

What Does $\rho\rho\epsilon\kappa\omega$ Really Echo in Romans 3.9?

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1. Introduction

$\rho\rho\epsilon\kappa\omega$ (i.e. $\rho\rho\epsilon\omega\mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha$) in Rom 3.9 is confusing. This is because it may be translated at least three different ways depending on whether it is true middle, passive or middle deponent, – ‘Are we protecting ourselves?’, ‘Are we any worse?’ or ‘Are we any better?’.¹ In spite of this confusion, commentators display little anxiety, because the overall sense of the verse is supposedly unaffected.² Paul (it is argued) is aiming to summarize 1.18-3.20: a proof of universal sinfulness.³ Under this reading, the role of $\rho\rho\epsilon\kappa\omega$ is simply a supporting one, introducing the idea of equality, leading to a clearer statement of the same in the second half of the verse: ‘What then? Are we self-protecting/better/worse? No, not at all; *for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin*’ (3.9). The precise meaning of $\rho\rho\epsilon\kappa\omega$ is not crucial, therefore, neither does it strongly echo anything outside this verse. Its primary role is rather to lead discussion to Paul’s all-important summary statement for the section.

There is however a fourth possibility, also attested in ancient literature. This reading (though never seriously considered in modern discussion of Rom 3.9),⁴ translates $\rho\rho\epsilon\kappa\omega$ as, ‘*to have something beforehand.*’ Such a usage can be seen in Herodotus (c. 484-425 BCE): ‘having previously received hostile expressions of

¹ Eg. W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *Romans* (ICC; 5th ed., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902) 76-77; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1977) 187-191; B. Byrne, *Romans* (SP 6; Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 1996) 119.

² J. Knox, *Romans* (IB 9; NY: Abingdon, 1954) 425: ‘This problem of translation is not very important, however, because there can be no doubt of Paul’s meaning at the really essential point. He is intending to affirm that the Jew is not better off (and of course not worse off) than others: All men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin.’

³ Such an interpretation was held as early as Chrysostom, and by the many commentators today. There is however a growing number who find this problematic. See eg. S. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans* (New Haven: Yale, 1994) 173-179 and most recently D. A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul’s Gospel* (NY: T&T Clark, 2005) 231-61.

⁴ Note, for example, its absence in Cranfield’s otherwise comprehensive analysis on the Greek of Rom 3.9 (*Romans*, 1:187-91). In the author’s reading, no commentator in the modern era could be found who considered this possibility.

feeling from the Athenians' (proeḗwn meḗ twā qhvaiḗwn ouofil iaj gnwmāj).⁵ The same is also found in one of the Flinders Petrie papyri: 'consider what they have already obtained' (uḗol oghson ōproeḗwn).⁶ The reason for it being neglected in consideration of Rom 3.9 is likely that the verb is used intransitively here, but transitively in the above two examples.⁷ It must be wondered however whether this is sufficient reason to eliminate this as a serious possibility.

This paper begins with the commentaries of two ancient Byzantine authors who, working with the same text as the critical text of today, take proeḗw in Rom 3.9 to mean, 'to have something beforehand.'⁸ Photius (c.820-893) and his disciple Arethas (c.860-932) devote significant space to this word and its meaning and in this way contribute importantly to modern discussion of this verse. As part of aiding a renewed consideration of this so-called 'fourth possibility' for proexomeqa in Rom 3.9, Section 2 will offer English translations of these two authors, together with discussion.

The question then emerges however, whether this fourth possibility should be given any credibility or indeed whether it might even be a superior way to translate proexomeqa in Rom 3.9.⁹ Section 3 will attempt to address this issue, by focusing on *etymology in Rome and Romans 3.9*. The use of etymology to determine the meaning of words (though rightly criticised as a strategy for today)¹⁰ was ingrained in the psyche of the first century. Because of this, it is reasonable that Paul could write and expected his implied hearers to have grasped such a 'fourth possibility.' If this is true, there are implications for renewed attention to etymology –not in linguistics but in interpreting the NT.

⁵ *Hist.* 9.4, ref. in C. Maurer, "proeḗkomāi," *TDNT* 6:692-93.

⁶ P. Petr.2.12, fr. 4, also quoted in Maurer, *TDNT*, 692.

⁷ C.f. again, Maurer, *TDNT*, 692. It might seem strange that no one has considered this idea, esp. when the variant prokatekōmen perissoh (D* G Y 104 Or^(lat) Ambst and other Fathers) seems to clarify discussion in this direction. In so far as this textual variant does not include the answer however (ouo pahtwj), thus changing the overall character of the verse, it has obviously been overlooked even as a viable way of translating proexomeqa.

⁸ A TLG search revealed that while people like Chrysostom were aware of the majority reading of today, they nevertheless chose to work with a variant. Ironically this variant clarifies the meaning of proexomeqa in the direction of the so-called 'fourth possibility' – prokatekōmen perissoh. In spite of this, Chrysostom in his homily on this passage smooths over its meaning and options for a reading of Rom 3.9 more consistent with interpretations of today.

⁹ The ongoing disagreement over the above three translations would seem to give some added impetus for at least seriously considering an alternative such as this.

¹⁰ See famously, J. Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1961).

With the analysis of Section 3 however, comes the ability to *critique* Photius and Arethas and speak of *the implications for Romans*. This will be the subject of discussion in Section 4.

3. Insights from Byzantine Commentators

Photius (or Photios; c.820–Feb6, 893) was an extremely accomplished individual. Besides serving as Patriarch of Constantinople for two separate seasons (858-867 and 877-886), he was professor of philosophy and dialectics at the university at the Magnaura Palace.¹¹ He penned the significant *Bibliotheca* which gives us access to many older theologians, historians, orators, philosophers, grammarians, physicists and physicians. He also wrote a significant Greek Lexicon.¹² He was undoubtedly a person with broad interests and learning. Sandys, quoting Gibbon, says that ‘no art or science, except poetry, was foreign to this universal scholar, who was deep in thought, indefatigable in reading, and eloquent in diction.’¹³

Arethas (c.860-932) was not so famous as Photius, but being his disciple it can be assume he learnt something from his teacher. Indeed *he* is described by Shahan as ‘one of the most scholarly theologians of the Greek Church,’ rising also to the ecclesiastical position of Archbishop of Caesarea.¹⁴ As can be seen below his comments on Rom 3.9, while agreeing with those of Photius, also go significantly beyond them.

Photius Theol., Scr. Eccl. Et Lexicogr., *Fragmenta in epistulam ad Romanos*.
Page 486.7 – 487.5.

Ti/ou~~η~~; proexomeqa; ou~~η~~antwj ; ‘What more then do we *have*,’ he says, ‘we Jews? What? Nothing.’¹⁵ Why? Because we all (Jews and Greeks) are under sin.’ ‘Through the law,’ he

¹¹ D. S. White, *Patriarch Photios of Constantinople* (MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982) 17.

¹² J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship Volume 1: From the Sixth Century B.C. to the End of the Middle Ages* (3rd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921) 95-97.

¹³ Sandys, *History*, 96. Note also White’s description: ‘an intimate of the powerful, a courtier, an intellectual, an encyclopedist, a teacher, and a voracious student of anything that books could offer’ (*Patriarch Photios*, 15).

¹⁴ See the ‘Arethas of Caesarea’ entry in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (NY: Robert Appleton company, 1913).

¹⁵ ti/ou~~η~~exomen, fhsih, h~~η~~iej- oi~~η~~oudaiei plebn; ti/ ou~~η~~eh

says, 'and through circumcision we in no way *have* more *before* regarding the things which we *have* (οὐδὲν προκατεκόμεν πλεονωφειόμεν).

This is the interpretation which is able to be read in a two-fold way (two, even, are the insights to be had): First, on the one hand, concerning the Jews being indicted and the other concerning the uncircumcised believers being liberated [i.e. from confusion].

If then, firstly, we read 'τι/ου)ν προεξομμεqa' (in this case we are stringing together the 'προεξομμεqa' which in the question is otherwise partitioned), the indictment concerning the Jew is reveal, even that the Jew might have thoughts of this kind – 'What then', he says, 'do we have before?' What answers do we get from the uncircumcised person? Their reply is 'ου) πα)ντωj' i.e. 'not in every way is this a gain to you. For you did not guard the entrustment in any way different, neither gain from it, except the greatest punishment!' So it is, in this first case, if someone reads a connection between 'τι/ου)ν' and 'προεξομμεqa'.

But on the other hand, if according to a distinction, two questions are formed: 'what then?' and separately the 'προεξομμεqa?' With the uncircumcised believer there will be concern. For since it was said before: 'much is the abundance of the Jew', the uncircumcised people turn in doubt and say: 'What then? Were they chosen before (προεκρίθησαν ε)ξειροί)? Did he receive beforehand (προελαβον)? Were we previously inferior (η)μεις προελειφθημεν)? Do we have before (προεξομμεqa)? What about the righteousness of God? On whose side is the divine Paul? He answers, 'God Forbid!' 'ου) πα)ντωj !' For, he says, that the ones not being set up straight are guilty, just as even you are not being set up straight. But concerning being set right, each of two has the same salvation, even as you [both] did not *have* it beforehand (ω)στε ου)προεκεςqe).

The 'What then? Do we have before?' seems to be a quarrel, even as it is connected to the prior discussion, because 'much in every way' (πολυκαταπαντα; c.f. Rom 3.2) is the abundance of the Jews and the benefits of the circumcised. For Paul says there is much to be said and much in the circumcision for the uncircumcised to have (ε)χειν). But then on the other hand nothing is to be had before (ε)δωκα δε\ουδὲν προεχειν). In fact, he is not actually quarrelling, for on the one hand there is much to have (ε)χειν), he says, from the compassion and truth of God, because the words were entrusted, because the promises were fulfilled, not being hindered by the unbelieving. In these things, he compares the appearances of the uncircumcised and the circumcised and he says that in these things, 'no one is different, with differences to be *had* beforehand' (μηδὲν ε)τερουj ε)τερων προεχειν). For as it may be with the setting up straight of the moral excellencies of such a succession, likewise of the good works benefiting; and further which again are being left, and further still the uncircumcised (quite so!), and yet further those in circumcision –of the same punishing themselves. Just as the 'nothing do I have before' is quarrelled and the 'many are the abundances of the Jews' and 'the advantages of the circumcised'. But according to one place there it is said and according to another is now the judgement.

Photius' main interest here is to explain the change in meaning which occurs if Paul is asking one question rather than two.¹⁶ If it is one question only, then the Jews are being exposed for their wrong belief that they 'have' anything more than the uncircumcised. If Paul has in mind two questions, the meaning changes to a defence before the uncircumcised of his 'overly-positive' statements about the Jews in 3.1-8. Paul had already claimed that the Jews *do* have some priority in 3.1-8, so his purpose under this reading of 3.9 becomes a clarification for his uncircumcised hearers. In the final analysis, Photius makes no judgement on which interpretation is to be preferred, only to explain how both fit the context and discussion of Romans 3.¹⁷

It may be seen however, that whichever path is taken, Phoitus believed that προεἶναι means 'to have something before.' This is unmistakable with Photius' constant use of εἶναι in explanation. It seems implied that the Jewish 'having' of *the law* is the issue at hand, though Photius' discussion tends to focus squarely on Romans 3, rather than connecting things back to Romans 2. Perhaps he simply fails to draw attention to it because of a lack of space. Or perhaps he did not see so strong a connection. Either way, it will be observed below that Arethas' moves discussion forward on this point by making a clearer allusion to Romans 2.

Arethas Philol. et Scr. Eccl., *Fragmenta in epistulam ad Romanos*. Page 654.14-25

In the strictest manuscripts, and the oldest ones, προεξομῆσα is not held, but 'What then are we possessing in abundance? (τί/οὐκᾶ κατεκόμεν περισσοῦ)' The προεξομῆσα is able to communicate two things: Either (1) more abundance to condemnation, since indeed we say: 'the condemned are liable!' Or he is able to communicate also the preference, in so far as we say: 'Such-and-such was prior in such-and-such unto moral excellence.' Now according to the first (1), he is desiring to make clear the προεξομῆσα, i.e. the condemnation upon such a knowledge: 'What then? Jews are condemned in greater ways to every Gentile, in as much as they are being honored 'before' (on the one hand) in the gift of the law compared to all Gentiles. But then on the other hand none of these are being made good are they? And he says, 'not at all', for out of the same honor all sinned. And if they did not sin they would not be having to boast over us –those according to law, as they are being honored more than us with moral virtue. But according to the second communication (2), he wishes to destroy the

¹⁶ C.f. Cranfield, *Romans*, 189.

¹⁷ One is perhaps reminded of Dunn's contention throughout his *Romans* commentary that the ancients were not so concerned with ambiguity.

self-will of the Jews in the feasting of the law, and he is demonstrating as nothing Jewish prior honor, compared with other nations on account of the law, when they are like the others –in want of the goodness of God.

Arethas (as mentioned already), follows Photius in his broad brushstrokes. He too reads $\rho\rho\epsilon\kappa\omega$ as ‘to have something beforehand,’ and like Photius sees this as a reference to the Jews ‘having’ something prior to the Gentiles. His description of what is meant by ‘beforehand’ however is more suggestive (i.e. having things before the Christian era). In addition though, he makes much clearer connections back to Romans 2, while at the same time saying little about the immediate context of Romans 3. His clearest link back to Romans 2 is a reference to Paul’s use of ‘boasting,’ to Rom 2.18, 23.

Arethas shows an awareness of the textual tradition which read $\tau\iota/\text{OU}\overline{\text{K}}\text{ATEKOMEN PERISSOH}$.¹⁸ In spite of this awareness however, Arethas opts to stay with what is today the critical text, probably because it includes $\text{OU}\overline{\text{Q}}\text{AHTWJ}$, which he saw as important to Paul’s argument (note above). It almost seems though (reading between the lines) that he would have been happiest with a text that read $\tau\iota/\text{OU}\overline{\text{K}}\text{ATEKOMEN PERISSOH}; \text{OU}\overline{\text{Q}}\text{AHTWJ}$ (were one to have existed).

It can be observed then, that both Photius and Arethas saw $\rho\rho\epsilon\chi\omega\mu\epsilon\alpha$ as meaning ‘Do we have something beforehand?’ Both also sought to read this word within the context which led to this point of noting the Jews ‘having’ and the uncircumcised/Gentiles not ‘having’. Photius tends to focus more on Romans 3, though by implication links things also back to Romans 2. Arethas on the other hand gives more clarity to ‘beforehand’ and makes stronger connections with Romans 2. Why then does Paul include this question here in 3.9? Photius has more to say on this. Depending on whether there are two questions or one, he either wished to clarify the place of the Jews compared with the place of the uncircumcised, or to satisfy a reader who thought he was giving Jews a superior status through the discussion of 3.1-8.

The question naturally arises whether this ‘fourth possibility’ has any likelihood of being correct compared with the other three. This will be the subject taken up in the next section.

¹⁸ Given the way Photius makes use of the word PERISSOH , a case could also be made for his awareness of this text.

We must proceed to lend brilliance to our style by frequent embellishments both of thought and words.... for great effect may be produced by dwelling on a single point... Again, slight changes and alterations may be made in words, the same word may be repeated sometimes at the beginning of a sentence and sometimes at the end... the same word may be repeated with a different meaning... words may have the same inflexion of termination ... we may... introduce the same word repeatedly in different cases.... Anticipation may also be employed to establish the meaning or propriety of words.²⁰

Rhetors, Quintilian notes, made use of word repetition for many different purposes to tie their speech into a neat artistic whole. If people were familiar with word repetition, then it might also be said that Paul could write with such connections consciously in mind and reasonably expect an implied hearer to catch such connections.

There is a second phenomena however, worth drawing attention to in this matter, i.e. the use of *etymology* as a strategy for understanding confusing words. Since as early as the fifth century BCE, the Greeks were interested in how people could know the meaning of unfamiliar words, when confused in reading. It was this issue which led to the inclusion of glossaries explaining to a reader the meaning of the most obscure words.²¹ Not surprisingly philosophers became involved in this practice,²² and in turn contemplated the problem of the nature of words. Plato (c.427-347) in his *Cratylus* portrayed Socrates mediating the middle view that language is founded in nature but modified by convention.²³ Aristotle believed it was all convention.²⁴ It was within this entire context that etymology arose as the practical strategy of choice for determining the meaning of a confusing word –particularly for those wishing to emphasize ‘nature’. According to philosophical ideals, etymology “reveals the original word-thing relations which ground language in meaning.”²⁵

As we enter the first century CE, Aristotle had little influence and people like the stoics and neo-Platonists were widely emphasizing the importance of ‘nature’. Not surprisingly therefore, etymology was the strategy of choice for lawyers in their quest

²⁰ Quintilian, *Inst*, 9.1.27-9.2.18.

²¹ L. Zgusta and D. Georgacas, ‘Lexicography of Ancient Greek,’ in *Dictionaries : an international encyclopedia of lexicography* (NY: W. de Gruyter, 1990) 1696.

²² R. L. Collison, *A History of Foreign-Language Dictionaries* (London: André Deutsch, 1982) 26; Zgusta and D. Georgacas, ‘Lexicography,’ 1696.

²³ Plato, *Cratylus* (tr. C. Reeves; in *Plato’s Works* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1997).

²⁴ Sandys, *History*, 96.

²⁵ M. Amsler, *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1989) 27.

to define words precisely. Quintilian notes the lawyers of his day, ‘who spend so much trouble over the appropriateness of words.’²⁶ But others too, like Plutarch (c.50-c.120), can be seen to employ etymology throughout their writings. Aulus Gellius (c.125-c.180) later wrote about individuals in this and earlier eras, who used (and abused!) etymology.²⁷

With this hermeneutical phenomena in mind, it becomes reasonable, that the ambiguity of proexomeqa and also Paul’s economy of words, would cause sufficient confusion to have hearers wracking their brains to understand it. They would then have turned to etymology. More than this though, all four of the possible meanings for proekw (mentioned in this paper) are directly derivable using an etymologically strategy: ‘Are we any better’ (middle deponent), takes the pro- prefix *spatially*, and reads ekw with its usual sense: ‘Do we *have* [something] (- exomeqa) *before* (pro-) [another] (i.e. do we have an advantage)?’ Likewise the true middle: ‘Do we *have* (- exomeqa) [something] *before* (pro-) ourselves (i.e. are we protecting ourselves)?’ So too the true passive: ‘Are we *had* (- exomeqa) *before* (pro-) [by another] (i.e. have a disadvantage)?’ The fourth possibility differs only in that the pro- prefix is now *temporal* rather than spatial: ‘Do we have [something] (- exomeqa) *beforehand* (pro-)?’ If the audience began to employ an etymological strategy, as we might expect, this particular word would encourage such a pursuit all the more. But then as they thought on the parts pro- and ekw , and their root meanings, their ears (attuned to word repetitions) would also hear connections to Romans 2 and to prohtiasameqa , three words later. They would then see that Paul was asking ‘What then? Do we have something beforehand?’ –even as Photius and Arethas imply they would, through context alone.

Drawing attention to Roman cultural conventions of repetition and particularly etymology therefore, add support to Photius and Arethas’ reading. Rather than simply connections with ideas, Paul could rely on other word connections to be seen, particularly via the etymological thinking of his day.²⁸

²⁶ *Inst.* 5.14.34, Butler.

²⁷ *Noct. att.* 7.12.1-6; 13.10.1-4.

²⁸ Which is further suggestive that we who since Ferdinand de Saussure have been inoculated against etymology in linguistics (c.f. Y. Malkiel, *Etymology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993] 41-104; and again, Barr, *Semantics*) should perhaps be paying closer attention to etymology as an exegetical tool in NT research.

4. Evaluating Byzantines & Implications for Romans

How then is the Photius/Arethas interpretation of *proekw* in Rom 3.9 to be interpreted? Favorably! It seems to the current author that the text makes good sense when read this way and that the necessary connections could certainly have been made by Paul's implied hearers (based on the discussion of Section 3). It was initially wondered whether there was a contradiction in reading 'we' as 'we Jews' under this interpretation –given that Paul in 3.9 would then be denying that the Jews ever 'had' the law. There is no problem here however, because in Rom 2.20 Paul is careful to define the 'having' of the Jew as the 'having' of benefits connected with the law (ie. *thñ morfwsin thj gnw/sewj kai thj aqhreibj*; 'the embodiment of knowledge and truth', v 20). Such a careful distinction on Paul's part could even be used to argue the credibility of this interpretation.

In the final analysis however this author prefers to read 'we' as meaning Paul or 'we Christians' instead of 'we Jews' as with Photius and Arethas.²⁹ In spite of the careful distinction in 3.20 just mentioned, the etymological connection with *proh̄tiasameqa* which seems to clarify *pro-* as temporal, also tips the balance towards linking the 'we' of this verb with the 'we' of *proekw* (ie. Paul). The other factor persuading this author, is the conviction that eschatology is crucial to Paul's discussion³⁰ and therefore that 'having *beforehand*' is a reference to eschatology –ie. whether Christians are claiming (in light of having true circumcision and real 'heart' law; 2.15, 26-29), to be the *new 'haves'*.³¹ In other words the question being asked is

²⁹ Stanley Stower's (among others) has argued strongly for this being the case ('Paul's Dialogue with a Fellow Jew in Romans 3:1-9' *CBQ* 46 [1984] 707-722). In Stower's case the argument is rooted in a careful connection with Paul's use of *questions* and this pointing towards a continuation of the dialogue with the Jewish interlocutor of Romans 2. It must be wondered in light of Quintilian's lengthy description of different rhetorical questions (*Inst.* 9.2.6-20) however, whether Stowers is correct to read so much from Epictetus' questions and their parallels with Paul in Rom 3.1-8.

³⁰ Note, for example, the comments of Bornkamm on Rom 1.16-17: 'As to what comes about in the gospel, Paul sounds the not of apocalyptic: "in it the righteous of God is revealed [apoclyptetai]" Rom. 1:17) – events with tremendous dimension, having the force of finality, the end of the present world and the beginning of a new era. It is as if the dazzling light of the last day flashes forth in this message. But this does not mean, as one might expect, that Paul is announcing an event still lying in the future and, as in the Jewish apocalypses, painting imaginative pictures of the destruction of the world and the splendors of the new aeon. He speaks of the present event, and event already here in the gospel itself. The gospel, then, does not simply inform about future salvation and destruction: God's saving advent has already been given effect in it. The gospel itself is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith" (Rom. 1:16). This does not fit into any apocalyptic pattern. What Jewish and primitive Christian apocalyptic look for in the near or remote future is already present reality in the gospel.' (G. Bornkamm, *Paul* [NY: Harper and Row, 1971] 114-115). See also the author's 'Oh dia ! How is Romans 4:25 to be Understood?' *JTS* 57 (2006) 149-55.

³¹ In terms of reading Rom 2.14-15 as Gentile Christians see S. Gathercole 'A Law unto Themselves: The Gentiles in Romans 2.14-15 Revisited' *JSNT* 85 (2002) 27-49.

whether Christians are simply turning the tables on the Jews ('What then? Are we Christians now claiming to have something beforehand?'). Paul denies such a claim, maintaining that all *flesh* (c.f. 3.20) in the era prior to the eschaton are culpable. What is needed, is for a person to enter into the eschaton in advance, through believing in Christ, and so receive the righteousness of God in advance (3.21-27). In this way the righteous judgment of God at the final eschaton,³² will have no fear for the individual.

Under either reading though, (whether the Photius/Arethas reading or this author's), Rom 1.16-3.20 cannot be seen as primarily a proof of universal sinfulness.³³ To be sure this is Paul's emphasis in 3.10-18 as part of drawing out an undercurrent in his teaching since Rom 1.16. But the second half of 3.9 can no longer drive the first half. Instead 3.9b and what follows gives support to the idea that no one 'has before'. Either it supports the bigger outlook of proving that Paul is not giving the Jews priority (Photius/Arethas), or it supports Paul's eschatological outlook that Christianity is not just a new form of Judaism. Under either of these readings a stronger connection is made with these early chapters of Romans and chaps 9-11. The difference in emphasis though has implications for the new perspectives discussion, a discussion which is beyond this scope of this current paper.³⁴

In this paper then, an attempt has been made to re-introduce an old interpretation of προεἶναι, i.e. the long-forgotten interpretations of Photius and Arethas. Support for their view has been given particularly through reconsidering the etymology of first century Roman culture. While adding support to such a reading, in the author's opinion it also points towards a modification in terms of 'we' being 'we Christians' rather than 'we Jews.' This paper also critiques Photius and Arethas as not seeing Paul's eschatological emphasis –something they can hardly be criticized for.

³² Contrast this emphasis throughout Romans 2, with Paul's 'present' emphasis in 1.16-32.

³³ Note H. Räisänen (*Paul and the Law* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986] 97-101), who discusses inconsistencies with the traditional view.

³⁴ The Photius/Arethas interpretation would seem to point more in support of the New Perspectives, while the author's interpretation tends to emphasize the other side more.