Paul is remembered as a teacher of the nations (διδάσκαλος ἑθνῶν) in 1 Tim 2:7, a role, even if it were fictional, which could obviously be envisaged by second generation Christ-followers. It indicates that aspects of Paul’s activities were considered educational, and although the term παιδεία is absent from his undisputed letters, and other specifically educational terms like διδάσκαλος, διδαχή, μαθήματος, are rare, there are indeed numerous passages where Paul can be seen as engaged in a teaching-learning discourse and as actually teaching his addressees, since they have to “learn to be a gentile in Christ.”¹ This teaching-learning discourse in the Pauline letters sheds fascinating light on the process of cultural translation in the earliest Christ-following groups from the nations. It is an aspect of high significance in my view when the notion of “Hellenism” is not envisaged as some uniform melting pot but rather as a label for a period during which Jews, Greeks, Romans, and other peoples and their respective traditions were in contact and interacted with each other in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, an interaction facilitated through the use of Greek as a lingua franca. The diverse traditions were not only linguistically different, but encompassed diverse practices and were embodied at numerous levels of social interaction.²

Thus, the Pauline letters provide glimpses of a teaching, a learning process between people who had been socialized partly in diverse, partly in shared, cultural, social, and linguistic traditions. Paul and his colleagues were deeply steeped in Jewish tradition, some expressed in Greek, some in other languages. The addressees were embedded in Greek, Galatian, Roman, and possibly a number

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of other traditions, with some having been familiar to some extent with aspects of Jewish traditions.³

The communication process between peoples of different cultural contexts involves cultural translation processes. It is thus to be expected that aspects of cultural translation in the teaching-learning process are also discernible in the Pauline letters. My particular focus in this contribution is on the dimension of embodiment in this process.

**Paul, the Teacher**

As mentioned above, in post-Pauline letters Paul is perceived in the role of a teacher. Although he never refers to himself as a teacher, there are numerous allusions to a teaching-learning process in his letters. There are some explicit references, such as 1 Cor 4:17 where he emphasizes that he is sending Timothy to the Corinthian Christ-followers to remind them τάς ὀδούς μου τάς ἐν Χριστῷ καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδάσκω; or in 4:6 he clarifies that he had written to them ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε; and he admonishes the Philippians (4:9) to keep doing what they had learned (μάθετε). In addition to these few explicit uses of teaching-learning language there are further indications throughout that Paul considered his task as apostle to the nations as one of teaching the nations how to live life as Christ-followers. Jewish terminology of education, that is the transmission of tradition, is found e.g. in Phil 4:9 (ἀ καὶ ἐμάθετε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ ἰκουσάτε καὶ εἰδέτε ἐν ἐμοὶ ταῦτα πράσσετε; also 1 Cor 15:1, 3; 1 Thess 4:1). In addition, the terminology of nurturing indicates a teaching-learning process which is also found, e.g., in Philo.⁴

It should not come as much of a surprise to find trajectories of an education discourse in the Pauline letters for a number of reasons. Given the significance of

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⁴ Prob. 160; Cong. 15–19.
learning in Jewish tradition, it seems rather self-evident that people who wished
to join a movement, which in the first century is located in a Jewish social and
symbolic universe, are expected to “learn” how to live their way of life as part of
this movement. If these Christ-followers from the nations were already familiar
with Jewish tradition through their sympathies and occasional or frequent par-
ticipation in synagogue gatherings in the diaspora, they would already have
been familiar with this particular kind of learning process, or education. But
as former pagans, that is, people who had not previously been socialized in a
Jewish way of life, there certainly was a need for them to be inducted into the
particularities of the way of life in Christ.⁵

Whether they had a formal Greek paideia or not, these Christ-followers from
the nations had learned a way of life which differed from the way of life of Jews
in many aspects, even if certain features were shared and communicated in the
same language. Their primary socialization differed from that of their Jewish con-
temporaries in a number of ways, and I cannot address all of the aspects I con-
sider relevant in the space of this paper. Not only would traditions and literature
with which formally educated people were familiar have been different, but the
cultural narratives—the narratives of belonging and of providing meaning—were
different.⁶ Although some values and traditions were shared, significant discrep-
ancies remained. What was considered accurate and appropriate in one dis-
course might be disregarded or even looked at with contempt in another. The
fact that the dominating educational ideal, which transmitted the perceived
ideal values and narratives of meaning, was the ideal of the dominating imperial
power, decisively shaped the cultural, linguistic, and social interactions through-
out the empire.⁷ The interaction between those who were different was asymmet-
rical; it was clearly dominated by a power imbalance, not an interaction between
equals.

These aspects must have impacted the educational process between Paul
and his communities, as bridges between these diverse worlds would need to

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⁵ This is not to say that Jewish Christ-followers had nothing to learn but their learning process
would have differed from that of the gentiles. Paul does not address this issue in my view as his
letters are addressed to Christ-followers from the nations, hence we do not know his views about

⁶ Cf. Catherine Heszer, “The Torah versus Homer: Jewish and Graeco-Roman Education in Late
Roman Palestine,” in Ancient Education and Early Christianity, ed. Matthew R. Hauge and
Andrew W. Pitts, (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 5–24. Although dealing with Late Antiquity, some as-
pects also apply to the earlier period.

⁷ Cf. Kathy Ehrensperger, “Speaking Greek under Rome: Paul, the Power of Language and the
be built through a translation process which involved far more than mere linguistics. I have discussed difficulties involved in this learning process in previous publications. Here I will focus on an aspect I had only marginally considered previously, that is the bodily dimension in the educational process between Paul and the Christ-followers from the nations. Paul clearly conveyed content, a new message about Jesus as the Christ, which he expected to be grasped cognitively and which he expected to be cognitively transmitted (1 Cor 14:19). But this message, this trust in and loyalty to Christ, was not something to be merely cognitively understood or considered to be true; it was expected to be translated into the practice of everyday life. It was expected to be embodied.

**Paideia—Embodied**

Body language in the self-presentation of Paul plays a significant role in his letters. This is in tune with the significance of body language and physical appearance as decisive aspects of communication in Greek and Roman culture. However, the ideals advocated in elite male education/paideia and the image Paul presents of himself differ fundamentally.

Body language and physiognomy played an important and explicitly acknowledged role not only in Greece and Rome but in diverse cultures in antiquity. The physical shape and movement of the body was interpreted as revealing the character of the person. It mattered how one walked, held one’s hands and head, raised one’s voice, etc. These human expressions were not perceived to be mere addenda to other aspects but were seen as intrinsically interwoven with all

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9 I am informed here by contemporary pedagogical theories which emphasize the relevance of the emotional and bodily/physical dimension of teaching and learning in addition to the cognitive aspect as decisive for this process to be successful and on approaches which are informed by the “corporeal turn" in cultural studies and philosophy, e.g. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008); Emmanuel Alloa and Miriam Fischer, *Leib und Sprache: Zur Reflexivität verkörperter Ausdrucksformen* (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2013).
12 Earliest occurrences concerning physiognomics with a specific focus on the face are Demosthenes and Aristotle. Cf. Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, 4–6.
aspects of life. The interpretation of physical expressions was based on the notion that humans physically participated with their environment; thus body movements, when properly performed could influence the world around them, that is, the social world of human interaction, as well as the physical environment and the more than human world of the gods.¹³ My focus here will be on body language in Roman perception, but aspects of course pertain also to the Greek as well as other discourses, although they are not identical.¹⁶

Although there can be hardly any doubt that body language was a decisive aspect of social interaction in Roman society, explicit evidence that the education of the male elite included the learning of appropriate body language as intrinsic to the habitus of the male members of the Roman aristocracy only emerged by the time of the late Republic/early Principate. The values of the Roman elite were embodied and were decisive aspects of social interaction between peers as well as between elite men and non-elite or subordinate people, such as women, freedmen, slaves, or provincials. Teaching of this body language was for centuries a matter of practice rather than based on written codes. Only in Cicero and later Quintilian can we find detailed accounts to the appropriate gestures and bodily posture corresponding to the ideal of the elite man. Boys born into Roman aristocratic families acquired this body language through their primary socialization and in a secondary step through formal education.

Since for elite men the ability to perform public speeches was a decisive aspect of gaining and asserting power, recognition, and authority among peers as well as in the wider population, Roman education in particular was dominated by learning how to perform as a rhetorician. This not only included the structuring of a speech but more importantly, as Quintilian asserts, the body language in which a speech is presented, that is, its performance.¹⁵ Every aspect was deemed important; every movement, gaze, and vocal expression was decisive for rendering the performance of a speech successful. Through his posture, eye movement, voice, handshake, etc., a young man had to prove that he was born to lead. Thus Cicero, in providing instruction to his son, warns him not to walk too quickly since this prompts “quick breathing, a changed facial expression, a misshapen

¹⁵ *Inst. Orat.* II.3.5
mouth” and thus renders it clear to any observer that one lacks in constantia.\textsuperscript{16} However, an elite man should not walk too slowly as this would indicate a lack of effectiveness.\textsuperscript{17} It was of highest importance to get this balance right, as in movement and bodily expression, especially in facial expressions,\textsuperscript{18} the social status of a person could be “read” in public. To hurry was certainly the mark of a slave or an inferior person.\textsuperscript{19} The bodily expression is taken to refer directly to social status and to the moral quality of the person. A man’s style renders his morals visible, as Seneca powerfully asserted: “Everything has its own indicator, if you pay attention, and even the smallest details offer an indication of a person’s character. An effeminate man is revealed by his walk, from the way he brings his finger up to his head, and from his eye-movement” (Epist. 52.12).\textsuperscript{20} Cicero notes that “gesture is used not merely to emphasize words, but to reveal thought—this includes the movement of the hands, the shoulders, the sides, as well as how one stands and walks.”\textsuperscript{21} This mattered because seeing and being seen were decisive aspects among the Roman male elite, and appearance (aspectus) was listed by Quintilian in one breath with wealth, influence, authority, and self-worth (pecunia, gratia, auctoritas, dignitias) as the features that render a person’s speech and action persuasive.\textsuperscript{22} Becoming a rhetorician and establishing one’s status in Roman elite society is bound to the ability to embody male elite values accurately. Education/paideia was the induction of boys and adolescents into this world. Rhetorical skill, which decisively encompassed the respective bodily expression, was the test of excellence.

Significantly, accurate embodiment of these values included differentiating oneself not only in terms of status (e.g., not to move like a slave) but also in

\textsuperscript{16} Off. 1.131.
\textsuperscript{17} Corbeill, Nature, 122.
\textsuperscript{18} This is an interesting aspect which cannot be further discussed within the scope of this paper, but note that Pliny (Nat. II.145) asserts that the eyes are superior to any other part of the body as they indicate emotions in such a way that they actually are a mirror of the soul in that the soul lives in the eyes. Cf. Corbeill, Nature Embodied, 146.
\textsuperscript{21} Cicero, Orat. 3.216
\textsuperscript{22} Inst. Orat. II.15.6. On the role of perception in Roman ideology, Cicero’s claim is interesting: “we have surpassed all nations in piety and in knowledge that we have perceived (perspeximus) how everything is ruled and ordered by divine spirits” (Har. Resp. 19). Cicero attributes Rome’s success to the accuracy of their perception. Cf. also Corbeill, Nature Embodied, 150.
terms of gender and in relation to the subordinate provincial ἔθνη. Thus the guidance to masculine bodily expression included warnings not to appear feminine. Certain movements and gestures had to be avoided as they were deemed feminine, such as the way one brought a finger to one’s head, and the vocal expression had to be firm and strong, as a thin and feeble voice was deemed feminine. As Maud Gleason so aptly described, paideia was about making men, Roman and Greek elite men. Paideia aimed at differentiating Roman elite men not only from women or effeminate men but also from all “others.” Thus not only should the orator not be seen to move in an effeminate way, he should also not speak with an accent or move in a rustic way. Provincials demonstrated their inferior status and the fact that they were not part of elite Roman society through their “accent, pronunciation, sense of humor, and speaking gestures.” This was perceived as evidence of their lack of paideia and knowledge, possibly a high degree of emotionality and even immorality. People who did not conform to the ideal of Roman elite masculinity were not perceived as worthy of equal standing as they were not able to articulate themselves accurately or move in accordance with what was considered nature. Through the embodiment of masculinity according to Roman elite values, an exclusivist, gendered discourse of “othering” was established.

Teaching Christ-followers from the Nations: Translating Body Language

This elitist body discourse must have had implications concerning the perception of the role and status of Paul. He presents himself as flogged and generally as suffering which categorizes him as a low status person close to slaves; com-
bined with the fact that he is a member of a conquered people, this appears to be a reference to himself as a man who clearly does not conform to the prevalent masculinity ideal, and thus renders him susceptible to being perceived as an effeminate apostle. Clearly Paul does not embody the Roman ideal of elite masculinity. He presents himself in the tradition of the fallible and vulnerable leader, characteristics which in Roman perception would have rendered him unmanly, possibly feminine, and certainly a member of an inferior people. I have argued elsewhere that I see this self-presentation not as merely based on the message of the gospel, although it is certainly part of it. But it needs to be taken into account that Paul and his interpretation of the Christ-event are embedded in and part of Jewish tradition, that is, of an embodied tradition which had developed an alternative to the dominating masculinity and authority discourse of Greece and Rome. As Catherine Hezser notes, “Paul’s presentation of a weak body that was subject to inflictions may also be based on a particularly Jewish perception of the (male) body which was different from Roman views of manliness.” Paul’s embodiment of alternative values differentiates him from
Roman elites, but in this differentiation he is not so much an exception as an advocate of certain existing Jewish traditions. This to some extent alternative tradition was transmitted through its own set of educational literature through which the young men were inducted into their own distinctive ideals and practices.\textsuperscript{34}

**The Addressees: From the Nations**

What are the implications of this alternative discourse when it comes to “teaching the Christ-followers from the nations” the ways in Christ? From a number of passages, it seems evident that Paul was not only aware of the relevance of body language as such (e.g. as in the context of leadership debates in 2 Corinthians), but specifically of its significance with regard to the educational process for Christ-followers from the nations. It can be assumed that these former pagans were socialized in their particular traditions and embodied these traditions in their primary *habitus*. Little is known about these provincial traditions beyond the Greek and Roman perceptions, which hardly reflect the self-perception of the provinces and conquered peoples, who in Roman sources predominantly serve the Roman imperial narrative.\textsuperscript{35} The image of peoples from the provinces were used to enhance the image of Rome as the just and divinely ordained rulers of the *oikoumene*. Therefore, positive traits of the provincials, such as bravery in battle, served to depict Roman victory in an even more favorable light.\textsuperscript{36} Subjugated peoples were typically depicted as inferior, thus providing the rationale for the conquest and the imposition of Roman rule. Greece was not exempt from this
perception, despite the fact that Greek *paideia* and aspects of Greek culture were held in the highest regard by the Romans. They could acknowledge that Greeks were superior in areas such as poetry and literature (Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1.1), but since these areas were considered less relevant, it was beyond Roman dignity to compete with Greeks. In areas that mattered, Romans perceived themselves as far superior to the Greeks. ³⁷

It can thus be assumed that Paul’s addressees would certainly have been exposed to Roman values and ideas of superiority, even if their own traditions and values might have differed. Although most of them were not part of the elite population (1 Cor 1:26–28) and thus not “made into men” through formal *paideia*, the ideals of Greek and Roman education most likely trickled down to the lower strata of the population since many of the related activities were performed publicly. Paul’s addressees certainly would have been able to “read” the body language of “running” or “walking in a moderate gait” as expressions of status differentiation through everyday encounters and as part of the necessity to “know their place” in this hierarchically stratified society. In addition, they would have learned the ideal of Roman elite body language indirectly through public speeches and the requirement upon them as members of the non-elite to be able to relate to elite body language with an accurate embodiment of their own inferior status.

### Translating Body Language in Philippians and 1 Corinthians

Paul seems to refer to elitist perceptions of “the other” when he reminds the Corinthians that God chose what is foolish, weak, low, and despised (1 Cor 1:27–28) in the world (in worldly perception) and tries to teach the addressees a different perspective on the elitist qualifications. Although the addressees would have not likely received a Greek *paideia*, as non-elite members of Roman provinces they would have embodied some of the values of Greece and Rome as attributed to inferior peoples. The fact that Paul feels compelled to mention that he did not conform to the image of the ideal orator and did not display the required qualities, either in speech or body language (2 Cor 10:10), indicates that at least some in the Corinthian community challenged the legitimacy of his leadership and authority based on such Roman elitist values. It was evident that Paul did not embody these.

³⁷ Cf. e.g. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1.1.2. See Ehrensperger, *Paul at the Crossroads of Cultures*, 76–90.
Paul’s teaching did not only encompass verbal guidance. In several passages Paul refers to embodiment and body language generally, aspects which constituted a decisive part of his teaching of the nations. In Phil 4:9 he reminds the addressees to “Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me” (ἀκαθιστάτε καὶ ἰκεχώροτε καὶ εἰθετε ἐν ἐμοί ταῦτα πρᾶσσετε). The first three aspects could be seen as referring to traditional teaching of traditions; the last, however, “what you have seen in me,” refers to the dimension of embodiment. It is evident that in order to teach the Christ-followers the embodiment of the message, Paul has to embody it himself. This resonates with teachers of rhetoric who not only taught young boys persuasive speech but also the requisite body language.

It is not quite clear what the Philippians would have seen in Paul. The admonishment “to do” what they have seen indicates that learning to be Christ-followers from the nations meant to learn to embody the message. Earlier in the letter Paul refers to a “struggle” the Philippians have seen in him (1:30), which he links with “suffering,” but in 4:9 no such specific link is made. So it seems that Paul does not restrict “what they have seen in him” to suffering. It seems that he admonishes them to consider for themselves which aspects of their lives correspond to what they have learned, received, heard, and seen in Paul: “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (4:9). This is not very precise guidance as to what should be embodied but leaves the addressees to their own assessment and judgement. They should work out for themselves what aspects of their own experience and possibly previously embodied traditions were compatible with what they have learned from Paul. This means that Paul considers them able to make such assessments without his detailed guidance, and moreover, that he presumes that aspects of their own non-Jewish traditions were compatible with being in Christ.

In 1 Corinthians there are passages with more details concerning the embodiment of the teaching the addressees had heard and seen in Paul. In 1 Cor 4:6 Paul explicitly notes that he had written about Apollos and himself “so


that they may learn through us (ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μᾶθητε).” Although the phrase “not beyond what is written” remains cryptic and cannot be discussed here, the reference immediately afterwards to “so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another” indicates that learning from Apollos and Paul means learning how to relate to each other. The social behavior refuted here is very much what is expected of Roman elite men and what is promoted in the education of young members of Roman aristocracy. They were taught to embody competitive strife in order to outdo and surpass others.⁴⁰ This is the problem Paul feels urged to address in the opening verses of this letter where faction building and competition threaten to distort the social relationships among the Corinthian Christ-followers. The Corinthians had not yet understood and, thus, had not been able to embody core aspects of Paul’s teaching in their social interactions with each other. They appear to relate to each other as they had learned or seen in social interactions. Although not members of the elite, they related to each other according to the pattern of Roman elite competitiveness (and later in 2 Corinthians it is evident that this included the ideal of leadership and authority advocated particularly in Roman elite education). Paul clearly considers this to be a failure in the learning process he had expected of them, and so in 1 Cor 3:1–2 he labels them infants in Christ, who could not yet be fed with solid food. This is educational language as noted above, as is Paul’s reference to them as children.⁴¹ The assertion of group membership via association with what were perceived to be people of status and authority is patterned on the pervasive patronage system prevalent in Roman society,⁴² a pattern Paul clearly considers to be incompatible with being a member of the Christ-movement. Paul tries to rectify the Corinthians’ misunderstood embodiment of the message by referring to Christ crucified, to himself as a messenger who does not conform to the ideal of the Roman elite orator (2:4), and to the cooperation between himself and Apollos as fulfilling different but equally important tasks in the service of the gospel without competing with each other (at least this is the image Paul depicts here). In addition, he had sent Timothy as an embodied reminder of the ways in Christ he “taught everywhere in every assembly (καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πᾶσι ἔκκλησισ διδάσκω)” (4:17). Paul’s appeal to imitate him needs to be seen in the context of his attempts to teach these former pagans “the ways in Christ,”

⁴² Cf. the discussion in Ehrensperger, Paul and the Dynamics of Power, 146–47.
as a teaching method. This teaching included the embodiment of the message and the values of the movement and thus had to include bodily dimensions of learning in analogy to, but at the same time different from, the paideia discourse of the dominating culture.\(^4\)

**Conclusions**

The problems Paul tries to address in 1 Corinthians 1–4 demonstrate the difficulties in translating the message of Christ, as a message thoroughly rooted and embedded in the diversity of the Jewish social and symbolic universe, into the social and symbolic universe of Christ-followers from the nations. This is particularly true with the embodiment of the message. This does not come as a surprise when we consider the imprint bodily socialization leaves on humans from a very early age, famously labeled the habitus by Bourdieu. Paul certainly tried to transform the habitus, that is the embodiment of values of Christ-followers from the nations. He faced an upward struggle. What is learned in the body is not easily left behind, if this is possible at all. However, according to Bourdieu the habitus, although durable, is malleable, hence the reshaping and transformation that happens throughout the human lifetime.\(^4\) The human learning process is open and includes embodiment. But teaching Christ-followers from the nations the embodiment of values and behavior concerning social relations which differed significantly from the dominating elite male discourse obviously led to some fundamental misunderstandings. Teaching via his own body was decisive for Paul if there was to be any chance of a successful translation process. But it was also decisive that aspects of the social and symbolic universe with which these Christ-followers from the nations were familiar were incorporated in this teaching and translation process. In my view, it is significant that Paul referred to their world in Phil 4:8, providing them with a bridge to aspects of embodied values and experiences from the world they were familiar with in order to embed these in their life in Christ as far as they conformed to the values of the message of the gospel.

Moreover, the fact that most of these early Christ-followers were not members of the elite themselves may have helped in that they themselves would have been perceived, as Paul reminds them, as not wise by human standards,

\(^4\) On imitation as part of the educational discourse in Paul, see Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, 137–54.

not powerful, and not of noble birth. From the dominating, normative perspective they would have been perceived as deficient of the credentials of elite men, of lower standing, and thus despised and weak. Their low social status, combined with the fact that most of the early Christ-followers were members of conquered nations, meant that it was impossible for them to ever entirely overcome this perception of the elite. Even Josephus acknowledged that he could not speak Greek without an accent, a clear sign of his inferiority in the eyes of Rome.⁴⁵ Thus the addressees’ embodiment of the values of the elite possibly was aspirational and a mimicking game rather than an expression of an elite status; there was little they could do to change their actual status. Even if provincials or slaves aspired to join the elite or at least come close to them, their status as “other” would not substantially have changed.⁴⁶ Paul’s embodied teaching includes a transformation of the self-perception of Christ-followers from the nations. The perception of the dominating elite was not the perception of the God of Israel who also was the God of Christ and through him of the Christ-followers from the nations. Paul tries to teach them not to try to imitate the pattern of this world (Rom 12:1–2) but to transform their perception so they could see and act differently. Humility and humbleness, support for others, even suffering at the hand of a dominating power are then not seen as the embodiment of inferiority, but rather of their relationship with the one God of Israel through Christ under the conditions of Roman domination. Thus, while it might be difficult to “translate” or transform body language, the perception or interpretation of body language could certainly be transformed. Paul’s teaching of the nations may be described as including a transformed perception of embodied practice in light of the Christ-event.

To conclude, Paul embodies aspects of his own Jewish traditions and as such also of the Christ-event. At the same time he demonstrates awareness of and familiarity with the Greek ideals of paideia as appropriated by Rome, in relation to leadership issues, group dynamics, and social interactions within the Christ-movement. Paul is fully cognizant of the socio-political and cultural context of his addressees as their teacher in Christ. Most of his addressees were not

⁴⁵ J.W. 20.263–64.
⁴⁶ In the first century even granting Roman citizenship to freedpersons or conquered peoples did not elevate them to the same status as free-born Roman citizens. Cf. Clifford Ando, Law, Language and Empire in the Roman Tradition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 86–92, who notes that “the Romans were clearly capable of conceiving of citizenship as a means to embrace conquered populations within structures of domination, and hence of citizenship as entailing obligations—above all, taxation and military service—without any correlative privileges whatsoever” (88).
socialized through a process of formal education into Greek and Roman male elite values and behavior. Nevertheless, since the Roman elite ideal permeated all aspects of public life, it influenced all members of society, and the elitist patterns may well have been replicated in the social relations of the lower strata of the population. Through the bodily dimension of his teaching, Paul tries to translate alternative values and perceptions of his Jewish tradition, highlighted in his view through the Christ-event, into the world of his addressees. Paul refutes the dominant perception with the alternative interpretation of his own bodily experience and his respective teaching of the nations in Christ, which is embedded in the Jewish perception of the world as God’s creation. This alternative narrative of belonging and meaning challenges Roman claims that only their form of embodiment coheres to nature, rendering “others” subhuman or at least human in a secondary sense. Paul’s teaching through embodiment aims at translating the Jewish challenge to the hegemonial Roman claims via the message of the Christ-event into the world of these “others,” these former pagans, encouraging and empowering them not to replicate the patterns “of this world” as the ideal to embody, but instead to transform their perception and embody the values of the Christ-movement by presenting “their bodies as living sacrifices to God” (Rom 12:1).