which the Shekinah dwells, consists only of just Israelites, with the result that, as in 2 Corinthians 6, the presence of God is dependent on moral conditions.⁸⁸

In this same midrash, the conditional presence of God is connected with a spiritual locality. The Israelites must prove themselves just by forming a protective “wall” for the glory of God—even if they are in the Diaspora. Then God will be a protective “wall” for the glory of the Israelites, and his Shekinah will be in the midst of them—wherever they are—for the glory of Israel.⁸⁹ The “wall” consists, thus, only of those Israelites who are just; and only when the Israelites are just, does God become the “wall” and glory of Israel. The parallel with 2 Cor 6:16–17 is striking.

⁸⁷ M. Friedmann, *Pesikta Rabati* (Tel Aviv: 1962) in the translation from W. G. Braude, *Pesikta rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths* (2 vols.; Yale Judaica Series 18; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 673–674; cf. also A. M. Goldberg, *Ich komme und wohne in deiner Mitte: Eine rabbinische Homilie zu Sacharja 2,14 (PesR 35)* (Frankfurter Judaistische Studien 3; Frankfurt am Main: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft zur Förderung Judaistischer Studien, 1977).

⁸⁸ Cf., among others, also *Deut. Rab.* 6.14 on Deut 24:9: “God said: ‘In this world, because there are amongst you slanderers, I have withdrawn My Divine Presence from amongst you,’ as it is said, Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens (Ps. lvii, 12), ‘I will restore My Divine Presence amongst you.’ Whence this? For it is said, And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh, etc. (Joel iii, 1)” (trans. J. Rabbinowitz, *Midrash Rabba: Deuteronomy* [3d ed.; Midrash Rabba 7; London: Soncino Press, 1983]; and *Mek.* on Exod 20:24: “In connection with this passage the sages said: Wherever ten persons assemble in a synagogue the Shekinah is with them” (trans. J. Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta De-Rabbi Ishmael* [JPS Library of Jewish Classics; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1933; repr. 1961], 2:287). Cf. in the New Testament Matt 18:20.

⁸⁹ So Goldberg, *Ich komme* (n. 87), 55.

“Shekinah” in 2 Corinthians 6:16b–17

The anachronistic examples from the rabbinic literature lead us again to 2 Corinthians 6. The following features connect 2 Corinthians 6 with the rabbinic concepts of Shekinah: Firstly, the phrase ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς clearly refers to the concept of God dwelling among his people.⁹⁰

Secondly, this habitation is based on moral conditions, which becomes clear from the verses following verse 16. Moreover, purity, which can be understood both morally and liturgically, is the precondition for God’s dwelling. Thirdly, God’s habitation is connected with the temple.⁹¹ The difference, however, is that the temple consists of the community. The separateness of this community constitutes a new locality, and because of the intertextual connections with Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 37 we can even go as far as to say: a new “land.”

If Paul Brooks Duff is right with his thesis that the conceptual background of 2 Cor 2:14–7:4 is that of a Greco-Roman religious procession,⁹² then we can understand both the content and placement of our pericope even better. According to Duff, Paul uses this imagery, but alienates its concepts. In Greco-Roman epiphany processions, the deity was carried through the city and brought to its temple.⁹³ Paul thanks God in 2 Cor 2:16 “who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession.” This is usually seen as an allusion to Roman triumphal procession but can also be seen, thus Duff, as an allusion to a religious procession. That this reference is immediately followed by the theme of the “fragrance of Christ” (2 Cor 2:14b–16) does reinforce this idea, as deities were considered to exude the sweet “fragrance of the holy” (cf. εὐωδία; 2 Cor 2:15), with the fragrance proclaiming the coming of the deity.⁹⁴ The point, however, for Paul, is that he spreads the fragrance of Christ by knowing him (“and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes

⁹⁰ One could even go further: ἐνοικήσω not only means “to dwell in/among,” but imitates it with its consonants when read from right to left as seen in the verb שכן. But I must admit that this is mere speculation.

⁹¹ B. Ego, “Von der Jerusalemer Tempeltheologie zur rabbinischen Kosmologie: Zur Konzeption der himmlischen Wohnstatt Gottes,” *Mitteilungen und Beiträge der Forschungsstelle Judentum an der theologischen Fakultät Leipzig* 12–13 (1997): 36–52.

⁹² P. B. Duff, “The Mind of the Redactor: 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1 in Its Secondary Context,” *NTS* 35 (1993): 160–180.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 178–179.

⁹⁴ See *ibid.*, 168–169, for Greek sources and secondary literature.

from knowing him [Christ]”; 2 Cor 2:14); the fragrance, thus, is the message of the gospel.⁹⁵ Even more remarkable is that Paul is carrying around in his body the death of Jesus (2 Cor 4:10). This alleged weakness, the vision of the salvation event, is Paul’s “triumph” (2:14).⁹⁶ For this kind of epiphany the herald, in the person of Paul, called for room to let the procession through (πλατύνθητε; 6:13; χωρήσατε; 7:2). In the Greco-Roman religious processions the herald was not only responsible for clearing the way, but also had to ensure religious purity. No impurity was allowed to be near the holy epiphany of the deity. This matches exactly the content of 6:14–7:1, the call for separation and holiness.⁹⁷ In contrast with pagan religious processions however, the procession is not heading to the temple but to the community that is the temple itself, a procession for which the community of believers has to prepare themselves.

Although Duff’s thesis offers a considerable amount of accumulative arguments, I also have my hesitations. First of all, it is hard to relate the verb “triumph” (2:14) to a religious instead of a triumphal procession—if we should refer it to a procession at all. Secondly, Duff does not really clarify the relationship between Paul as carrying the dying Christ in his body and the community of believers in 6:14–7:1 as a temple. Additionally, in 2:14–16 and 4:10 as in most of 2:14–7:4 Paul uses the first person plural, indicating an inclusive statement.

Returning to 2 Cor 6:16, one question is still unanswered. How is God present in the temple of the community? In 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 we find no answer to this question. In the parallel 1 Cor 3:16–17, however, God is represented in the temple of the community by his Holy Spirit. With different metaphors the same is expressed in 2 Cor 5:5, where the Spirit is the guarantee for Christian believers.⁹⁸ The idea of making broad space for the spirit in the hearts of Paul and the Christians is, I presume, the connection with the immediate context of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 and the apologetics of Paul in the Corinthian correspondence in general.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Ibid., 168.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 169–170.

⁹⁷ Duff, nevertheless, has the opinion that 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 cannot stem from Paul (ibid., 160–161). Though if it was inserted by Paul or another editor is not important for his argument (ibid., 176).

⁹⁸ J. Behm, “ἁρραβών,” *TWNT* 1:474.

⁹⁹ See for details de Vos, *Heiliges Land* (n. *), 153–155. Peter Schäfer has shown that, although the text material comes from a later date, in Judaism the Shekinah is also often identified with the Holy Spirit (P. Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der*

Conclusions

2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1, a traditional Jewish text, shares cosmic, ethical, and spatial dualistic features with other early Jewish literature—mostly with a couple of Qumran writings. In both those Qumran writings and 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 the “we”-group is morally on the right side; they are cosmically in the realm of a good force; and they constitute a holy space reserved for God. However the positive side of the opposition is not static in either text. Both groups behind the texts must continue to strive for the ethically good, the good force, and strive to constitute a good and pure space; in short, they have to strive for holiness, to remain or become holy. In addition to the Qumran writings, 2 Cor 6:14–17 shows a strong emphasis on soteriological dualism. The “we”-group considers itself to be a group of believers, and in contrast to the unbelievers, they have the promises of God.

It appears likely that the community of believers in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 is not only conceived as a “temple” (6:16) but also as a “land.” Intertextual analysis of Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 37 appears to support this claim. Both chapters are echoed in 2 Cor 6:4–7:1 and both chapters deal with the presence of God among his people (cf. the rabbinic concept of *Shekinah*) and with the land. The theme of the land is never explicitly referred to in the Corinthian pericope. Instead, the words used and the clear absence of the land theme (*Leerstellen*) in comparison to Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 37 shows that the whole text is full of spatial imagery. Strikingly, the author rewrites the texts from Leviticus and Ezekiel in such a way to depict the believers themselves as this “land.” The believers themselves become the “land” of salvation, a space bound by the nearness of God to his believers. This “land” is or becomes holy by the community keeping itself separate morally for God and, at the same time, by the presence of God amidst this social-spatial “temple” and “land”; that is, the community of believers, the people of God (2 Cor 6:16–18). Temple and holy land are dynamic spaces that can emerge everywhere on earth as long as the people of God strive for holiness and only when God is present in this “temple” and “holy land.”

rabbinischen Literatur [Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 28; München: Kösel-Verlag, 1972]).

Table 1: Text and Structure of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

	Verse	Text	Form / Themes
A	14a	Μὴ γίνεσθε ἑτεροζυγοῦντες ἀπίστοις·	Introductory adhortation: separation
			Rhetorical questions in form of antitheses:
B	14b	τίς γὰρ μετοχὴ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνομία,	1. righteousness
C	14c	ἢ τίς κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος;	2. light
D	15a	τίς δὲ συμφώνησις Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελιάρ,	3. Christ
C'	15b	ἢ τίς μερὶς πιστῶ μετὰ ἀπίστου;	4. belief
B'	16a	τίς δὲ συγκατάθεσις ναῶ θεοῦ μετὰ εἰδώλων;	5. temple of God
A'	16b	ἡμεῖς γὰρ ναὸς θεοῦ ἐσμεν ζῶντος,	Conclusion and climax: temple of living God
			Quotation formulae:
A	16c	καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς	quotation formula 1: “God”
	16d	ὅτι ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς	“Temple” of God
	16e	καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω	“Land” of God
B	16f	καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεὸς	God of his People
C	16g	καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μου λαός.	People of God
D	17a	διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν	Separation
	17b	καὶ ἀφορίσθητε,	
	17c	λέγει κύριος,	Quotation formula 2: “Lord”
	17d	καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε·	Purity
A'	17e	κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς	God of his people
B'	18a	καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα	Father of his people
C'	18b	καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας,	Children of God
	18c	λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ.	Quotation formula 3: “Lord Almighty”
	1a	ταύτας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀγαπητοί,	Grounds: promises of God
	1b	καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος,	Adhortation: purity
	1c	ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ.	Zeal: Striving for holiness

Table 2: Quotations and Allusions in 2 Corinthians 6:16b–18

Verse	MT	LXX	2 Cor 6:16b–18c
Lev 26:11a	ונתתי משכני בתוכם	καὶ θήσω τὴν διαθήκην ¹⁰⁰ /τὴν σκηνήν ¹⁰¹ μου ἐν ὑμῖν	16d . . . ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς
Ezek 37:27α	והיה משכני עליהם	καὶ ἔσται ἡ κατασκήνωσίς μου ἐν αὐτοῖς	
Lev 26:12a	והתהלכתי בתוכם	καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω ἐν ὑμῖν	16e καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω
Ezek 37:27αβ	והייתי לכם לאלהים	καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῶν θεός	16f καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῶν θεός
Lev 26:12b	ואתם תהיו לי לעם	καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μου λαός	16g καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονταί μου λαός.
Ezek 37:27b	והמה יהיו לי לעם	καὶ αὐτοὶ μου ἔσονταί λαός	
Isa 52:11b	צאו מתוכה	ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς	17a διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν
	הברו נשאי כלי יהוה	ἀφορίσθητε οἱ φέροντες τὰ σκεύη κυρίου	17b καὶ ἀφορίσθητε,
			17c λέγει κύριος,
Isa 52:11α	שמע אל תגעו	καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε	17d καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε
Ezek 20:34 ¹⁰²	... וקבצתי אתכם ...	καὶ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς . . .	17e κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς
2 Sam 7:14a =	אני אהיה לו לאב	ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα	18a καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα
1 Chr 17:13a (Isa 43:6?)	והוא יהיה לי לבן	καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν	18b καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱούς καὶ θυγατέρας,
2 Sam 7:8*	כה אמר יהוה צבאות	τάδε λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ	18c λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ.

¹⁰⁰ Thus, Wevers and Quast, *Leviticus* (n. 28).

¹⁰¹ Thus, A. Rahlfs and R. Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum graeca iuxta LXX interpretes: Editio altera* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

¹⁰² Cf. Ezek 20:41.