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FRIENDSHIP AND GIFT IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8–9:
SOCIAL RELATIONS AND CONVENTIONS IN THE JERUSALEM COLLECTION

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Ruth Ang-Onn Whiteford
May 2018

Approved by _____
Mark A. Seifrid Advisor

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Joel C. Elowsky Reader

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To my mother Priscilla and my husband Matthew

δυνατεὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεύσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν
αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν

2 Cor 9:8

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PREFACE

My academic work as a student comes full circle with this investigation into friendship and into the placement of the Jerusalem collection within the context of Hellenistic friendship. As an economics major in my undergraduate studies, I was intrigued, on one hand, by development and aid to struggling countries, and, on the other hand, the comparison of economic systems and theories behind those systems. My original intent involved working internationally with underprivileged groups to better their economic situations, but I became disenchanted with the idea after being confronted with the realities of corruption and the required systemic overhauls needed to sustain any true improvements.

My ponderings of the shape of real aid led me to seminary studies, where Hillel's *prosbul* piqued my interest. The *prosbul* was Hillel's response to the rich withholding loans from the poor prior to the sabbatical year of forgiveness; he found a loophole within the law to allow the rich to collect their loans when transferred from the private realm to the Jewish court. While it preserved the life of the poor in the short run, it did nothing to alleviate the burden of their debt and ultimately seemed to contradict the ethos God intended for his covenant community.

My inner longing for an alternative economic system and worldview is finally satisfied through my work on 2 Corinthians and Paul's instructions on the Jerusalem collection. The beginnings of this project came from a course on 2 Corinthians taught by Mark Seifrid and his insistence on Paul's presentation of the countercultural message of the gospel. That this fundraising project for Jerusalem was at odds with the patronage system led to hours in my library basement carrel and the serendipitous discovery of an essay by Abraham J. Malherbe on how the term ἀντάρχεια in Philippians should be understood as drawing from the friendship topos.

On the surface level, it interests me to consider how Corinth's economic transaction, her gift, to Jerusalem creates, symbolizes, and transforms their relationship. Whereas the Corinthians desire to see themselves as patrons in their desire for more status and honor, Paul, through the language of his instructions on the collection, reframes social relationships within the Church to that of friendship. His adaptation of Greco-Roman ideas of friendship encourages the Corinthians to embody the ethos of the new covenant community, to demonstrate care for each other and to engage in "righteous" activity together. Apart from God's χάρις and other gifts, such an ideal is unviable and unsustainable. Therefore, at a deeper level, I am happy to find that God redemptively interrupts the logic of the gift cycle and of all economic models. In his self-giving, he has enabled and enables true friendship and κοινωνία among Christians, and the covenant community's experience of the kingdom of God becomes a burgeoning reality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One thing that is clear from any study of friendship is that no one would want to live life alone. We are in need of friends, to alleviate our pain of bad times and to share our joy in good times. The same is true for me in my doctoral journey, and I am deeply grateful to all the people who have encouraged and helped me along.

I am first thankful for my professors at Concordia Seminary. At the top of the list is my doktorvater, Mark Seifrid, who thoughtfully listened to all my musings and gently guided me to discover answers and new questions for myself. Next are my readers, the first of which is Jeffrey Kloha, who directly worked with me throughout my early dissertation stages and always accommodated my request for Skype conversations at odd hours, and the second of which is Joel Elowsky, who helped me better define my terms and produce more polished writing. While all the professors I encountered during my time in St. Louis were never anything but open and willing conversation partners, I was especially impacted by my interactions with David Adams, Jeffrey Gibbs, Robert Kolb, Jeffrey Oswald, Paul Raabe, Henry Rowold, Timothy Saleska, Bruce Schuchard, and James Voelz. Thank you all.

My gratitude extends also to others in the Concordia community—Ruth McDonnell, Eric Stancliffe, the Palmer family—and to my cohort of classmates within the exegetical theology department—Brad Pribbenow, Lihui Sui, Eric Fudge, Aaron Mueller, Aaron Goldstein, Alexandre Vieira, Brian Taylor, Daniel Berge, Paul Muther, James Fickenscher, and Gene Fung. I think fondly of our study sessions, discussions, and exam preparations, and I cannot imagine having accomplished this degree without each of you.

Other people to whom I owe thanks for encouragement in my faith and growth and biblical studies include my church families in Tulsa, St. Louis, Kuwait City, Shenzhen, and Hsinchu, and

my professors from Oral Roberts University, notably Brad Young, Trevor Grizzle, Robert Mansfield, James Breckenridge, Cheryl Iverson, Jeffrey Lamp, Daniel Thimell, and Lenore Mullican. I am further indebted to Jen Robertson, Alissa Asmus, and Michael Vogel for their international support.

I cannot begin to express my appreciation for my family, the people who see me at my best and at my worst and walk with me through it all: my grandparents; my parents, George and Priscilla Chang; my brother David and my sister-in-law Suzi; my in-laws, Jim and Rebekah Crawford; and my many other relatives. I am grateful to my husband Matthew for working tirelessly to support our family all these years, for listening to me ramble endlessly about my topic, for both enveloping me in hugs and serving as my punching bag. I cannot imagine having completed this journey without my daughter Vera or my son Jacob, who was determined to help me with this project that became identified with “Clement.” Most of all, my gratitude extends to my Heavenly Father, Abba, who loves me and has provided everything I could request and more.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AC	<i>Acta Classica</i>
ACNT	Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AnS	<i>Ancient Society</i>
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
<i>Apeiron</i>	<i>Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science</i>
APR	Ancient Philosophy & Religion
<i>AThR</i>	<i>Anglical Theological Review</i>
<i>ATJ</i>	<i>Ashland Theological Journal</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BCBC	Believers Church Bible Commentary
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3 rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 (Danker-Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich)
BibU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BNZW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
BSem	The Biblical Seminary
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTS	Biblical Tools and Studies

CFJ	Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary
CJPS	<i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i>
Colloq	<i>Colloquium</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i> , The New Series
CRISPP	<i>Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy</i>
CSSH	<i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>
CTQ	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
CTR	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
DBM	<i>Deltion Biblikon Meleton</i>
DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> . Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1933
EI	Ecclesiological Investigations
EpRev	<i>Epworth Review</i>
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
RevP	<i>The Review of Politics</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HTSTS	<i>HTS Theological Studies</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
HvTSt	<i>Hervormde teologiese studies</i>
IBR	Institute for Biblical Research
ICHSONT	International Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments

<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JEP	<i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JEthTh	<i>Journal of Ethnographic Theory</i>
JGRChJ	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTI	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
KTAH	Key Themes in Ancient History
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
<i>LQ</i>	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NIBCNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary

<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NZSTR</i>	<i>Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie</i>
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalische Literaturzeitung</i>
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PCP	Perspectives in Continental Philosophy
PKNT	Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PolG	Politische Geschichte
<i>PP</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PR</i>	<i>Philosophical Review</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PrTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
PSt	Pauline Studies
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevistB</i>	<i>Revista bíblica</i>
<i>RevM</i>	<i>Review of Metaphysics</i>
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Rivista biblica italiana</i>

<i>RPP</i>	<i>Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion.</i> Edited by Hans Dieter Betz et al. 14 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2007–2013
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SC	Studies in Classics
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SMRT	Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
SPB	Studia Post-Biblica
SSAGP	SUNY Series in Ancient Greek Philosophy
SSET	SUNY Series in Ethical Theory
<i>SVTQ</i>	<i>St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
Syn	Synkrisis
<i>TL</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TZB</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift Basel</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigilae Christianae</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WDNER</i>	<i>The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Wesleyan Theological Journal</i>

WUNT Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

ZNW *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der
älteren*

ABSTRACT

Whiteford, Ruth A. "Friendship and Gift in 2 Corinthians 8–9: Social Relations and Conventions in the Jerusalem Collection." Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2018. 197 pp.

The collection in 2 Corinthians 8–9 not only presents the opportunity for a transfer of economic resources, but also signifies a particular kind of social relationship between the Christians in Corinth and Jerusalem. While the Corinthians interpreted prospective transactions through the lens of patronage and therefore as an opportunity to gain status, Paul's sustained use of the ancient Greco-Roman friendship topos in his instructions reveals his conviction that all members of the ἐκκλησία are equal, ideal friends on the basis of God's gifts of χάρις and δικαιοσύνη. An assessment of status and its role in the different social relationships in the Hellenistic world, especially in Corinth, and an examination of Hellenistic friendship first set the foundation for a comprehensive examination of Paul's adaptation and use of the topos throughout 2 Cor 8–9. This dissertation then concludes with an evaluation of how friendship provides an organizing framework for individual and corporate Christian flourishing under the gospel.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The major subject of 2 Cor 8–9 is the gift to the saints in Jerusalem. In the Greco-Roman world, this Jerusalem collection may be understood as a social exchange with the potential to establish and maintain social relationships among all its participants. The nature of the social relations involved in such an exchange have yet to be studied fully, and, in light of the theological framework within which Paul discusses relationships among the churches. The present study will reconsider the predominant interpretative social framework of patronage and benefaction for interpreting Paul’s instructions on the collection in 2 Cor 8–9, and it will propose that the friendship model allows for more clarity in understanding Paul’s theology.

Despite the lack of the specific words *φιλία* or *φίλος*, the cumulative effect of Paul’s

¹ Edwin A. Judge, “Paul as a Radical Critic of Society,” in *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E. A. Judge*, ed. David M. Scholer (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 106–7, argues that Paul deliberately avoids using the words *φιλία* and *φίλος* to avoid the hierarchical associations that transfer from patronage over to friendship. Similarly, Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul’s Relations with the Corinthians*, WUNT 2/23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 134–35, suggests that the lack of the words *φιλία* and *φίλος* was to avoid any hint of status; cf. Alan C. Mitchell, “‘Greet the Friends by Name’: New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman *Topos* on Friendship,” in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald, SBLRBS 34 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 261. David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, KTAH (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 159, provides the possibility that Paul avoided friendship language, because it would represent a claim to the qualities of goodness, which would run contrary to the Christian ideal of meekness. Alan C. Mitchell, “Looking to the Interests of Others: Friendship and Justice in New Testament Communities,” in *Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters: Jesuit Education and Faith That Does Justice*, ed. William J. O’Brien (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1993), 111, 126, meanwhile, contends that the friendship tradition might have been so familiar that Paul had no need of directly naming it as such, as he notes that scholars have argued for the presence of the friendship tradition and/or elements of the friendly letter in 1 Thess, Gal, 1 and 2 Cor, Rom, and Phil, despite Paul’s rare use of *φιλία* or *φίλος* in any of his letters.

As Abraham Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*, LEC 4 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 144, explains, it is most useful to understand *topoi* as “traditional, fairly systematic treatments of moral subjects which make use of common clichés, maxims, short definitions, and so forth, without thereby sacrificing an individual viewpoint.” These *topoi* then can be used as support for arguments. Johan C. Thom, “‘The Mind is Its Own Place’: Defining the *Topos*,” in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of*

utilization of language and motifs from the topos of friendship, one of the most heavily discussed themes in ancient Greco-Roman philosophy, points to this as the dominant social model. Not only does Paul feature the recurring motif of χάρις, a term tied to the ideas of grace, gift, counter-gift, and gratitude; he also speaks about the κοινωνία into which the Corinthians are invited through their participation in the collection; the ισότης between Corinth and Jerusalem in giving and receiving; the Corinthian avoidance of a contribution that would be given out of

Abraham J. Malherbe, ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht, and L. Michael White, *NovTSup 110* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 566–69 (cf. Johan C. Thom, “Topos as Heuristic Construct for Reading Ancient Moral and Religious Texts” [paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the SBL, San Diego, 25 November 2014], 2–3), focuses on such an understanding of topos in order to contend that topoi can be identified through the location of a conventional subject matter that is treated in a conventional way by a variety of authors from differing philosophical backgrounds. Therefore, the friendship topos is essentially a “collection of *theses* (θέσεις) or issues to be debated.” These questions range from, “What is the definition and basis of friendship?” to “What kinds of friendships are there?” and “What are the claims of friendship?”

Gottfried Bohnenblust, “Beiträge zum Topos ΠΕΡΙ ΦΙΛΙΑΣ” (PhD diss., University of Bern, 1905), provided the ground-breaking survey that established the topos on friendship. In his first chapter, he establishes the “Quellenkritisches,” paying particular attention to Cicero’s *Laelius*, Themistius, Maximus Tyrius, Cassiodorus, and Aristotle. In the second chapter, Bohnenblust identifies the key themes, keywords, and proverbs associated with friendship (esp. pp. 38–44, which lists his summary of the “Vergleiche und Sprichwörter” of Hellenistic friendship). His work has essentially formed the foundation for modern studies and discussion of ancient Greco-Roman friendship.

Some of the particular vocabulary and ideas from this friendship topos in 2 Corinthians 8–9 include χάρις, ἀπλότης, κοινωνία/κοινωνός, σπουδή, ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω, προθυμία, ισότης, προνοέω, δοκιμάζω, πλεονεξία, λύπη, ἀντάρχεια, and δικαιοσύνη, in addition to the ideas of “giving oneself,” “thinking the same thing,” engaging in life together, frankness of speech, unity, loyalty, reconciliation, and friendship as necessary towards maintaining harmony in the πόλις. These terms and ideas arise repeatedly and will be further developed in the following discussion.

² 2 Cor 8:1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 19; 9:8, 14, 15. Sophocles, *Aj.* 522; Euripides, *Hel.* 1234; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.7.1385a; *Eth. nic.* 5.5.11331a1–5; Demosthenes, *Cor.* 131; Seneca, *Ben.* 1.3.2–4.6; Cicero, *Off.* 1.47–48. In its earliest usage, χάρις designated “that which gives pleasure,” spanning both the feeling of pleasure itself and the object producing the pleasure. Within Homer, it also designated a cooperative value, the evidence that humans needed each other for survival. Subsequent usage of the term, especially with Pindar, removed the conflict between χάρις and ἀρετή, cooperation and competition, by making them both aspects of success. “*Charis* is a response to generous action and establishes an atmosphere where generous action is likely, and yet *charis* is also the feeling that an *agathos* experiences with success” (Mary Scott, “*Charis* from Hesiod to Pindar,” *AC* 27 [1984]: 12). Within this context, χάρις (the Latin equivalent being *gratia*) finds its social context in that of reciprocal relationships.

³ 2 Cor 9:13; cf. 8:4. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.9.1159b30–31, 8.12.1161b11, 9.12.1171b33, defines friendship in terms of κοινωνία.

⁴ 2 Cor 9:13–14. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 18.5.157b34–1158a1, uses ισότης in his definition of friendship to refer to equality of status between the giver and recipient.

πλεονεξία; God’s provision of ἀντάρθεια, a prerequisite to true giving; and moral excellence expressed in terms of δικαιοσύνη. Broader themes within the entire epistle point to the friendship topos as well. Paul acts as a friend towards the Corinthians, emphasizing his love for and loyalty towards them and speaking in a display of παρρησία; he additionally continuously works towards reconciliation with the congregation.⁹ The collection itself is an opportunity for the Corinthians to demonstrate reconciliation with Paul,¹⁰ but also reconciliation among the factions within the Corinthian church itself and the larger Church. Finally, Christ is shown to be the friend of Christians, and his example provides the model for the Jerusalem collection and all

⁹ 2 Cor 9:5. Friendship and πλεονεξία are antithetical, with φιλία leading to stability and harmony and with πλεονεξία leading to στάσις (Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 5.2.1130a14–1131a9).

¹⁰ 2 Cor 9:8; Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 357.

¹¹ 2 Cor 9:9–10. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.1.1129b30, cites a proverb of Theognis, “In justice (δικαιοσύνη) is all virtue (ἀρετή) found in sum.” Also relevant here is Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.1.1130a8–9: “Justice in this sense is not a part of virtue, but the whole of virtue.” Cf. Te-Li Lau, *The Politics of Peace: Ephesians, Dio Chrysostom, and the Confucian Four Books*, ed. M. Mitchell and D. P. Moessner, NovTSup 133 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 124; Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982), 345.

The δικαιοσύνη of the Corinthians both finds its vertical source within their reception of God’s gift and results in horizontal expression of reciprocity with other Christians, that is, in ideal friendship. By basing friendship upon God’s gift of δικαιοσύνη through Christ, every Christian, in union with Christ, now has equal “virtue” and equal social status attributed to him or her. Virtue friendship, the accepted ideal form of friendship, is no longer limited to noble men of equal and high status, and it is no longer limited to happening among a few men. The Corinthians are enabled to be friends with all others in the Church, including the members in Jerusalem, and are encouraged to understand participation in the Jerusalem collection in light of this social and spiritual reality. Maintenance of the status quo, that is, continuing social relationships based upon how the Corinthian Christians of higher social standing saw themselves as superiors to the beneficiaries of their gift, would be to misunderstand the gospel and to respond inappropriately to God the Giver.

¹² Paul states that he has opened his heart up towards the Corinthians in 2 Cor 6:11 and 7:3. The expression in 6:11 can be “understood as a *topos* about friends as two bodies with one soul,” and, in 7:3, it serves as a “common *topos* for friendship in the ancient world and expresses friendship’s depth and permanence” (Ivar Vegge, *2 Corinthians—A Letter about Reconciliation: A Psychological, Epistolographical and Rhetorical Analysis*, WUNT 2/239 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 193).

¹³ 2 Cor 9:1–4.

¹⁴ John T. Fitzgerald, “Christian Friendship: John, Paul, and the Philippians,” *Int* 61 (2007): 289; Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 251, writes that the appeal to reconciliation is formulated as an appeal to friendship (2 Cor 1:7, 14; 2:3b; 6:11–12; 7:2–3).

¹⁵ Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 35, 37.

other friendships.¹² Friendship is embodied as the Christians respond to the invitation to participate in the life of Christ, and as the formerly status-obsessed Corinthians embrace a gospel exemplified by the paradoxical logic of Christ's incarnation.¹³

Paul's redefinition of friendship suits his larger theological and socio-economic purposes in 2 Cor 8–9. It promotes the success of the Jerusalem collection, ensures Corinthian adherence to the true gospel, and facilitates unity between the Jewish and Gentile believers. The Corinthians are also to reimagine their relationship with Jerusalem, the other Diaspora churches, Paul himself, and God in light of the gospel. The reciprocity in which the Corinthians participate is no longer framed by what they have to gain or lose in terms of status, influence, or power. Rather, God is the sole source and provider of the means through which Christians can attain the ideal state of friendship and fellowship characterized by εὐδαιμονία,¹⁴ equality, harmony, and stability.

The Jerusalem Collection

Paul's longest preserved correspondence is that with the Corinthians, and the instructions

¹² 2 Cor 8:1–5, 9.

¹³ 2 Cor 9:8 furthermore provides an understanding of the nature of χάρις in these chapters: "Die eigentliche Gnadenat bewirkte der Herr, indem er Selbstlosigkeit und Liebe bekundete, seinen Reichtum als Präexistenster aufgab und die Armut des irdischen Lebens annahm und sich so mit den Menschen zu ihren Gunsten solidarisierte (V.9). Das ist die Grundlage des Evangeliums." Hans Klein, "Die Begründung für den Spendenaufruf für die Heiligen Jerusalems in 2Kor8 und 9," in *Der zweite Korintherbrief: Literarische Gestalt – historische Situation – theologische Argumentation: Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Dietrich-Alex Koch*, ed. Dieter Sänger, FRLANT 250 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 109; cf. Ulrich Schoenborn, "La Inversion de La Gracia: Apuntes Sobre 2 Corintios 8:9," *RevistB* 50 (1988): 210.

¹⁴ The word εὐδαιμονία refers to "happiness" or "human flourishing," a central concern in ancient Greek ethics, particularly with respect to its relationship with virtue. The most important two understandings of this term come from Aristotle and the Stoics; nevertheless, both schools of thought agree that friendship and the practice of virtue are requirements for the achievement of εὐδαιμονία. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.8–9.1099b5–35; Julia Annas, "Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism," *Mind* 86 (1977): 550; A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 105–6. With respect to the Stoics, see Glen Lesses, "Austere Friends: The Stoics and Friendship," *Apeiron* 26 (1993): 59.

in 2 Cor 8–9 concerning the completion of the collection for the Jerusalem saints include Paul’s most detailed delineation of Christian giving and reciprocity. The project appears in Acts 24:17–18 and in all of the undisputed Pauline texts.¹⁵ Broadly speaking, there are generally five or six often interrelated categories which scholars have used to discuss the impetus for Paul’s fundraising on behalf of the poor saints in Jerusalem.¹⁶ These purposes are (1) economic, an effort to alleviate the material need of the believers who have likely suffered from both famine and double taxation;¹⁷ (2) worship, an effort to pay spiritual homage to Jerusalem, the headquarters of both the Jewish and Christian faith;¹⁸ (3) ecumenical unity or reconciliation, an effort to bring the Jewish Jerusalem church and the Gentile Christian Diaspora into closer relationship;¹⁹ (4)

¹⁵ Rom 15:25–33, 1 Cor 16:1–4, 2 Cor 8–9, and Gal 2:10.

¹⁶ Summaries of these purposes and issues involved are available in Joachim Gnilka, “Die Kollekte der paulinischen Gemeinden für Jerusalem als Ausdruck ekklesialer Gemeinschaft,” in *Ekklesiologie des Neuen Testaments für Karl Kertelege*, ed. Rainer Kampling and Thomas Söding (Freiberg, Germany: Herder, 1996), 306–9; Margaret E. Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians VIII–XIII. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, ICHSONT (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 2:511–15; S. McKnight, “Collection for the Saints,” in *DPL*, 144–46; David Horrell, “Paul’s Collection: Resources for a Materialist Theology,” *EpRev* 22 (1995): 75–76.

¹⁷ In Acts 11:27–30, the prophet Agabus foresaw a time of famine, so the church decided to send relief to Judea through Barnabas and Saul. Their participation in an early collection may be one reason why the pillars of the church of Jerusalem asked Paul and the Gentile mission to “remember the poor” (Gal 2:9, 10). Horrell, “Paul’s Collection,” 79, suggests that the collection is an example of “materialist theology,” “a theology which engages with social, economic, and political realities, a theology which insists that the gospel has to do with the whole of life, including the material conditions and socio-economic relationships in which people are enmeshed.” Petros Vassiliadis, “Equality and Justice in Classical Antiquity and in Paul: The Social Implications of the Pauline Collection,” *SVTQ* 36 (1992): 57, is another proponent of the materialist reading and says that the ultimate purpose of the collection “was to realize the social ideal of the *equal distribution and permanent sharing of material wealth*.” Finally, Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 158, suggests that all church members were poor and that the collection was the chief example of the practice of mutualism in the early church as a method for dealing with subsistence existence. However, there is no suggestion that the gift was to address poverty of the society at large – it was for Jerusalem – and there is no suggestion that the collection was more than a one-time project.

¹⁸ Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, 159; Horrell, “Paul’s Collection,” 74–83; Petros Vassiliadis, “The Collection Revisited,” *DBM* 11 (1992) 42–48; David J. Downs, *The Offering to the Gentiles: Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts*, WUNT 2/248 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 163.

¹⁹ This purpose reflects Gal 2:12 and the frequent occurrence of *κοινωνία* and its cognates in conjunction with the collection. Keith F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul’s Strategy*, SBT 48 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1966), 111–29; Oscar Cullmann, “The Early Church and the Ecumenical Problem,” *ATHR* 40 (1958): 181–89; Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. Frank Clarke (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1959), 290; Josef Hainz, *Koinonia: “Kirche” als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus*, BibU 16 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982); Sze-kar Wan,

eschatological, an effort to fulfill Hebrew Bible prophecies and bring the rest of Israel to acceptance of Jesus Christ;²⁰ (5) acceptance of Paul's ministry, an effort to demonstrate the goodwill of the Pauline Gentile churches toward Jerusalem and to reassert Paul's authority in

"Collection for the Saints as an Anticolonial Act: Implications of Paul's Ethnic Reconstruction," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 191–215; Rudolph Brändle, "Geld und Gnade (zu II Kor 8, 9), in Festschrift Für Markus Barth, Zum 70. Geburtstag Am 6. Oktober 1985. (L'argent et La Grâce: II Corinthiens 8:9)," *TZB* 41 (1985): 270.

A variant of this idea is Klaus Berger's suggestion that the collection was an example of almsgiving from gentile "Godfearers" as a substitute for other visible markers of Judaism in "Almosen für Israel: Zum Historischen Kontext der Paulinischen Kollekte," *NTS* 23 (1977): 180–204. See esp. p. 198 – "Für die paulinischen Gemeinden bedeutete das Almosen für die armen Judenchristen nicht weniger als die Einheit mit der Gemeinde in Jerusalem: es hat demonstrativen Charakter, und die Annahme durch die Gemeinde in Jerusalem bestätigt den eigenen Gruppenstatus: daß sich um Unbeschnittene handelt, deren Wille zur Zugehörigkeit gleichwohl respektiert wird." However, the Gentiles do not become part of the covenant community of Israel through their almsgiving, according to Nicholas Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity*, JSNTSup 66 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 119. Thrall adds that such a perspective also reflects to account for the conflict of the Galatians in 2:11–14, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:510, 514.

²⁰ This eschatological emphasis draws upon the fulfillment of Isa 2:2–4 and Mic 4:1–3 (the Gentile nations' journey to Jerusalem) before the conversion of all Israel (Rom 10:19; 11:11–16). Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992); Horrell, "Paul's Collection," 74–93; Nickle, *The Collection*, 129–32; Wan, "Collection for the Saints as an Anticolonial Act," 191–215; cf. David Bolton, "Paul's Collection: Debt Theology Transformed into an Act of Love among Kin?" in *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict: Studies in the Exegesis and Theology of 2 Corinthians*, ed. Reimund Bieringer et al, BTS 16 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 345–59.

Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations: The Franz Delitzsch Lectures for 1953*, trans. S. H. Hooke, SBT 24 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1958), 57–61, identifies five distinctive features of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations: (1) the epiphany of God to the nations, (2) the call of God to all the peoples of the world, (3) the response to that call which results in a journey of the Gentiles, (4) worship at the world-sanctuary, and (5) the messianic banquet on the world-mountain. Jeremias also notes that, "Another favourite theme is that of the gifts which the Gentiles bring as tokens of their submission."

Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, 300–301, connects the collection with Jewish prophetic traditions that envision Gentiles bringing gifts to Jerusalem in the last days. The collection would provoke a spiritual jealousy that would lead to Israel's salvation (Rom 11:11–32, cf. Isa 2:2–3; Mic 4:1–2). Within this perspective, the salvation of Israel in 2 Cor 9:10–12 is called the Corinthians' "harvest of righteousness" and results in the "overflow of thanksgivings to God."

The issues with eschatological interpretation of the collection include (1) an absence of pilgrimage texts in connection with Paul's statements about the collection in 1 and 2 Cor and Romans; (2) the lack of sufficient numbers in Paul's envoy for delivering the collection [Paul does not highlight the delegation outside of Acts 20, so it is a nonissue in 2 Cor 8-9]; and (3) the wealth of the nations flowing into Jerusalem should be intended for the temple, rather than the poor among the saints (Downs, *The Offering to the Gentiles*, 6–8). Paul does not utilize the relevant eschatological Hebrew Bible passages or refer to this eschatological motif (Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:513).

Corinth; and (6) the collection as obligation.²¹ Each of these possibilities is dependent on one's understanding of the significance of Paul's vocabulary in describing the giving and receiving to take place, and past scholarship on the Jerusalem collection typically begins with analysis of the Greco-Roman system of exchange with which his primarily Gentile audience would have been familiar. The literature review will begin with general studies on the collection, move onto broad studies on social relationships and reciprocity with respect to Paul's fundraising efforts, and finish with more specific studies on friendship in conjunction with the project.

General Studies on the Collection

The value of Keith Nickle's work, the first important modern study of the Jerusalem collection, is primarily in his coverage of Paul's strategy and the three-dimensional theological significance of the collection: (1) the realization of Christian charity, (2) the expression of Christian solidarity, and (3) the anticipation of Christian eschatology. Moreover, he sees all three of these interests as interrelated. First, Christian fellowship was characterized by care for the poor. Second, the collection would help unify the Gentile and Jewish segments of the church with its Gentile demonstration of Christian love and fellowship. Finally, such a display would help effect the conversion of Israel by provoking jealousy among the Jews.²²

Dieter Georgi also considered the Jerusalem collection to be a sign of the unity and

²¹ This connects the collection to a moral or social obligation to the Jews, analogous to the Temple tax. Karl Holl, "Der Kirchenbegriff des Paulus in seinem Verhältnis zu dem der Urgemeinde," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte, II: Der Osten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1928), 62, speaks about the right of the Jerusalem church to impose a tax on the second-class half-citizen Gentiles in order that the Gentiles would acknowledge their indebtedness to Jerusalem and the supremacy of Jerusalem; cf. Berger, "Almosen für Israel," 180–204; Stephan Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection*, WUNT 2/124 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 145; Richard S. Ascough, "The Completion of a Religious Duty: The Background of 2 Cor 8.1–15," *NTS* 42 (1996): 599.

²² Nickle, *The Collection*, 100.

equality of all Christians, whether Jewish or Gentile, and to be essential to carrying out Paul's mission and theology. The most distinguishing part of his interpretation is his presumption that Paul was influenced by Hellenistic-Jewish gnostic thought so that *ισότης* is not a legal concept but a representation of God, the source of righteous activity. God's grace, which is and establishes righteousness and equality, provides the justification and motivation for the collection.²³ While no scholar now holds to Georgi's interpretation of *ισότης*, his work draws attention to the close relationship between *ισότης* and *δικαιοσύνη* and to the manner in which they find their origin in God and grace.²⁴

Both Nickle and Georgi treat the collection through historical criticism, focusing on how the collection cannot be explained simply as an act of charity but that it serves as an extension of the theological and ecclesiastical conflict between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles.²⁵ Subsequent contributions revealed the social nature of many of the conflicts in Corinth, with economics a key factor in the relevant social structures. As a result, Georgi comments on the need to consider further the collection through a socio-economic perspective in an added afterward in the English edition of his book, finding that the collection embodies the concrete expression of Paul's doctrine of justification and that righteousness is an "efficacious divine power" that "brings about equity and equality."²⁶ Their insights remain useful as a foundation for further study.

Studies on the Impact of Social Ordering and Distribution of Resources in the Collection

In efforts to better understand the nature and function of the Jerusalem collection, scholars

²³ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 88–89.

²⁴ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 89.

²⁵ Cf. Steven Chang, "Fund-Raising in Corinth: A Socio-Economic Study of The Corinthian Church, the Collection and 2 Corinthians" (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 2000), 1.

²⁶ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 141–65.

have looked to models of comparison in both the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds. These have included assessments of the fundraising within the context of the temple tax, almsgiving, ἐπίδοσις, grain dole, associations, and patronage/benefaction. Of these, patronage/benefaction emerges as the dominant framework, which is appropriate to the language and context of reciprocity in 2 Cor 8–9.

John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, begins the conversation with his analysis of 1 Corinthians to argue that certain members from the upper stratum served as patrons of the church. He then shows how patronage affected relations within the Corinthian church, namely, by how the elite were misusing their influence. Paul radically sides with the socially weak in the church, and his instruction that every member of the congregation contribute to the collection in 1 Corinthians is part of Paul's efforts to strengthen horizontal relationships in Corinth.²⁷ His work presents the foundation for much ensuing New Testament discussion of how Paul responds to the congregational members with higher socio-economic status and elite tendencies. Overwhelmingly, biblical scholars agree that Paul understood the gospel to have ushered in a new kind of economic and social reality, one characterized by a flattening of vertical differences.

With *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, Ben Witherington III is another scholar who utilizes the Greco-Roman social context in order to analyze the Corinthian correspondence. He concludes that Paul uses and transforms the norms of reciprocity, providing an alternative to the Corinthians' desire to see themselves as patrons by allowing them to be bound by "gifts" in non-

²⁷ John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, JSNTSup 75 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 185–86.

conventional ways.²⁸ Similarly, Kieran J. O'Mahony in *Pauline Persuasion* concludes that Paul serves as a benefactor to the Corinthians as he offers them social esteem and prestige as benefactors to Jerusalem through contributions to the collection.²⁹ Both Witherington and O'Mahony provide helpful rhetorical treatments of the epistle, but they lack more technical understandings of benefaction relationships and therefore miss Paul's distinct disapproval of Corinthian pride in worldly things.

Another unsustainable application of the patronage/benefaction model is found in Stephan Joubert's *Paul as Benefactor*. He considers Jerusalem to be Paul's benefactor with her recognition of his work in Antioch. Paul then takes on the collection as a benefaction to be returned to Jerusalem so that he and the Gentile churches also became beneficiaries of the Jerusalem church as they participated in the collection.³⁰ This schema is problematic in that two parties may not take turns at being the benefactor; the formal beneficiary-benefactor relationship is stable in its positions of superiority and inferiority. If neither party maintains an upper hand, if both are equal, then it would be more accurate to use the language of friendship for understanding the reciprocity. Joubert does argue that Paul reinterprets benefit exchange to exhort the Corinthians to give to Jerusalem simply because it is the right thing to do, rather than with the expectation of honor or what they could receive in return.³¹ Though Joubert does not realize it, his work on this points to the friendship topos, as the ancient Greco-Roman thinkers

²⁸ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 412–13, 419.

²⁹ Kieran J. O'Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion: A Sounding in 2 Corinthians 8–9*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, JSNTSup 199 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 148–49.

³⁰ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 111–15, 150–52.

³¹ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 217.

were concerned that friends give altruistically.³²

The untenability of the applications of patronage by Witherington, O'Mahony, and Joubert is examined in the work of Sze-Kar Wan, "Collection for the Saints as Anticolonial Act," and Steven J. Friesen, "Paul and Economics," who emphasize the Jerusalem collection as an alternative to patronage. For Wan, the collection is a project that reinforces an alternative to the Roman imperial order, which is characterized by patronage and its depiction of the emperor as head patron; Paul specifically "point[s] to God as the ultimate source of wealth."³³ Taking a different route, Friesen demonstrates that Paul offers the collection as an alternative to patronage, evidenced by how it promotes "an economy of voluntary redistribution among the saints," an endeavor supported by a group of people from modest resources who were opposed to continued exploitation of the poor.³⁴

In *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, Justin J. Meggit departs from the patronage model altogether by understanding the collection in terms of mutualism, which he defines as "the implicit or explicit belief that *individual and collective well-being is attainable above all by mutual interdependence*."³⁵ Now the Corinthians contribute to fulfill Jerusalem's need, but the favor would be returned when the reverse economic situation happens.³⁶ Meggitt's description of the widescale subsistence-level of Christians is the most provocative and debatable element of his study. Nevertheless, his description of mutualism echoes ancient Greek political theory and its discussions on friendship.

³² Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.8.1162b32–34; Seneca, *Ben.* 4.12.13–15.

³³ Wan, "Collection for the Saints as Anticolonial Act," 210.

³⁴ Steven J. Friesen, "Paul and Economics: The Jerusalem Collection as an Alternative to Patronage," in *Paul Unbound*, ed. Mark D. Given (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 51.

³⁵ Meggit, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 158.

³⁶ Meggit, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 159.

A larger strand of interpretation, meanwhile, locates the collection in relationship to God, the Ultimate Benefactor. For David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity*, the collection is the most “prominent act of beneficence” in the New Testament, one in which “God’s beneficence work[s] itself out through responsive Christians.” Corinthian participation honors God and itself is an honor-bound responsibility based on the gifts they have received from God.³⁷ Similarly, James R. Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context*, bases the collection in God’s ultimate gift of χάρις, which required no return. Instead of the standard burden of reciprocation associated with χάρις, Paul maintains that divine grace and its accompanying abundance subverts the dynamics of the reciprocity system so that the Corinthians are to act as a result of and in response to God’s overflowing grace and divine love.³⁸ Gary Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity,” again emphasizes God’s χάρις as the source and impetus for all Christian giving, which is for the establishment of relationship and “horizontal fellowship among believers.”³⁹ Moreover, the theological motivation for the collection hinges upon the expression of χάρις received from God.⁴⁰ Alan B. Wheatley, *Patronage in Early Christianity*, similarly emphasizes that persons of all socio-economic standings should understand their possessions as originating from God, should freely share with those in need, and should recognize that any credit for benefaction belongs to the Benefactor.⁴¹ Finally, from a more

³⁷ David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 154.

³⁸ James R. Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 322–24, 349.

³⁹ Gary Webster Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity: A Study of *Charis* in 2 Corinthians 8–9” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2005), 253.

⁴⁰ Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity,” 20.

⁴¹ Alan B. Wheatley, *Patronage in Early Christianity: Its Use and Transformation from Jesus to Paul of Samosata*, PrTMS 160 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 178.

theological starting point and although he does not treat the technical language of patronage, Mark A. Seifrid demonstrates that all giving originates in God, creating the possibility of “pure” or “true” Christian giving.⁴² Accordingly, he emphasizes how the Macedonians are an example of “the grace of God that is to be sought,” not “a moral virtue that is to be imitated,” and the manner in which Paul bases his request for the Corinthian Christians to act on their reception of God’s grace, rather than moral obligation or gratitude.⁴³ These readings all rightly emphasize the significance of God’s χάρις in the context of the collection. They simultaneously prompt more investigation into the impact that God’s χάρις has on social relationships within the Church.

It is clear from the context of socio-historical scholarship on 2 Cor 8–9 that questions of social status and corresponding modes of exchange are important for more fully understanding Paul’s exhortation and the purposes of the Jerusalem collection, in addition to matters of Greco-Roman benefit-exchange conventions, patronage, and benefaction. First century Corinth was a city in which status, competitive honor, and gift-exchange dictated relationships. With the exception of Meggitt and Friesen, these scholars all assume the presence of an elite minority within the Corinthian congregation—this minority was accustomed to a world in which they exerted influence over others through their status and economic standing, and they had yet to

⁴² Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 320–24. Here, Seifrid’s work, echoing traditional Lutheran interpretations of grace as gift, is interesting in light of John Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 66–75, where grace is treated under the rubric of gift. Barclay establishes that there are six perfections of gift: superabundance, priority, singularity, incongruency, efficacy, and non-circularity. He sees non-circularity as dominating Luther’s and Protestant discussions of grace/gift, but he disagrees with this emphasis on the basis that Paul expects the believer to respond concretely to grace/gift. The Corinthian participation in the collection is seen as one example of this—they were to participate in response to having received God’s grace. Instead, Barclay states that Paul’s emphasis is on the incongruity of grace/gift, that the gift is more perfect the more undeserved the gift is. The gift is *unconditioned*, so that its recipients’ prior worth is a non-factor, but it is not *unconditional*. The topic of whether God’s grace requires a response, whether material or immaterial, will be addressed in chapter 5.

⁴³ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 317–18.

understand the gospels' relevance to their daily lives.⁴⁴ Paul's language of benefaction and economics⁴⁵ would have made little sense without this kind of competitive audience.

The studies in this section provide a solid place to begin analyzing the socio-economic position and status of the members of the Corinthian church, how they would have understood gift-exchange dynamics—particularly in light of the χάρις of God—and its significance, and how they perceived their relationships with God, Paul, and the broader Church. Paul's vocabulary, especially that of equality and partnership, allows that the friendship topos could provide a constructive tool for framing the relationship between Corinth and Jerusalem.

Studies on the Significance of Friendship in the Collection

While a handful of scholars have noted the presence of a friendship topos in 2 Corinthians, they either largely skip over chapters 8–9 or focus only on chapter 8. These studies can be grouped into two general lines of thinking: (1) a generalized focus on the entire epistle that glosses over chapters 8–9 and (2) a narrowed focus on 2 Cor 8:13–14 which treats friendship only in these two verses. In the first group of studies that acknowledge friendship in the larger epistle (Marshall, Vegge, Welborn), the research is focused upon the resolution of conflict between the apostle and congregation, so the status of the collection represents the state of Paul's relationship with the Corinthians as well. In the second group of works (Keener, Iori, Welborn, Faye, Fitzgerald, Johnson), ἰσότης is a major theme, often leading to discussions focused around material equality. Such a survey reveals the usefulness of a sustained study on friendship in both

⁴⁴ John M. G. Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," in *New Testament Interpretation and Methods: A Sheffield Reader*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, BSem 45 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 69–71.

⁴⁵ Words associated with economics and benefaction-exchange in 2 Cor 8–9 are located in words including ἀπλότης, πλούτος, πλεονεξία, ἰσότης, χάρις, and the like, not to mention the larger context involving the collection and giving of monetary funds.

chapters 8 and 9. More significantly, from a theological standpoint, none have noted the role of God's gifts of grace and righteousness within a friendship among Christians.

Peter Marshall's monograph, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians*, is the first work to analyze friendship and enmity in 1 and 2 Corinthians. His thesis is that Paul began his relationship with the Corinthians by entering into friendship with them by means of "self-recommendation." The Corinthians accepted this friendship and thus offered Paul a gift, but Paul refused it in order to avoid "unwanted obligations," which the Corinthians interpreted as enmity. In support of this thesis, Marshall walks through the entirety of both epistles while helpfully pointing out the consistent presence of friendship and enmity themes. Marshall's work has been thorough enough that most subsequent scholars who work on the Corinthian correspondence assume the validity of the friendship and enmity motif. However, he only treats the Jerusalem collection as something that cannot happen until Paul and the Corinthians are reestablished as friends, thus passing over 2 Cor 8–9 with little analysis on the presence of friendship language there.⁴⁶ As a result, there is more room for work to be done on these two chapters with respect to the topos.

Similarly, Ivar Vegge's and L. L. Welborn's more current works on 2 Corinthians focus on the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians as it wavers between conflict and reconciliation, with Vegge noting that reconciliation belongs to the topos of friendship. They find this theme of reconciliation throughout the entirety of the second epistle, thus providing grounds for the discovery of friendship in chapters 8–9 as well, but neither of them develops the wider implications of friendship in 2 Cor 8–9. This is because their emphasis is on Paul's

⁴⁶ Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 165–258.

renewed partnership with the Corinthians, as evidenced by the participation in the Jerusalem collection.⁴⁷ In other words, their scholarship leads to the conclusion that the Corinthians had the opportunity to reaffirm friendship with Paul and can help provide a basis to consider what the Corinthian participation would have signified about their relationship with the broader Christian church.

Craig S. Keener, in his commentary on 1–2 Corinthians, considers Paul to be referring to friendship in chapter 8 by his use of the word ἰσότης, a word that is key to the topic in consideration in this study. His discussion of friendship, however, is limited to a brief reference to Marshall’s work and to the reference of equality as a means of exhorting the Corinthians to help alleviate Jerusalem’s famine.⁴⁸ Renato Iori’s article, “Uso e Significato di *Isotns* in 2 Cor 8:13–14,” similarly notes the connection between ἰσότης and friendship in his survey of the secular usage of the term, but he does not view friendship to be present in the text.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, both Keener and Iori hint that Greco-Roman background behind key vocabulary can help deepen a theological interpretation of the verses, which is the intent of this thesis.

Welborn’s essay, “‘That There May Be Equality’: The Contexts and Consequences of a Pauline Ideal,” is a third work which looks at the use of ἰσότης in 2 Cor 8:13–15 within the three Greek contexts in which the concept developed: friendship, politics, and the cosmos. He primarily argues that Paul was attempting to achieve equality between persons of different social classes through redistributive exchange via the Jerusalem collection. In the context of friendship, Welborn puts forth his argument that there is an unequal relationship between Corinth and

⁴⁷ Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 52; L. L. Welborn, *An End to Enmity: Paul and the “Wrongdoer” of Second Corinthians*, BZNW 185 (New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 428.

⁴⁸ Craig S. Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, NIBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 200–215.

⁴⁹ Renato Iori, “Uso e Significato di *Isotns* in 2 Cor 8:13–14,” *RivB* 36 (1988): 426–27.

Jerusalem, in which “equality” is “proportional.”⁵⁰ Welborn contends that Jerusalem is superior by virtue of her spiritual wealth, so the Corinthians are obliged to give an extraordinary gift to restore equality. While Welborn rightfully considers all the possible contexts for understanding ἰσότης, his paper has some gaps that may still be filled. The first is a matter of stance on the unity of 2 Corinthians, as he considers 2 Cor 9 a separate letter and does not consider its rhetorical impact together with chapter 8. The second is a matter of scope; Welborn’s analysis is entirely economic; he has taken away any mention of the gospel and friendship as now understood in terms of the Christ-event.⁵¹ The theological significance Paul attributes to ἰσότης within the scope of the friendship topos remains to be explored further.

Most recently, Yohannes Baheru Faye makes the point in his dissertation, “The Nature and Theological Import of Paul’s Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem,” that the closest social analogy for understanding the collection is that of “the reciprocal exchange of benefits ... between friends of equal social status.” He identifies the chief purpose of the collection as then “building social cohesion” and accomplishing ethnic reconciliation between Jewish and Gentile believers.⁵² His identification of friendship, as opposed to patronage, as the particular relationship ensuing from the exchange of benefits results from Paul’s use of ἰσότης.⁵³ Aside from this analysis, Faye does not pursue the topos of friendship further, although he continuously keeps the solidarity of the Christian community firmly in view. His analysis of Paul’s methods in light of Greco-Roman social conventions and institutions, nevertheless, remains a good starting point

⁵⁰ L. L. Welborn, “‘That There May Be Equality’: The Contexts and Consequences of a Pauline Ideal,” *NTS* 59 (2013): 76; Aristotle *Eth. eud.* 7.9.1241b34–36.

⁵¹ Welborn, “That There May Be Equality,” 73–90.

⁵² Yohannes Baheru Faye, “The Nature and Theological Import of Paul’s Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem” (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2013), 127, 150.

⁵³ Faye, “The Nature and Theological Import,” 123.

for taking a closer look at the friendship relationship promoted in 2 Cor 8–9.

Meanwhile, Fitzgerald mentions that 2 Cor 8:13–14 is a relevant text to friendship, merely noting that the Jerusalem collection is a conspicuous “expression of Christian friendship, of the unity and equality in Christ” with its involvement of *κοινωνία*, reciprocity, and *ισότης*.⁵⁴ As the purpose of Fitzgerald’s paper is to introduce areas for further research, that he identifies friendship in 2 Cor 8 should prompt closer study. Similarly, Luke Timothy Johnson writes that the Jerusalem collection is “evidence of the ideal of friendship within the life of the church” in support of his thesis that this ideal is *κοινωνία*, which has its practical manifestation as the sharing of material goods.⁵⁵ Ultimately, Johnson, like Welborn, is only concerned with material implications of friendship, so he also provides stimulus for considering friendship’s theological dimensions.

The previous studies therefore acknowledge the presence and importance of friendship in 2 Cor 8–9, but none cover the transformation of the institution in Paul’s thought and its spiritual dimensions. Fitzgerald mentions friendship in passing alone. Welborn and Johnson have a purely material agenda. Vegge and Marshall focus only on the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians. Lastly, Keener and Faye briefly consider friendship in relation to *ισότης* without carrying out the concept to fruition. Nevertheless, the fact that a number of scholars have begun to consider the relevance of the friendship topos in these two chapters strengthens the case for a deeper look into its significance.

⁵⁴ John T. Fitzgerald, “Paul and Friendship,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley (New York: Trinity Press International, 2003), 340.

⁵⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson, “Making Connections: The Material Expression of Friendship in the New Testament,” *Int* 58 (2004): 165.

Purpose of Study

The present study argues that, in 2 Cor 8–9, Paul uses terms and concepts from the ancient Greco-Roman friendship topos to articulate his theology of the proper reciprocal practices and social relationships among the members of the ἐκκλησία that ensue from the reception and communication of God’s gifts of χάρις and δικαιοσύνη. Namely, the Corinthians are to understand themselves as equal friends with all other Christians.

This dissertation will accomplish the following outcomes. First, it will establish that Paul specifically draws upon the Greco-Roman topos of friendship in 2 Cor 8–9. Second, the use of this friendship topos promotes Paul’s purpose of establishing the Corinthian acceptance of the true gospel and, subsequently, unity within the broader church, via proper participation in the Jerusalem collection. Third, this dissertation will argue that Paul provides a counter-cultural response to Greco-Roman social ideals and goals; gift-giving and social relation conventions are re-envisioned in light of the gifts of God. These gifts encompass both physical and spiritual dimensions, and they include material provision, χάρις, δικαιοσύνη, and God/Jesus’ self-giving in his life, death, and resurrection. Thus, soteriological dimensions of χάρις and of δικαιοσύνη in Pauline literature are also in view here.⁵⁶ Proper orientation towards these gifts and towards God the Giver define all proper human relationships, which in 2 Cor 8–9 is namely a φιλία-in-Christ.⁵⁷ Fourth, the natural result of such a Christian friendship based on God’s χάρις and δικαιοσύνη distinguishes it from friendship based upon pleasure or utility, so that considerations associated with these kinds of relationships are no longer in place. Fifth, the nature of the ἰσότης that Paul envisioned as exemplified in the offering for Jerusalem will be

⁵⁶ Cf. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 330.

⁵⁷ After all, in the ancient world, gift-giving produces and maintains relationship, and the kind of relationship formed by the gift-giving is directly related to the type of giving.

discussed. Finally, this dissertation will offer a consideration of the non-circularity of God's χάρις.

Socio-Historical Methodology

This dissertation is interested in the socio-historical situation of Paul and of the church at Corinth to appreciate more clearly the cultural impact of Paul's instructions on the Jerusalem collection in 2 Cor 8–9. More specifically, it is interested in Paul's understanding of social relationships in light of how it was transformed by the gospel.⁸⁸ As such, the methodology is concerned with the cultural and historical world of social relations behind the text and chooses to utilize social-historical description with a few selective influences from social-scientific modeling.

Broadly speaking, social-historical description is concerned with highlighting the social structures and expectations of the members of the Corinthian congregation. It helps place a particular group of people, the Corinthian Christians, at a particular time, the first century, in a particular context, Roman Corinth, in a particular situation, that in which Paul was exhorting the congregation to complete their contributions to a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Insights from social-scientific modeling draw upon parallels between the text of 2 Cor 8–9 and comparable contemporary social phenomena structures as established through their description in ancient documents in order to create a more detailed historical picture and situation. More specifically, this project employs the historical reconstruction of the institutions of patronage, benefaction, and friendship by establishing common conventions of social interaction via their description in ancient documents. While the literature on those topics generally speaks of

⁸⁸ Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Land, "Paul and His Social Relations: An Introduction," in *Paul and His Social Relations*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Land, PST 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3.

specific situations within the upper strata of society, this paper holds that the institutions' influence filtered down and infiltrated the entire society. Any reconstruction of social institutions and conventions in history remains tentative, so models utilized in biblical scholarship continue to be refined.⁹⁸

Through a social-historical reading of 2 Cor 8–9, one able to appreciate more fully the theological impact that Paul's instructions would have had on his audience. The language of friendship heightens the drama of Paul's call towards voluntary equality and unity and highlights how the new Christian faith transcended secular boundaries for relationships. The final goal is to assess (1) the factors that characterized and drove the various social relationships and modes of reciprocity within the Corinthian congregation, (2) the manner in which Paul sought to alter these factors in light of the gospel of Christ, and (3) how all this all comes to bear upon participation in the collection and the Corinthian understanding of and response to God's gifts.

This proposed methodology requires some delimitations. The first delimitation involves a limited discussion of approaches toward the construction of ancient economic models, whether

⁹⁸ Social-scientific modeling assesses data from historiography and then fills in the gaps of the historical data with sociological analysis. The result is a model with which the scholar can interpret other sets of data. It is impossible to be removed completely from the use of models, because its paradigms and theories influence interpretation whether or not they are explicitly acknowledged. The models necessarily require modern social theories which can be anachronistic and later invalidated. Therefore, when possible, this dissertation favors descriptive methods of history and data drawn from primary sources of the ancient Greco-Roman world and seeks to avoid shaping the data within 2 Cor 8–9 to fit the model or eliminating data that does not fit the model. John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 60–69; E. A. Judge, "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History," *JRH* 11 (1980): 210.

Within Pauline studies, the social-scientific interpreters include Bruce J. Malina, Jerome H. Neyrey, John H. Elliott, Philip Esler, John J. Pilch, Richard Rohrbaugh. The social historians include E. A. Judge, Andrew D. Clarke, Abraham J. Malherbe, Robert M. Grant, Ronald F. Hock, and Peter Marshall. Theissen and Meeks use social theory in an eclectic and piecemeal manner. In an oversimplification of the differences, the social-scientific scholars would hold that the early Christian actors were largely constrained by their social structures and patterns, whereas the social historians would allow more freedom and "creative space." Bengt Holmberg, "The Methods of Historical Reconstruction in the Scholarly 'Recovery' of Corinthian Christianity," in *Christianity in Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 2004), 267, 269; cf. Carolyn Osiek, "The New Handmaid: The Bible and the Social Sciences," *TS* 50 (1989): 269–70, 276–77.

patronage and benefaction were identical or separate phenomena, and questions of the social status of the typical member of a Pauline church. The second delimitation is that this project will only concern itself with the instructions for the collection that are found in 1 and 2 Corinthians; it will not treat the collection texts in Romans or Galatians. The third delimitation is the lack of space for a fuller defense of the literary integrity of 2 Corinthians, which will be assumed in this project.⁶⁰ Countless essays and monographs have dealt with theories for the integrity and partition

⁶⁰ Until Johann Salomo Semler's partition theory of 2 Corinthians (*Paraphrasis II. Epistolae ad Corinthios* [Halle: Hemerde, 1776], 235–36, 238, 310, 321), the unity of the epistle was assumed; since then, scholars have been divided on its literary integrity. Briefly, 2 Corinthians will be regarded as a single letter for a number of reasons.

(1) No textual or patristic evidence exists to the contrary. Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 16.

(2) Rhetorical criticism can be utilized to argue that 2 Corinthians has a complete rhetorical arrangement and is thus a unified letter, thus addressing questions of changes in tone. Those who put forth arguments that rhetoric does not necessarily demonstrate the independence of different segments of 2 Corinthians include the following: Frances Young and David F. Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 38–39; J. D. H. Amador, “Revisiting 2 Corinthians: Rhetoric and the Case for Unity,” *NTS* 46 (2000): 95; Sidney Potter Fulton II, “A Rhetorical Analysis of Second Corinthians with a View to the Unity Question” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999), 142–45; and Frederick J. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology: The Compositional Unity of 2 Corinthians*, SNTSMS 131 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 143–98. Cf. Günther Bornkamm, *Die Vorgeschichte des sogenannten Zweiten Korintherbriefes* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1961), 165, who acknowledges a thematic unity to 2 Corinthians, despite his four-letter hypothesis.

Hans D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 37–140, is the primary proponent of rhetoric as supporting multiple letters within 2 Corinthians, especially for the division between chapters 8 and 9. However, shortcomings within Betz's project are demonstrated by the following scholars: O'Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion*, 164–81; Stanley K. Stowers, review of *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* by Hans D. Betz, *JBL* 106 (1987): 727–30; and Frank Witt Hughes, “The Rhetoric of Reconciliation: 2 Corinthians 1.1–2.13 and 7.5–8.24” in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in NT Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*, ed. Duane F. Watson, *JSNTSup* 50 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 246–61.

(3) Repetition of distinctive vocabulary and verbal forms appear throughout the entire epistle. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 19–21, cites examples including (1) the juxtaposition of “ministry”/“minister” with “righteousness” found in ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης (3:9) and διάκονοι δικαιοσύνης (11:15). (2) the keyword συνίστημι (3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12, 18; 12:11), and (3) the repetition of ὑπερβολή and δύναμις in each of the four “sufferings” passages (1:7–11; 4:8–10; 6:4–10; 11:23–12:10), among other verbal linkages and linguistic considerations.

(4) Verse 12:19 seems to summarize the entire letter, which would make little sense in the context of a partition theory. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 21.

Since the supposed divisions in 2 Corinthians can be overcome and explained, especially through the means of rhetoric, this dissertation will treat the epistle as a unity.

of 2 Corinthians, and neither side clearly has the majority.

Plan of Study

The present chapter provided an introduction to some of the theological questions surrounding the Jerusalem collection, a literature review, and methodology of social-historical description.

Chapter two, “The Significance of Social Status,” details status in the ancient Greco-Roman world and its impact on social relationships both within the broader society and within the Corinthian church.

Chapter three, “Friendship in the Greco-Roman World,” provides the basis for discussion of the friendship topos. The foundational thinkers – Homer, Plato, and Aristotle – provide the shape for all subsequent definitions of friendship and its associated issues. They establish the vocabulary of friendship, and Plato and Aristotle place the concerns of friendship within the context of ethical and political theory.⁶¹ Then follows the treatment of Paul’s closer contemporaries – Cicero, Seneca, Dio Chrysostom, and Plutarch. The conversation continues with a consideration of Philo and Clement of Alexandria’s adaptation of friendship in their theological thought, and it concludes with an overview of the friendship topos.

⁶¹ The earliest detailed literature on friendship is found in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in which words from the φίλος-family appear in conjunction with affection, obligation to one’s extended household, and heroic friendship. He not only provides the vocabulary for all friendship discussions, but he anticipates themes that appear in the friendship topos throughout the classical, Hellenistic, and even modern periods. Cf. Steve Summers, *Friendship: Exploring Its Implications for the Church in Postmodernity*, EI 7 (London: T&T Clark International, 2009), 53–54.

Though Plato and Aristotle’s discussion of friendship find their context within the city, their thought remains philosophically relevant in the Hellenistic period. For example, the Stoics reject Plato’s view of love arising from need in favor of the notion that “love finds its fulfillment in friendship and concord.” Cicero additionally draws from Aristotle’s ideas about a friend as another self and eudaimonism to resolve tensions between love and friendship. Gary M. Gurtler and Suzanne Stern-Gillet, “Preface,” in *Ancient and Medieval Concepts of Friendship*, SSAGP (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 10–11; cf. Julia Annas, “The Hellenistic Version of Aristotle’s Ethics,” *Monist* 73 (1990): 80.

Chapter four, “Friendship and Gift in 2 Corinthians 8–9,” walks through the text with attention to Paul’s use of the friendship topos. A special focus is given to the role of the gospel and God’s gifts in transforming the Corinthians’ self-identity and social relationships.

The final chapter considers how the outcomes impact a reading of the second epistle to the Corinthians as a whole, features a summary of the findings of this dissertation, and addresses the paradox of the non-circularity of God’s gift and how God’s gift has undermined the logic of reciprocity.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL STATUS

Due to finite material resources, limited social capital, and the prevailing ideas of inequality and differentiation, ancient Greco-Roman society was characterized by social stratification, in which material goods, services, privileges, obligations, influence, and honor were allocated according to each individual's "worthiness."¹ Social status served both as a gateway to privilege and influence and dictated the shape of all relationships and their corresponding modes of exchange. At the same time, status was not an absolute or stable property, a reality which fostered competition to gain it. The inhabitants of Corinth did not escape this reality, and, as Greco-Roman and gospel values clashed, the disparity of status among members of her church caused dissonance.

The Pervasive Factor of Social Status

Political and social life in the Roman Empire reinforced inequality based upon the belief that things ought to be distributed among people based upon their merit and character, characteristics largely limited to those in the upper classes.² Greek philosophy, which the Romans adapted, held that ἀρετή was the means to becoming ἀγαθός. Because the possession of wealth provided a person with the means of doing good, often material prosperity signified the

¹ Chang, "Fund-Raising in Corinth," 59.

² Plato, *Leg.* 5.744b–c; 6.757a–e; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.3.1131a15–b14; Peter Garnsey, "Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire," *PP* 41 (1968): 3.

possession of ἀρετή as well.³ The cumulative effect of this connection among ἀγαθός, ἀρετή, and wealth meant that persons with high social status were thought to be worthy of power and prestige and its corresponding responsibilities, not to mention whatever wealth they possessed. Persons of low status correspondingly deserved their stations in life, and expectations for interpersonal relations based upon status so followed.

According to the polarities of Aelius Aristides, in order to be legitimately part of the upper strata of society, one had to fulfill four criteria: rich/poor, large/small, prestigious/nameless, and noble/ordinary.⁴ In other words, a man needed to be wealthy, enjoy a large amount of power via holding higher offices, possess social prestige, and belong to a leading *ordo*.⁵ Beyond these four characteristics, societal position was determined by a combination of factors, including birth, possession of citizenship, freedom or slavery, geographic origin, loyalty to the imperial monarchy, and abilities and education, though this last criterion had a limited role.⁶ How each of these factors was weighted, particularly outside the highest social stratum, is subject to debate. For this reason, many discussions center on money. After all, every person with high social status had wealth, since power made it possible to accumulate wealth, though not every person with wealth had high social status.⁷

³ As Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6*, ed. Martin Hengel, et. al., AGJU 18 (New York: Brill, 1993), 23–24, explains, the highest goal for many was to be described as being ἀγαθός and as possessing ἀρετή. Warriors in Homeric society were described as ἀγαθός, of being of a benefit to society, because of their ability to achieve safety for their dependents. As a result, ἀρετή became connected with wealth and nobility, since a richer person could own good armor. Cf. A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 30–36; Chang, “Fund-Raising in Corinth,” 113.

⁴ Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 26.39, 59.

⁵ Géza Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome*, trans. David Braund and Frank Pollock (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 106.

⁶ Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome*, 107, 111–13.

⁷ Chang, “Fund-Raising in Corinth,” 62; Richard L. Rohrbaugh, “Methodological Considerations

Growing and maintaining one's wealth was not an end in itself but a means to gaining additional status and not losing it.⁸ Status was heavily related to ownership of land and slaves, since these reflect the most important factors in economic production and activity.⁹ In *De Officiis*, Cicero defends this desire to accumulate private property as rooted in natural instincts of self-preservation and duty. He then explains that "great men" maintain or acquire wealth in an honorable way, without dishonesty or fraud, and increase that wealth through "wisdom, industry, and thrift."¹⁰ Once high status was attained, that status also demanded certain moral responses. Thus, Cicero simultaneously believed that the wealthy needed to balance their advancement of their own interests with using their wealth for the public good and for the aid of the needy; men of high status needed to display their greatness both in public and in private life.¹¹ Most importantly, the distinguishing mark of high status was "competitive and ostentatious expenditure, whether in the service of the state, or in the local community, or in the pursuit of purely personal political glory."¹² Cicero's attitudes reflect the broader Greco-Roman values relating status to both methods of acquiring wealth and patterns of consumption. In the context of honor and shame, status was only significant if it could be seen, so displays of patronage, both public and "private," were held in high esteem.

Considerations in the Debate over the Social Class Status of Early Christians," *JAAR* 52 (1984): 542.

⁸ Hopkins, "Introduction," in *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, ed. Peter Garnsey, Keith Hopkins, and C. R. Whittaker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), xiv, explains that "vulgar acquisition" and increased production were concerns left to "underlings."

⁹ Hopkins, "Introduction," in *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, xiii.

¹⁰ Cicero, *Off.* 1.11–12, explains that, "Nature has endowed every species of living creature with the instinct of self-preservation," one aspect of which is the accumulation of possessions. In *Off.* 2.64, he instructs men to earn their money fairly and honorably.

¹¹ Cicero, *Off.* 1.92, specifies that leaders ought to excel in both their private and public lives; *Off.* 2.72 speaks of service to both individuals and to the state.

¹² Hopkins, "Introduction," in *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, xiii.

Although there was a large distance between the senatorial and equestrian classes with the rest of society, the possibility of social mobility remained. Three factors commonly contributed to mobility: status dissonance, structural differentiation of institutions, and political conflict. First, status dissonance occurred when a person's juridical status and actual social status did not match, as when a person commanded "high occupational prestige and power" but a low birth legal status.¹³ Both structural differentiation and political conflict then fostered increased status dissonance and weakened the aristocratic families. The former, structural differentiation, arose with the rapid expansion of the Roman Empire. Government also grew and separated into different divisions – military, bureaucratic, legal, educational, and economic. New jobs and new skills arose within each of these institutions, such that the aristocracy could no longer monopolize all the highest offices and others were able to acquire status on this front.¹⁴ Furthermore, with regard to political conflict, the emperor increasingly employed non-aristocrats in powerful positions in response to the threat of aristocratic power.¹⁵ The result was that imperial freedmen and court eunuchs from the *Familia Caesaris* exercised a disproportionate amount of power and possessed great money, culminating with the elevation of some freedmen to equestrians in official status ranking.¹⁶

Within ancient Greco-Roman society, social status impacted not only the political, economic, and legal privileges and rights that a person held, but also how that person behaved and thought. With the high level of status consciousness and status visibility typical of the

¹³ P. R. C. Weaver, "Social Mobility in the Early Roman Empire: The Evidence of the Imperial Freedmen and Slaves," *PP* 37 (1967): 7.

¹⁴ Keith Hopkins, "Élite Mobility in the Roman Empire," *PP* 32 (1965): 16.

¹⁵ Hopkins, "Élite Mobility in the Roman Empire," 20

¹⁶ Weaver, "Social Mobility in the Early Roman Empire," 3–20, lists numerous examples of such freedmen.

Republic and Empire, all intra-status social relationships were affected as persons jockeyed for more honor and status. Even as social structures and ideals generally sought to maintain the gulf between the upper and lower classes, social mobility remained possible. The higher one's status, the greater one's economic and political opportunities were.

Reciprocity in the Ancient Greco-Roman World

In the Hellenistic world, the exchange of benefits established and maintained social relationships.¹⁷ Based on the status of the involved parties, that exchange takes one of three forms: symmetrical, asymmetrical, or negative reciprocity. Symmetrical exchange, such as gift exchange and market exchange, requires symmetry of status of those doing the exchanging *and* symmetry of value of what is being exchanged. Asymmetrical exchange, such as patronage and benefaction, involves exchanges of unequal value that occur between parties of unequal status. Lastly, negative exchange is the attempt of one party to get more and give less, examples of which include haggling and cheating.¹⁸

While Paul's ideology of reciprocity was transformed by the gospel, he adapted the terms, language, metaphors, and forms of speech of his surrounding Greek and Jewish cultures for his rhetorical purposes.¹⁹ In regarding his instructions on the Jerusalem collection, the initial question

¹⁷ The range of the meanings of χάρις and *gratia* points to the relationship between gift-exchange and social bonds. Cicero *Off.* 1.56; Phoebe Lowell Bowditch, *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 47, 52; and Stephan Joubert, "Coming to Terms with a Neglected Aspect of Ancient Mediterranean Reciprocity: Seneca's Views on Benefit-Exchange in *De beneficiis* as the Framework for a Model of Social Exchange," in *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honor of Bruce J. Malina*, ed. John J. Pilch (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 49. Joubert, "Coming to Terms," 49, summarizes that reciprocity colored all forms of social interaction in ancient societies, and it was the chief bond holding people together.

¹⁸ Zeba A. Crook, "Fictive-Friendship and the Fourth Gospel," *HvTSt* 67 (2011): 3.

¹⁹ G. W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift-Exchange and Christian Giving*, SBLMS 92 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 199; Helmut H. Koester, "Paul and Hellenism," in *The Bible and Modern Scholarship: Papers Read at the 100th Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature*, December 28–30, 1964, ed. J. P. Hyatt (Nashville: Abingdon, 1965), 193.

is whether the Corinthian contribution may be understood as symmetrical or asymmetrical. In turn, this question also prompts a discussion of the differences among some of the forms of symmetrical and asymmetrical relationships from the ancient Greco-Roman world, namely, patronage, benefaction, kinship, and friendship, all types of relationships that contain overlap in terms of history, vocabulary, and conceptual space, and whether any of these provide an appropriate lens through which to interpret 2 Cor 8–9.

The perspective on the Corinthian conflicts as colored by social issues has logically led to an emphasis on patronage—all social relationships arguably operated within the system of patronage, as can be seen with the constant vying for status and the hierarchical mentality in ancient Greco-Roman society.²⁰ While the relationships can correspond to each other, collapsing them into one phenomenon creates only broad conclusions that are minimally useful for biblical interpretation.²¹ Before one can speak of and apply a friendship model, it is the necessary and expedient to compare and contrast these four reciprocal relationships for more precise terms and clarity.

Patronage vs. Benefaction

Saller's three characteristics of patronage have been generally used as the starting point in biblical literature studies on the phenomenon within the Bible. According to him, patronage (1) involves reciprocal exchange of goods and services; (2) is a personal, enduring relationship; and

²⁰ Chang, "Fund-Raising in Corinth," 66–67.

²¹ David Emilio Briones, "Paul's Financial Policy: A Socio-Theological Approach" (PhD diss., Durham University, 2011), 39, 44, writes that patronage, benefaction, and reciprocity are overly simplified in New Testament studies so that New Testament scholars have imposed the patron-client relationship onto every gift-giving relationship in the text; cf. Erlend D. MacGillivray, "Re-evaluating Patronage and Reciprocity in Antiquity and New Testament Studies," *JGRChJ* 6 (2009): 40, 80.

(3) is an unequal relationship between persons of differing status.²² However, the breadth of this description limits its usefulness, and Joubert's work has spurred the reevaluation of whether patronage and benefaction should be considered separate phenomena.²³ The scholars who consider the two to be separate put forth the following evidence. Most significantly, patronage exploits the inferior member of the relationship, whereas benefactors and beneficiaries can each put the other in debt by fulfilling their respective obligations. Furthermore, patronage involves individual relationships, while euergetism consists of public benefaction meant to benefit all citizens. Patronage language took a long time to appear in Greek circles. Patronage came to coexist with other forms of exchange in the East. Patronage, according to the literary evidence, was understood by both the Romans and Greeks as distinctly Roman. Finally, patrons were motivated by public recognition for their generosity, whereas the ideal benefactors were not.²⁴

²² Richard Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1. Cf. Richard P. Saller, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (New York: Routledge, 1989), 49; Eisenstadt and Roniger, "Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," *CSSH* 22 (1980): 49–50.

²³ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 59–69; cf. Stephan Joubert, "One Form of Social Exchange or Two? 'Euergetism,' Patronage, and Testament Studies," *BTB* 31 (2001): 21–23.

Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, BZMW 130 (New York: de Gruyter, 2004), 53–89, esp. p. 66, explains that he "use[s] the terms 'patron' and 'benefactor' carefully when the context demands it but interchangeably most of time." They both are types of general reciprocity and have considerable overlap. However, patronage occurred more on the level of daily survival, whereas benefaction happened on specific occasions and was more related to luxury. Holland Hendrix, "Benefactor/Patronage Networks in the Early Christian Urban Environment: Evidence from Thessalonica," in *Social Networks in the Early Christian Environment: Issues and Methods for Social History*, ed. L. Michael White, *Semeia* 56 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 40, engages in a similar discussion.

In contrast, Joubert, "One Form of Social Exchange or Two?" 21, cites Wallace-Hadrill, "Patronage in Roman Society: from Republic to Empire," in Wallace-Hadrill, *Patronage in Ancient Society*, 65–66, and John Nichols, "Pliny and the Patronage of Communities," *Hermes* 108 (1980): 380 (cf. 385), as interpreting patronage and benefaction to be the same.

²⁴ Alicia J. Batten, "God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor?" *NTS* 50 (2004): 264; Alicia J. Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction in James*, ESEC 15 (Blandford Forum, Dorset, UK: Deo, 2010), 69–70; Briones, "Paul's Financial Policy," 40–41; Joubert, "One Form of Social Exchange or Two?" 21–23; Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 67–68; MacGillivray, "Re-evaluating Patronage and Reciprocity," 47–54; Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 4.3.1122a34–1125a15; Seneca *Ben.* 3.15.4.

The counterarguments also hold merit.²⁵ Ultimately, for the purposes of this project, it is not essential to decide whether patronage and benefaction are identical institutions. What is important is that this discussion gives credence to the notion that the forms of unequal social exchange do not always present themselves in identical ways. It is furthermore better to work towards more nuanced understandings of how reciprocal relationships operated rather than to minimize differences. For the sake of simplification, however, patronage and benefaction will be considered essentially identical institutions in this dissertation from this point forth. For lexical clarity, patronage is the relationship between a superior and inferior(s) that may easily become exploitative; the terms benefactor, beneficiary, and benefaction are used neutrally to refer to the giver, recipient, and gift without reference to the involved persons' social status.

Patronage vs. Kinship

It is additionally helpful to compare the relationships of patronage and kinship. As Westbrook observes, kinship and patronage involve duties that initially appear to be similar, points of agreement that may be highlighted by the notion in the Roman world that a patron was a father of the community.²⁶ Nevertheless, a number of nuances can be inferred. Aside from how kinship ties are formed by blood relations, "Kinship obligations ... are based upon an involuntary, indissoluble tie. Patronage exists only as long as its obligations are met."²⁷ As a

²⁵ The counterarguments are as follows. (1) Both were public *and* private systems of exchange, and both these types are attested in both earlier Greek and later Roman worlds. (2) The idea of selfless benefaction is an anachronism. (3) The presence of terminology is not necessary for the practice of patronage. (4) Changes in terminology often come more slowly than changes in practice. (5) Some inscriptions include the appellation "patron and benefactor," which could indicate a single social phenomenon. (6) Finally, the writings which indicate patronage is distinctly Roman are highly ideological or employ satire. Briones, "Paul's Financial Policy," 41–42, 59; Carolyn Osiek, "The Politics of Patronage and the Politics of Kinship: The Meeting of the Ways," *BTB* 39 (2009): 145.

²⁶ Batten, "God in the Letter of James," 264.

²⁷ Raymond Westbrook, "Patronage in the Ancient Near East," *JESHO* 48 (2005): 212.

result, collapsing the two kinds of relationships into one broad category is unnecessary and often unfruitful.

Patronage vs. Friendship

A number of biblical scholars consider patronage and friendship to be synonymous, collapsing friendship underneath the system of patronage due to confusion between the two kinds of relationships. They point to how patrons and clients often called each other friends. They highlight the way in which the boundaries between patronage and friendship were not always clear, especially when a friendship was based upon utility. They draw attention to the manner in which friendships could come to more closely resemble patron-client ties when one friend fell in status.²⁸

The roles of patron or client and friend could overlap; friendship was compatible with a patron-client relationship, but not reducible to it, since friendship indicates altruism, goodwill, and mutual respect in the relationship.²⁹ Other scholars now reinforce the idea that *amicus* retained its meaning as “friend” and did not simply serve as a synonym for patron or client.³⁰

Whenever the two kinds of roles did intersect, “there was always a certain tension between them.

²⁸ Westbrook, “Patronage in the Ancient Near East,” 211; Bowditch, *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage*, 19.

²⁹ Miriam Griffin, *Seneca on Society: A Guide to De Beneficiis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37; Konstan, “Patrons and Friends,” *CP* 90 (1995): 329, 341.

³⁰ The strongest proponent of this view is Konstan, “Patrons and Friends,” 329. Chang, “Fund-Raising in Corinth,” 66–67, also explains that there is a difference between patron-client relationships and the system of patronage. All social relationships operated within the system of patronage, as can be seen with the constant vying for status and the hierarchical mentality of each level of society. Therefore, friendship can be said to have operated within the system of patronage, though not the equivalent of patronage itself. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*, 11–15, theorized that patronage and *amicitia* were different forms of the same kind of relationship—patronage was “lop-sided” friendship derived from asymmetrical reciprocity, whereas *amicitia* was friendship based on symmetrical reciprocity; cf. Saller, “Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome,” 61. Zeba A. Crook, “Reflections on Culture and Social-Scientific Methods,” *JBL* 124 (2005): 519, agrees that, “Greco-Roman partners in exchange knew full well the differences between real friends and ‘friends’ as clients”; cf. Crook, “Fictive-Friendship and the Fourth Gospel,” 5.

This left room for appeals to the nature of friendship as a means of exposing the coercive aspects of contemporary patron-client relationships.”³¹ Juvenal’s fifth satire and Horace demonstrate these issues as satirical texts on the hypocrisy of the patron-client as friendship charade.³² Furthermore, Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch’s criticism of issues around friendship was for the purpose of maintaining a conception of the ideal friendship, and these writers were not interested in a flattening of social hierarchies or in seeing friendship devalued into patronage. They needed to maintain elite friendship in order to maintain the elite. Therefore, the concept of ideal friendship consistently maintained the necessity of equality among its participants and was distinguished from the vertical relationship between patrons and clients.³³ Pliny in *Ep.* 2.6 disapproves of differentiating between classes of *amici* and offering them different menus, and Seneca in *Ben.* 6.33.3–34 compares true friends and *amici* according to their access to great men at *salutationes*³⁴ and in *Ben.* 6.34.2–5 and *Ep.* 19.11–2 likewise talks about mistaking clients for true friends. The

³¹ Konstan, “Patrons and Friends,” 330.

³² Konstan analyzes these texts in “Patron and Friends,” 336–40. Juvenal, *Sat.* 5.170–73, points out that Virro clearly highlights his status difference with Trebius through exploitation and humiliation but that Trebius is no true friend of Virro’s either. In Konstan’s interpretation, the point of the poem is that fake friendships are hypocritical and always benefit the superior party more. Meanwhile, Horace, through his instructions to Lollius in *Ep.* 18, reveals that the behavior of a friend and the behavior of a client are opposed, because a client is unable to exhibit the selflessness and frankness required of a friend. Similar to Juvenal, when two parties initiate a relationship with each seeking his own benefit, the superior party has the advantage over the inferior.

³³ Joshua F. Rice, “Paul and Patronage: The Dynamics of Power in 1 Corinthians” (PhD diss., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 2012), 88.

Keener, “Friendship,” in *DNTB*, 382, establishes that the Greek discussion of friendship traditionally revolved around the idea of equality, as established by Aristotle’s proverb, ἰσότης ἢ φιλότις (*Aristotle Eth. eud.* 7.9.1241b14) and around the definition of friendship as an “equality of reciprocal good-will” (*Diogenes Laertius, Vit.* 5.1.31).

³⁴ That the Romans distinguished different levels of friends is evidenced by Seneca who indicates the formalization of lesser *amici*, as evidenced by C. Gracchus and Livius Drusus’ practice of dividing their friends/followers into three groups: peers, lesser *amici* allowed into the *atrium* for the morning salutation, and the *clientes* in this text. However, Saller does continue to say that it is significant when people were called *amici* rather than *clientes* or *patroni*. The difference is partly due to the gulf between the ideals of the philosophers versus the “common values and expectations which affected everyday life,” in addition to the paradox that, “although friendship was ideally to be based on mutual affection with no thought of profit, a necessary part of friendship was a mutually beneficial exchange of goods and services.” Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 12.

cumulative evidence points toward the need to consider patronage and friendship as separate institutions.

Kinship vs. Friendship

Finally, the distinction must be made between kinship and friendship. The original forms of friendship among the ancient Greeks were indeed patterned after kinship, but these dissolved with the development of city-states.³⁵ As such, Aristotle does not consider birth and kinship as a basis for friendship; he only considers pleasure, advantage, and moral character.³⁶ His concern involves the problems that arise with deliberate choice in *φιλία*, whereas kinship eliminates the possibility that the relationship is based on chosen affection.³⁷ Later, Cicero affirms the superiority of *amicitia* over kinship (*propinquitās*) “because it depends on good will, while kinship is (one understands) an objective connection and thus independent of good will.”³⁸ The two institutions may have similarities but are distinct.

These Greco-Roman reflections on the closely related institutions of patronage, benefaction, friendship, and kinship complete the foundation needed for this dissertation to single out the friendship topos as a model in its own right for reading 2 Cor 8–9. Each of these relationships is characterized by reciprocity, or the exchange of *χάρις*. The word *χάρις* takes on multiple senses, all of which point to specific aspects of the reciprocal cycle: the willingness to give, the gift itself, the attitude resulting from the benefaction, and the concrete response to the

³⁵ Plutarch, *Frat. amor.* 479C–D, indicates that friendship was modeled after familial relationships. Cf. InSeong Wang, “Paul’s Employment of the Friendship Motif throughout His Paraenesis in Galatians,” (PhD diss., Drew University, 2003), 135; Gerhard Vowinckel, “Social Studies,” subarticle within “Friendship,” *RPP* 5:264–5.

³⁶ Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156a5–1156b28; 8.4.1157a25–33; 8.5.1157b17–23.

³⁷ Charles H. Kahn, “Aristotle and Altruism,” *Mind* 90 (1981): 22n1.

³⁸ Cicero, *Amic.* 5.19; David Konstan, “Greek Friendship,” *AJP* 117 (1996): 19n79.

gift.³⁹ Because ideal friendship occurs among equals, χάρις flows most readily within this relationship; friendship, as the paradigmatic relationship based upon χάρις, provides the ideal conditions in which χάρις may be practiced and realized.

The Impact of Social Status in the Corinthian Church

Enabled by the development of infrastructure, banking and capital markets, market integration, and the unification of geographic cities that allowed “production cities” to specialize in exporting commodities, the Roman Empire experienced significant economic growth and was able to provide above bare subsistence living standards for many of her inhabitants.⁴⁰ Corinth, with her strategic geographic location and position as a major provincial capital, commanded a disproportionately high amount of that growth.⁴¹ Coupled with her history, the city’s residents were especially sensitive to status mobility. Her church did not remain immune to these influences. Members from different social stratum were present within the congregation, and status disparity affected the way members related to each other and to Paul.⁴² Moreover, their attachment to conventional societal understandings of status negatively influenced their

³⁹ On χάρις as the willingness of the benefactor to grant some benefit, see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.7.1385a. On χάρις as the response to the benefaction, i.e., gratitude, see Demosthenes, *Cor.* 131; Seneca, *Ben.* 1.3.2–4.6; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.5.1133a1–5; Cicero, *Off.* 1.47–48.

⁴⁰ Morris Silver, “Roman Economic Growth and Living Standards: Perceptions versus Evidence,” *AnS* 37 (2007): 213. His article continues to detail agricultural and literary evidence for rises in income and material prosperity at all societal levels so that the actual gross domestic product (GDP) of the Roman Empire “is some nine times greater than subsistence GDP.” In his analysis, such a GDP meant that the general population would still have an income approximately 80 percent above subsistence, even if the “miniscule ‘elite’” captured 90 percent of the surplus (194–206).

⁴¹ Chang, “Fund-Raising in Corinth,” 104

⁴² The qualitative evidence for economic growth and living standards in the Roman Empire makes it untenable to follow Meggitt’s definition of poverty as an absolute phenomenon and his primitivist economic position which held that the ancient Roman economy was crude, underdeveloped, and growthless (Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival*, 4–5, 42). This is significant in that it supports the thesis that some members of the Corinthian church came from higher social classes and had surplus wealth with which to wield influence.

understanding of the gospel and threatened to serve as a barrier to the completion of the collection for Jerusalem.

The History of Corinth

References in the writings of about thirty Greek and Latin authors from the first century BCE to second century CE piece together the history of Corinth.⁴³ Due to Corinth's ideal location, she emerged as one of the largest and most important cities in ancient Greece for both military and trade purposes.⁴⁴ She generally experienced great riches, with Homer noting her condition as "wealthy" in the sixth century BC⁴⁵ and Antipater of Sidon saying that the wealth of Corinth was legendary.⁴⁶ Situated on the Isthmus, Corinth contained a number of ports in addition to the Peloponnesus-Greece land bridge, and she was additionally near springs, fertile plains, and other natural resources.⁴⁷

Due to Corinth's history, she experienced more openness to new ideas and more room for social mobility than other Roman colonies and cities. In 146 BCE, Lucius Mummius completely destroyed Corinth,⁴⁸ and, in 44 BCE, Julius Caesar refounded her as *Colonia Laus Iulia*

⁴³ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*, 3rd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 3.

⁴⁴ J. Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome I: 228 B.C.–A.D. 267" in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der Neueren Forschung*, vol. 2, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979), 440. "Control of the *diolkos* and such excellent protected harbors as those at Lechaemum and Cenchreae assured Corinth of an early, important role in ancient commerce. The narrow isthmus enhanced her significance even in that area, because Corinth also, to some extent controlled commercial land traffic between the Peloponnesus and central Greece. The combination of the presence of the isthmus and the citadel of Acrocorinth that overlooks it also made Corinth a place of pre-eminent military importance."

⁴⁵ Homer, *Il.* 2.570.

⁴⁶ Antipater of Sidon, *Anth. graec.* 9.151.

⁴⁷ Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.3.5, 8.22.3; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.20–22; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 46.34; Dio Chrysostom, *Virt. (Or. 8)* 5, [*Cor.*] 8; Thucydides, *Hist. pel.*, 1.13.5.

⁴⁸ Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.1.2; Antipater of Sidon, *Anth. graec.* 9.151; Dio Cassius, *Hist. rom.* 21; Cicero, *Fam.* 4.4; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.23.

Corinthiensis, a Roman colony, made her the capital of the province of Achaia, and repopulated her primarily with freedpersons from other origins.⁴⁹ Thus, a mixture of Romans, Greeks, Orientals, and Jews came to reside in the city, and the Corinthian government was open to these freedmen in a novel way.⁵⁰ The divide between the elite and non-elite was no longer well-defined,⁵¹ the criteria of family ties for status was no longer relevant, and wealth became the most important element for determining one's societal position.⁵²

The significance of money relates back to Corinth's natural resources and location. As a distribution center for interregional trade and known for industries of bronze,⁵³ inhabitants likely had means other than land ownership for socio-economic opportunities, again removing another historical barrier to status. The same could be applied to the economic opportunities afforded by the shipping industry.⁵⁴ The cumulative effect was that the typical Corinthian individual was uniquely sensitive to the issue of status and the opportunities to improve his honor, wealth, and position.

⁴⁹ Pausanias, *Descrip.* 2.1.2; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.23; Appian, *Hist. rom.* 8.20.136; Crinagoras, *Anth. graec.* 9.284; Plutarch, *Caes.* 57.

⁵⁰ Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 10.

⁵¹ Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, ed. and trans. John H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 102.

⁵² Chang, "Fund-Raising in Corinth," 99. Cf. Murphy O'Connor, "The Corinth that Saint Paul Saw," 138, who writes, "By the middle of the first century A.D. some families enjoyed inherited wealth, but even they could recollect how and when it had been won. Corinth was still a city of self-made men."

⁵³ Propertius, *El.* 3.5.3–6, lists Corinthian bronze among huge landholdings, jeweled goblets, and gold, while Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 34.1, calls Corinthian bronze "valued before silver and almost even before gold." Suetonius, *Aug.* 70 and *Tib.* 34, indicate the popularity of Corinthian bronzes. Cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.6.23; Cicero, *Verr.* 2.34.83. Furthermore, Wiseman, "Corinth and Rome I," 512, details how foundries and casting pits dated to the 1st century CE have been excavated.

⁵⁴ Chang, "Fund-Raising in Corinth," 98.

Social Status Issues within the Corinthian Church

Biblical scholarship has reached the general consensus that the majority of people from the Corinthian congregation were from the lower classes but a few influential members from upper classes were present.⁵⁵ The bulk of the discussion of social status and wealth within the Corinthian church is derived from the first epistle to the Corinthians and the interpretation of its conflicts in terms of class tensions. To begin, the three characteristics listed in 1 Cor 1:26–29 of σοφός, δυνατός, and εὐγενής have been interpreted as sociological categories used together to describe one group of people. The educated, influential, and well-born hold the corresponding status.⁵⁶ What is more, these specific terms are traditionally used to describe the elite in texts including Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.12.1388b; Dio Chrysostom, *Rhod.* 74, and Plutarch, *Lib. ed.* 5C–D.⁵⁷ Origen additionally cites these verses to object to Celsus’s claim that Christians were all lower class,⁵⁸ and Pliny, speaking more generally, states that Christians came from all ranks of society.⁵⁹

Scholars analyze the persons specifically mentioned in Paul’s letters in conjunction with Corinth to establish that they may have had higher social status. The relevant figures include Erastus, likely the “city steward” of Corinth;⁶⁰ Crispus, an ἀρχισυνάγωγος;⁶¹ Gaius, the host of

⁵⁵ Theissen, *Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 69; Craig S. de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationship of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities*, SBLDS 168 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 203; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*; Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 73, 104–91.

⁵⁶ Theissen, *Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 72.

⁵⁷ de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 197n74.

⁵⁸ Origen, *Cels.* 3.48.

⁵⁹ Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.96.

⁶⁰ Rom 16:23. Erastus might also be identified with the aedile Corinth who paid for a large paving project, which would firmly place him among the elite. J. H. Kent, *Inscriptions 1926–1950*, Corinth 8.3 (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1966), 99–100, no. 232.

⁶¹ Acts 18:8; 1 Cor 1:14. Numerous inscriptions feature such synagogue leaders as benefactors of Jewish communities; they had some responsibility for upkeep of the synagogue building and so were often appointed

the church;⁶² Stephanas;⁶³ Chloe;⁶⁴ and Aquila and Priscilla.⁶⁵ Though the data on each of these people is incomplete, so that the socio-economic profiling process is complicated, even Steven J. Friesen, a scholar who generally locates both Paul and all his church members among the “poor” who lived near, at, or below subsistence level, acknowledges that some members at least can be placed above subsistence level.⁶⁶

partially on the basis of their abilities to make financial contributions towards this purpose. Theissen, “The Social Structure of Pauline Communities,” 80; Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 74; de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 198).

⁶² Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 14:23. Acts 18:10 indicates that the Corinthian church was sizeable. For Gaius to have a sufficiently large house to fit the entire congregation indicates wealth on his part. Gerd Theissen, “The Social Structure of Pauline Communities: Some Critical Remarks on J.J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*,” *JSNT* 84, (2001): 83.

⁶³ 1 Cor 1:16; 16:15. That Stephanas makes journeys and that he and his household dedicate themselves to serving the saints indicates he must have had some financial means.

⁶⁴ 1 Cor 1:11. Chloe had people who travelled on her behalf, so it is likely that she held at least moderate surplus resources.

⁶⁵ Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Acts 18:18-19. Paul stays with Aquila and Priscilla, and they are on a journey. Furthermore, they hosted the church in Ephesus and possibly in Rome.

⁶⁶ The crux of Friesen’s argument is that Paul and the majority of his churches lived at or near subsistence level. Nevertheless, he hypothesizes that the “middling” non-elite groups within the Roman Empire controlled another one-fifth of the wealth and thus earned between 2.4 to 10 times the amount needed for subsistence (Steven J. Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus,” *JSNT* 26 [2004]: 358; Steven J. Friesen, “Prospects for a Demography of the Pauline Mission: Corinth among the Churches,” in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen, HTS 53 [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005], 365, 368; Walter Scheidel and Steven J. Friesen, “The Size of the Economy and the Distribution of Income in the Roman Empire,” *JRS* 99 [2009]: 84–85). Assuming Friesen’s poverty scale and analysis of the Pauline church, the data could still indicate “substantial wealth stratification in the Pauline churches—much as claimed by Theissen and Meeks, though with different vocabulary!” (John Barclay, “Poverty in Pauline Studies: A Response to Steven Friesen,” *JSNT* 26 [2004]: 365). One of the primary reasons prompting Friesen’s reactions against the “New Consensus” and its interpretation of social stratification within the churches is the bias of the data towards Corinth. However, since the subject of this inquiry is Corinth, this bias becomes irrelevant.

Moreover, Peter Oakes, “Constructing Poverty Scales for Graeco-Roman Society: A Response to Steven Friesen’s ‘Poverty in Pauline Studies,’” *JSNT* 26 (2004): 368–71, convincingly puts forth the argument that subsistence is a faulty basis on which to build a poverty scale. He instead proposes an “ordered poverty scale” based on “socially perceived necessities,” the resources needed to participate in society as non-poor. Although he concedes that the construction of a complete scale would be impossible and does not attempt the application of such a poverty scale to the Corinthian congregation, his model broadly bolsters the validity of seeing a socially stratified Corinthian church.

The conflicts within 1 Corinthians—factions and wisdom,⁶⁷ litigations among Christians,⁶⁸ mixed marriages,⁶⁹ the conflict between the strong and weak,⁷⁰ invitations from pagan hosts,⁷¹ and the Lord’s Supper⁷²—gain clarity when they are interpreted as issues prompted by the sociological differentiation.⁷³ Since Paul’s apparent rhetorical purpose in the first epistle to the Corinthians was to exhort the church members to overcome these conflicts and to be unified, the existence of the second epistle seems to indicate that Paul was successful in his previous aims. Nonetheless, in the second epistle to the Corinthians, the congregation continued to need a reorientation of their social conventions in light of the gospel.

One of the major topics in 2 Corinthians is Paul’s continual defense of his apostleship.⁷⁴ In the timeline of Paul’s tumultuous relationship with the Corinthians, he planted the church during his initial visit.⁷⁵ He afterwards headed to Ephesus, the likely location from which Paul then sent Corinth a letter.⁷⁶ Members of the Corinthian church visited Paul,⁷⁷ bringing him reports of factions and questions about conduct,⁷⁸ to which he responded with the letter labeled 1

⁶⁷ 1 Cor 1–4.

⁶⁸ 1 Cor 6:1–11.

⁶⁹ 1 Cor 7:8–16.

⁷⁰ 1 Cor 8–10.

⁷¹ 1 Cor 10:27–29.

⁷² 1 Cor 11:17–34.

⁷³ Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 113–66; Gerd Theissen, “Social Conflicts in the Corinthian Community: Further Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*,” *JSNT* 25 (2003): 377–89; Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 96–98.

⁷⁴ 2 Cor 10:1–13:13; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, xxvii.

⁷⁵ Acts 18:1–17.

⁷⁶ Acts 18:18–19; 1 Cor 5:9.

⁷⁷ Acts 19:1–41.

⁷⁸ 1 Cor 1:11; 7:1.

Corinthians. At this point, relations between Paul and the church deteriorated, and he was forced into making an emergency “painful visit.”⁷⁹ After this visit, Paul met Titus in Macedonia and received updates about Corinth.⁸⁰ While Paul was encouraged by some of the news,⁸¹ he also found that he was being criticized in the church for changing his mind about visiting again,⁸² lacking credentials,⁸³ whether he has financial integrity,⁸⁴ and his lack of proper outward appearances for his station as a teacher.⁸⁵ These concerns prompted Paul to write the canonical second epistle to the Corinthians and to promise a third visit.⁸⁶

Within the scope of the charges against Paul, most scholars work under the premise that Paul rejects the patronage of the Corinthians.⁸⁷ Paul seems to have rejected their financial offer, which may have been an offer of friendship,⁸⁸ in order to separate himself from traveling orators who marketed their religious messages for profit.⁸⁹ Paul’s rivals demand compensation for their teaching,⁹⁰ while Paul refuses financial support.⁹¹ This contributed to the Corinthians questioning

⁷⁹ 2 Cor 2:1; 12:14, 21; 13:1–2.

⁸⁰ 2 Cor 2:12–13.

⁸¹ 2 Cor 7:6–16.

⁸² 2 Cor 1:12–2:4.

⁸³ 2 Cor 3:1–4:5.

⁸⁴ 2 Cor 11:7–11; 12:11–18.

⁸⁵ 2 Cor 10:1–2; 12:2–10.

⁸⁶ 2 Cor 12:14; 13:1; Seifird, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, xxii–viii.

⁸⁷ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 8; David Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology From 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 213; Calvin J. Roetzel, *2 Corinthians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 112; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 418.

⁸⁸ Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 165–258.

⁸⁹ 2 Cor 2:17; Steve Walton, “Paul, Patronage and Pay: What Do We Know about the Apostle’s Financial Support?” in *Paul as Missionary: Identity, Activity, Theology, and Practice*, ed. Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner, LNTS 420, ed. Mark Goodacre (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 223.

⁹⁰ 2 Cor 2:17; 11:20.

⁹¹ 2 Cor 11:7–15; 12:14–15.

his apostleship—Paul did not love them,⁹² Paul was refusing their “friendship,”⁹³ and, according to the sophistic tradition, Paul’s teaching was worthless if it was free.⁹⁴ In contrast, Paul does not want to adopt the posture of a client and be obligated to the powerful in Corinth to the detriment of sharing the gospel with all, and he desires that the gospel be freely available to the Gentiles.⁹⁵ Paul is interested in reframing social relationships, overturning patronage in favor of equality and mutuality in submission to God.⁹⁶

In addition to his abnormal financial policy, Paul’s apostleship bears little resemblance to the normal societal standards of power and authority; he boasts strength in weakness, following the same logic that allowed Christ’s death to bring salvation to mankind.⁹⁷ It is Paul’s faithfulness to the gospel alone that authenticates his apostleship, not ecstatic experiences or demonstrations of power. Paul’s defense of his apostleship is synonymous with his defense of the true gospel message, so that Corinthian acceptance of the gospel and acceptance of Paul’s apostleship are one and the same. Paul is concerned with reconciliation among the different groups with the Corinthian church and reconciliation between himself and the Corinthian church.⁹⁸ Such reconciliation, however, implicitly points to reconciliation with God, which creates a new reconciled community in which human markers of status are irrelevant.⁹⁹

⁹² 2 Cor 11:11; 12:13.

⁹³ Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 1–34.

⁹⁴ Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC 40, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 582.

⁹⁵ Walton, “Paul, Patronage and Pay,” 224, 225.

⁹⁶ Walton, “Paul, Patronage and Pay,” 232.

⁹⁷ 2 Cor 4:7–12; 6:4–10; 11:22–12:10.

⁹⁸ 2 Cor 6:11–13; 7:2–4; 13:11–14.

⁹⁹ 2 Cor 5:16–19.

Status as a Barrier to the Completion of the Collection

The Corinthian completion of the collection would establish their recognition of Paul's apostolic authority and fully reconcile them both to him and to the broader Church.¹⁰⁰ Not only is their hesitation to finish the completion a result of their misunderstanding of true apostleship, but it also has been hindered by the Corinthian desire to contribute in an ostentatious way in keeping with their status.¹⁰¹ They maintain the norms dictated by their social status when they engage in reciprocal exchange. In exhorting these Corinthians to play their part in finishing the collection, Paul reorients their understanding of reciprocity in light of the gospel and the Christ-event. He affirms the members of lower status by having them participate as equals to members of relatively higher status, and he reminds those members of higher status that all members of the Church are now equals, that they are friends. Because of the Christ-gift, human markers of status and distinction no longer exist. They must remove themselves from operating *κατὰ σάρκα* so that they may experience the *ἐκκλησία* as it is meant to be, an ideal community bound in friendship.

¹⁰⁰ Werner Kleine, *Zwischen Furcht and Hoffnung Zwischen Furcht und Hoffnung: Eine textlinguistische Untersuchung des Briefes 2 Kor 1–9 zur wechselseitigen Bedeutsamkeit der Beziehung von Apostel und Gemeinde*, BBB 141 (Berlin: Philo, 2002), 15, 345; Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology*, 203; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, xxx; Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 221.

¹⁰¹ 2 Cor 8:11–12; 9:7; Hopkins, "Introduction," xiii.

CHAPTER THREE

FRIENDSHIP IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Ancient Greco-Roman friendship, particularly in the context of benefit exchange, entailed a specific kind of relationship with certain privileges and responsibilities enjoyed by its participating parties. Philosophers recognized the importance of friendship for ethical principles and political theory and dedicated numerous dialogues and treatises to the topic, forming a stock treatment as they wrestled with its parameters and form.¹ The resulting friendship topos is the collection of terms and proverbial pithy sayings in popular philosophical thought that influenced the entire society, including Hellenistic Judaism and Christianity.² Aristotle acknowledged a number of expressions as proverbial in his day—“friends have all things in common,” “one soul,” “a friend is another I,” “friendship is equality,” and “like to like”—and these maxims continued to be used long afterwards as well.³ As a whole, the topos was flexible enough that each philosophical school of thought was able to nuance it for its own purposes. Paul followed this tradition by adapting friendship to his theological purposes and situation. Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, Epictetus, and Dio Chrysostom will each be discussed, as the sources which comprise both the philosophers who established the foundation for all subsequent

¹ The friendship topos covers the characteristics of friendship, types of friends, identifying true friends, whether only equals can be friends, maintaining friendship, the difficulties in friendship, the relationship between self-interest and altruism in friendship, and the function of friendship. Le Chih Luke Hsieh, “Virtue, Friendship, and Polis: A Reading of Paul’s Letter to the Philippians” (PhD diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2012), 3; Mitchell, “Looking to the Interests of Others,” 105.

² Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 8, furthers the argument that Paul was “familiar with the traditions used by his philosophic contemporaries.” Malherbe contends that Paul had first-hand knowledge of the moral philosophy and utilized it to articulate his “self-understanding” and to further his arguments.

³ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.8.1168b7–10.

discussion of friendship and the contemporaries of Paul, in order to distinguish Paul's use of the topos.

The Greek Foundational Thinkers on Friendship

The writings of Homer, Plato, and Aristotle from the Classical period provide the foundation for subsequent Greco-Roman use of the friendship topos. Homer provides an introduction to the social relationship, Plato poses the question of what a friend is, and then Aristotle responds to Plato's work. Together, these thinkers point to the importance of friendship within Greek ethical theory and point towards how the topos serves as one of the most prominent in ancient philosophy.

Ancient Greco-Roman ethics is characterized by the following interconnected topics: (1) the formation of ἀρετή, virtue, which is built upon the concept of εὐδαιμονία, which is happiness, human-flourishing, or the well-being of a person; (2) friendship discussions; and (3) politics. The best form of friendship is based on virtue; and the best πόλις is composed of friends. In turn, the purpose of politics is to create the environment in which virtue may be

⁴ The concept of ἀρετή, often translated as "excellence" or "virtue," is intimately tied to the Greek understanding of εὐδαιμονία. Although the word εὐδαιμονία is often translated as "happiness," it does not refer to contentment or pleasure but rather encompasses "human flourishing" (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.4.1095a18–28). The achievement of εὐδαιμονία is the goal (τέλος) of all human activity (*Eth. nic.* 1.7.1097b20–21). Therefore, both ἀρετή and εὐδαιμονία involve the achievement of the highest human potential. The achievement of the highest human potential involves fulfilling one's purpose or function, which Aristotle determines to be reason. In other words, humans must exercise reason well in order to flourish, and good reason is reason that is in accordance with virtue (κατ' ἀρετήν) (*Eth. nic.* 1.7.1098a5–6). He affirms that, "happiness (εὐδαιμονία) is a certain activity of soul in conformity with perfect goodness (κατ' ἀρετήν τελείαν)," that εὐδαιμονία is ἀρετή in action (*Eth. nic.* 1.13.1102a5–8; cf. 1.13.1102a16–18; 10.7.1177a12–18). Cf. Anthony Edward Carreras, "Aristotle's Ideals of Friendship and Virtue" (PhD diss., Rice University, 2011), 172–211; Julia Annas, "Virtue and Eudaimonism," in *Virtue and Vice*, ed. Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr., and Jeffrey Paul (New York: Social Philosophy and Policy Foundation, 1998), 37–55.

⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156b7–8.

⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a22–29. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, 194, notes, "A city serves three ends that correspond to the three ends of friendship: living (a goal of utility), living together (a source of pleasure), and living well (the goal of goodness). Its initial purposes are living (*Pol* 1.2.1252b29–30), and living

practiced and happiness may be achieved,⁷ and friendship itself is essential to happiness.⁸

Therefore, the friendship discussion is inextricably located within this broader context of ethical and political theory.

Homer

Homer begins the ancient Greek conversation on friendship with his depiction of the faithful relationship between Achilles and Patroclus; Achilles responds in grief towards the death of Patroclus, his πολὺ φίλτατος ... ἑταῖρος, the one he loved as dearly as his own life.⁹ Homer's writings provide the vocabulary of φίλος and anticipate major themes related to φιλία that are developed further by subsequent thinkers in the classical and Hellenistic periods:¹⁰ the usefulness of friends, oneness of mind,¹¹ the problem of distinguishing one's true friends,¹² the abuse of friendship,¹³ the death of a friend,¹⁴ and the loss and restoration of friendship.¹⁵

together (*EE* 7.10.1242a8–9, *Pol* 3.6.1278b20–1); yet, once established, it aims less at living and living together than at living well (*Pol* 1.2.1252b30, 3.9.1280a31–2, 1281a2–4).” Cf. Hsieh, “Virtue, Friendship, and Polis,” 4; Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship: The Origins of Classical Notions of Politics in the Theory and Practice of Friendship* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978), 25; Frederic M. Schroeder, “Friendship in Aristotle and Some Peripatetic Philosophers,” in Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman Perspectives*, 36.

⁷ Aristotle, *Pol* 1.1.1252b29–31; 3.4.1278b24–25; 3.5.1280b6–11; 3.5.1280b35–36; 7.12.1332a5–9; *Eth. nic.* 1.9.1099b30–33; 1.13.1102a8–10.

⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.9.1169b3–20.

⁹ Homer, *Il.* 17.411, 655; 18.80–82; 19.315.

¹⁰ Summers, *Friendship*, 53–54.

¹¹ Homer, *Il.* 4.360–61; 13.487; 15.710; 16.219; 17.267; 22.262–65; *Od.* 15.195–8.

¹² John T. Fitzgerald, “Friendship in the Greek World Prior to Aristotle,” in Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman Perspectives*, 23–24, says that later Greeks identified Homer’s description of Podes as Hector’s “banqueting buddy” (*Il.* 17.577) as evidence that he was a parasitic friend, although elsewhere Podes was described as a “trustworthy comrade” and “a good man among the foremost fighters” (*Il.* 17.589–90) and as prized by Hector “above all the people (*Il.* 17.576–77).

¹³ This is seen in ξενία. Fitzgerald, “Paul and Friendship,” 322.

¹⁴ Achilles’ response to Patroclus’s death develops this theme. Fitzgerald, “Paul and Friendship,” 322.

¹⁵ Fitzgerald, “Paul and Friendship,” 321–22, identifies three problems related to friendship. The first is the abuse of friendship. The second is the death of a friend. Finally, delicate problems arise when a friendship dissolves and when these friends attempt to reconcile. Homer’s depiction of the relationship between Agammemnon and

When words from the φίλος-family appear in Homer’s writings, scholars generally consider the passive (possessive) or sense of “friend” to be primary.¹⁶ The term φίλος then is the designation for members of one’s household, the label for those one finds “dear,” and the bond of guest friendship. In other words, it entails friendship in terms of the good man committed to the members of his household, including his guests.¹⁷ Isolation of the incidents in which Homer’s φίλος-terms describe only persons reveal *Od.* 11.326 and *Il.* 9.144 and 3.136 as places in which the term is redundant if it merely means “dear” or “one’s own.”¹⁸ This indicates an even more nuanced understanding of φίλος, φιλεῖν, and φιλότης, as they go beyond affection or possession. Within the context of the hostile Homeric society which prized the survival of the community, these words indicate cooperation and a way for the ἀγαθός to designate “the persons and things on which his survival depends,”¹⁹ including parts of his own body,²⁰ his possessions,²¹ his family,²² his dependents,²³ and his friends.²⁴ Accordingly, φιλεῖν refers to the action and result, rather than an emotion or intention, to provide for the survival of a φίλος via food, lodging, and protection within “a circle of cooperation whose members have a right to feel

Achilles in the *Iliad* are the earliest portrayal of the dynamics of losing and restoring friendship.

¹⁶ Fitzgerald, “Friendship in the Greek World Prior to Aristotle,” 15–19.

¹⁷ Suzanne Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship*, SSAGP (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 6–7.

¹⁸ Arthur W. H. Adkins, “‘Friendship’ and ‘Self-Sufficiency’ in Homer and Aristotle,” *CQ* 13 (1963): 31–32.

¹⁹ Adkins, “‘Friendship’ and ‘Self-Sufficiency,’” 30, 33.

²⁰ Homer *Il.* 18.27 (hands); *Od.* 8.178 (breast); 9.413 (heart); 19.401 (knees); 22.68 (heart).

²¹ Homer, *Il.* 2.178 (country); 12.221 (house); *Od.* 8.277 (bed); 18.421 (house).

²² Homer, *Il.* 3.138 (wife); 4.155 (brother); *Od.* 1.94 (father); 2.88 (mother); 9.207 (wife); 22.99 (father); 23.86 (husband).

²³ Homer, *Il.* 5.413 (household); *Od.* 20.129 (house); 22.480 (nurse); 4.722 (household).

²⁴ Homer, *Il.* 5.529; 6.67; 6.224; *Od.* 7.76; 9.466; 19.301.

mutual reliance.”²⁵

Homer, like his successors, does not envision a society without friends or reciprocation. Accordingly, the Greek Diomedes and Lycian Glaucus, strangers until the point of their meeting in war, accordingly refuse to fight each other on the basis of guest-friendship between their grandfathers.²⁶ They wish for each other’s good, despite the hostility felt between their peoples.

Plato

Plato’s conception of friendship is established primarily in two of his works. *Laws* treats friendship in relation to its political role, whereas *Lysis* explicitly discusses the nature and definition of a friend. With these writings, Plato initiates written discussions of the connections among friendship, ethics, and political theory; Aristotle later provides a more developed conception of friendship’s role within the city state, and the Stoics and Cicero reconsider Plato’s understanding of love and friendship.²⁷

Plato in the *Lysis* recounts Socrates’ attempt to define friendship in the context of his discussions with Menexenus and Lysis, a pair who demonstrate their friendship through their laughter in response to disputes regarding their differences. In this introduction, all the characters accept the concept that κοινὰ τὰ γε φίλων²⁸ and that friends are useful to each other.²⁹

Socrates’ investigation of whom might be said to be a friend considers and discards a number of possibilities. Neither loving nor being loved is sufficient basis for being a friend, since

²⁵ Adkins, “‘Friendship’ and ‘Self-Sufficiency,’” 36; cf. Mary Scott, “*Philos, Philotēs and Xenia.*” *AC* 25 (1982): 6–8, who notes that φιλεῖν often took place within the context of ξενία, guest-friendship.

²⁶ Homer, *Il.* 6.119–232; Adkins, “‘Friendship’ and ‘Self-Sufficiency’ in Homer and Aristotle,” 36–37.

²⁷ Gurtler and Stern-Gillet, “Preface,” 10–11.

²⁸ Plato, *Lysis* 207c.

²⁹ Plato, *Lysis* 210c–d.

the other could hate in return.³⁰ Those who are alike may not be defined as friends,³¹ for those who are like in being bad would not be loved,³² and those who are alike in their goodness cannot need anything from each other.³³ On the other hand, those who are unlike cannot be friends either, because hatred and friendship are opposed.³⁴ Thus, the subsequent possibility for a friend proposed by Socrates is that the person who is neither good nor bad may be a friend to the good, but even this cannot be right.³⁵ “Love of the good collapses into self-love.”³⁶ Finally, Socrates omits the possibility that a friend may be defined as kindred, because that would return him to the previous argument that friends are alike.³⁷ Socrates’ inquiry ultimately comes to no conclusion regarding a basis for all the forms of friendship and whether there exists a perfect friendship that is free of need.³⁸

Plato treats friendship and its political role within his treatise *Laws*. He attempts to sketch a political system that brings out the best in its citizens and provides them with the opportunity to

³⁰ Plato, *Lysis* 211d–213d.

³¹ Plato, *Lysis* 213e–214b.

³² Plato, *Lysis* 214b–c.

³³ Plato, *Lysis* 214e–215a. In 215a–b, it appears that only the good can be friends but that the good would appear to not need friends in their self-sufficiency. James Haden, “Friendship in Plato’s *Lysis*” *RevM* 37 (1983): 354–6, contends that Plato’s goal in this dialogue is to assess the scope of the different forms of *φιλία*. This, in turn, allows persons within relationships to identify the nature of their friendship and act appropriately. The decision that those who are like in their goodness cannot be friends was one of ignorance and reveals that the “friendships” between *Lysis* and *Menexenus* and between *Hippothales* and *Lysis* are merely potential, not actual.

³⁴ Plato, *Lysis* 215c–216b.

³⁵ Plato, *Lysis* 216c–220c.

³⁶ Mary P. Nichols, “Friendship and Community in Plato’s *Lysis*” *RevP* 68 (2006): 7.

³⁷ Plato, *Lysis* 220e–222d.

³⁸ Plato, *Lysis* 223b7–8: οὐπω δὲ ὅτι ἔστιν ὁ φίλος οἰοί τε ἐγενόμεθα ἐξευρεῖν; cf. David Bolotin, *Plato’s Dialogue on Friendship: An Interpretation of the Lysis, with a New Translation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 12. Bolotin (pp. 196–97) further notes that Socrates fails to consider (1) those who both love and are loved and (2) “intermediate beings in their friendly relation to the good” as possible friends. These omissions reinforce the question of the relationship between “friendship in the ordinary sense, which requires that the friends both love and be loved, and the friendly disposition, without any desire to be loved, which men have toward the good which they pursue.”

maximize virtue and happiness,³⁹ determining that the law aims at freedom, friendship, and wisdom, which are all determined to be the same goal in the end.⁴⁰ Plato illustrates his point through the examples of Sparta, Persia, and Athens: they were each most successful when their political policies and situations were able to balance wisdom, freedom, and friendship.⁴¹

Plato's *Laws* reveals that genuine friendship is characterized by gentleness and reciprocity, and it is experienced by those who are equal in status and alike in goodness.⁴² He determines that the social group which finds itself between poverty and wealth is the one which is able to attain true friendship; this class of people is most able to become virtuous and be able to exercise σωφροσύνη, moderation, as opposed to πλεονεξία.⁴³ They are additionally best able to share all things in common, as friends do.⁴⁴

Significantly, Plato in *Laws* resolves some of the issues from the *Lysis* and provides an outline for friendship that takes greater shape in Aristotle. Plato affirms three forms of φιλία. The friendship from opposites is temporary, ending when the object of desire is acquired.⁴⁵ The friendship from resemblance here goes beyond Socrates' contentions in *Lysis* so that the identity of the two friends is not as important as their shared desire for virtue. The pursuit of virtue can overcome personal differences, though acquaintance and affection are still required. However,

³⁹ Plato, *Leg.* 5.743c.

⁴⁰ Plato, *Leg.* 3.693b–c, 701d.

⁴¹ Plato, *Leg.* 3.691d–694b, 3.698a–699d; Malcolm Schofield, "The *Law's* Two Projects," in *Plato's Laws: A Critical Guide*, ed. Christopher Bobonich (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16–21.

⁴² Plato, *Leg.* 5.837a.

⁴³ Plato, *Leg.* 3.679a–c, 716c; cf. *Gorg.* 508a.

⁴⁴ Plato, *Leg.* 5.739c. Cf. *Gorg.* 507e, where κοινωνία provides the proper orientation for the life that allows φιλία to flourish.

⁴⁵ Plato, *Leg.* 8.837a–b.

this friendship results in perfect and ongoing reciprocity.⁴⁶ The third form of friendship mixes the other two, torn between the instinct for pleasure or utility and the concern for the other's soul and good, so that it results in imperfect reciprocity.⁴⁷ While Plato does distinguish between interpersonal friendships, which are based on mutual affection and shared goals, and civic friendship, which are concerned with the unity of the city, there is a link between the virtue friendship (friendship from resemblance) and civic friendship. They are both based on proportionate equality, which is dependent upon the virtue of each member.⁴⁸ They both involve shared activity and mutual goodwill. They both foster cooperation, which in turn fosters virtue in all its participants. In the end, civic friendship arises from the same activity that allows for virtue friendship.⁴⁹ In this way, Plato does present a developed conception of interpersonal friendship, which provides the basis of his understanding of civic friendship and the ideal state.

Aristotle

In the time between Homer and Aristotle, the rise of the city state, accompanied by its democratic ideology and changing conditions of economic production, shifted the primary concerns within the friendship discourse from choosing between conflicting loyalties to the issue of the unfaithful and disloyal friend.⁵⁰ Friendship was understood as a bond based on generosity and affection, and there was expectation of mutual assistance and equality between friends.⁵¹ In

⁴⁶ Plato, *Leg.* 8.837a–b; Dimitri El Murr, “*Philia* in Plato,” in Gurtler and Stern-Gillet, *Ancient and Medieval Concepts of Friendship*, 19–20.

⁴⁷ Plato, *Leg.* 8.837b.

⁴⁸ Plato, *Leg.* 6.757b–c.

⁴⁹ Plato, *Leg.* 8.837a–b; El Murr, “*Philia* in Plato,” 24.

⁵⁰ Fitzgerald, “Friendship in the Greek World Prior to Aristotle,” 34.

⁵¹ Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 20.

this way, Aristotle represents the transition between the classical period and the subsequent Hellenistic schools: he responds to and further develops the preceding friendship discussion, adding his own distinctives; others later persist in using his categories in their considerations of friendship, virtue, and εὐδαιμονία.⁵²

Aristotle develops Plato's definition of friendship more robustly and provides the most detailed treatments on friendship before the Greco-Roman period,⁵³ explaining how two people may need or desire each other without allowing that good and bad can be friends. He emphasizes κοινωνία,⁵⁴ the three types of friendship,⁵⁵ and virtue as being the basis of the highest kind of friendship,⁵⁶ and he continues to discuss equality,⁵⁷ self-sufficiency,⁵⁸ and politics⁵⁹ in relation to φιλία. He refers to friendship in *Politics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Magna Moralia*, and he devotes *Eudemian Ethics* book 7 and *Nicomachean Ethics* books 8 and 9 to the subject. *Nicomachean Ethics* is assumed to reflect Aristotle's most developed reflections on friendship, which commands more space than any of the other moral virtues. Altogether, Aristotle's model of friendship plays a major role in his thoughts on the "highest philosophical life" (εὐδαιμονία),

⁵² Gurtler and Stern-Gillet, "Preface," 10; Annas, "The Hellenistic Version of Aristotle's Ethics," 80.

⁵³ Michael Pakaluk, ed., *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 28; Lorraine Smith Pangle, "The Philosophy of Friendship: Aristotle and the Classical Tradition on Friendship and Self-Love" (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 1999), 10.

⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.9.1159b26–32, 8.12.1161b11, 9.12.1171b32.

⁵⁵ Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156a5–1156b28.

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156b6–18; George Lyons and William H. Malas, Jr., "Paul and His Friends within the Greco-Roman Context," *WTJ* 42 (2007): 52.

⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.9.1241b14, 7.9.1241b34–41; *Eth. nic.* 8.5.1157b34–37, 8.7.1158b19–34; 8.13.1162a34–1162b4.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.9.1169b27–1170a15; 10.7.1176a27–1177b1; 10.8.1178b33–1178a3.

⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.6.1167a26–1167b5; Heather Devere, "Reviving Greco-Roman Friendship: A Bibliographic Review," *CRISPP* 2 (1999): 165.

ethics, and politics.⁶⁰

Definition of Friendship

Aristotle defines friendship as the mutual knowing exchange of affection and goodwill on the basis of lovable qualities within each person.⁶¹ He additionally delineates five marks of a friend. First, a friend “wishes, and promotes by action, the real or apparent good of another for that other’s sake.” Second, he wishes for the other’s existence and preservation for the other’s sake. Third, a friend spends time together with the other. Fourth, he wants the same things as his friend. Finally, he grieves and rejoices with his friend.⁶²

Types of Friendships

According to Aristotle, the possible bases of friendship include likeness,⁶³ contrast,⁶⁴ goodness,⁶⁵ and utility.⁶⁶ From there, he determines the existence of three kinds of friendship corresponding to the three kinds of lovable qualities: utility (χρήσιμος), pleasure (ἡδός), and goodness (ἀγαθός and ἀρετή).⁶⁷ Friends of utility love for the benefit and profit they provide each other, friends of pleasure for their agreeableness, but friends of goodness for the friend

⁶⁰ Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2; Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship*, SSET (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 4.

⁶¹ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1236a14–16; *Eth. nic.* 8.2.1155b18–1156a5; *Rhet.* 2.4.1381a.

⁶² Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.6.1240a24–25, 7.6.1240a37–39; *Eth. nic.* 9.4.1166a2–10; *Rhet.* 1.5.1361b.

⁶³ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.1.1235a5–9; *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a33–35.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.1.1235a14–19; *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155b1–2.

⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.11.1208b38–1209a10; *Eth. eud.* 7.1.1235a33; *Eth. nic.* 8.1–2.1155b9–26, 8.4–5.1157a16–b28; *Rhet.* 2.4.1381a.

⁶⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.1.1235a36–37.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1236a31–33; *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1155b5–10.

being what he is.⁶⁸

The first friendship, the one based on utility, is the most common⁶⁹ and the most vulnerable, riddled with complaints.⁷⁰ It is established by men interested in profit and so is completely self-interested.⁷¹ Aristotle explains, that this type of friendship “dissolves as soon as its profit ceases; for the friends did not love each other, but what they got out of each other.”⁷² The second type of friendship, based on pleasure, is found among the young, quickly formed and dropped.⁷³ The friend again is not loved for who he is but rather because he is pleasant, so this friendship also ends easily.⁷⁴

Friendship of virtue occurs among the best men⁷⁵ and, in one sense, is the truest and only friendship.⁷⁶ As Aristotle admits, friendships of utility and pleasure are only called friendships in that they resemble, with qualification, the friendship of virtue in structure and convention through goodwill, affection, mutuality, and reciprocity.⁷⁷ This true friendship, meanwhile, entails the person’s totality as being good and liking what is good. Aristotle calls this friendship the perfect form (τελεία), because the permanence of virtue allows for relationship to endure in the “fullest and best form.” It can only take place between those who are good and alike in virtue (ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν φιλία καὶ κατ’ἀρετὴν ὁμοίων), but this allows for friends to love each other for

⁶⁸ Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156a11–24.

⁶⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1236a34–37; *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156a25–30.

⁷⁰ Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 8.13.1162a34–1163b29.

⁷¹ Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 8.13.1162b16–21.

⁷² Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 8.4.1157a14–15.

⁷³ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2. 1236a38–39; *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156a31–1156b6.

⁷⁴ Aristotle *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156a12–19.

⁷⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1236b1.

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1236b25–1237b14, 7.2.1238a32–33; *Eth. nic.* 8.5.1157b25–26.

⁷⁷ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.11.1209a19–38; *Eth. nic.* 8.2.1155b28–1156a5, 8.4.1157a26–34.

their own sake.⁷⁸

Qualities of Friends

Aristotle's descriptions of friends and friendships are interconnected as they fit within his larger theory of politics, εὐδαιμονία, and ethics. The overall point of Aristotle's ethical writings "is to demonstrate the unity of virtue and happiness,"⁷⁹ and friendship is essential to each. He names friendship a virtue or an activity in accordance with virtue, "one of the most indispensable requirements of life,"⁸⁰ which also provides the structure for the good life.⁸¹ Friendship additionally provides the ideal relationship among citizens⁸² even as the goal of politics is to provide the proper environment for virtue, friendship, and εὐδαιμονία to flourish.⁸³ Since εὐδαιμονία requires doing and living according to virtue, not merely having virtue, friends are able to engage in virtue together and even help sustain each other in this activity.⁸⁴ Thus, εὐδαιμονία provides the shape of the purpose of good friendship, and "includes the activity of good friendship in accordance with its virtue."⁸⁵ Friendship requires virtue, a correct conception of self, and equality.

⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156b8–24, 8.4.1157b1–3; cf. *Mag. mor.* 2.11.1209b12–16.

⁷⁹ Pangle, "The Philosophy of Friendship," 11–12.

⁸⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a1–5.

⁸¹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.8.1098b21.

⁸² "[L]awgivers seem to set more store by [φιλία] than they do by justice (τὴν δικαιοσύνην), for to promote concord (ἡ ὁμόνοια), which seems akin to friendship, is their chief aim, while faction (τὴν στάσιν), which is enmity, is what they are most anxious to banish." Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a23–29; cf. *Rhet.* 3.5.1280b40–1281a4.

Friendship goes further than justice, because it is concerned in achieving absolute equality as opposed to a concern with only proportional equality. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.7.1158b29–35.

⁸³ Aristotle, *Pol* 1.1.1252b29–31; 3.4.1278b24–25; 3.5.1280b6–11; 3.5.1280b35–36; 7.12.1332a5–9; *Eth. nic.* 1.9.1099b30–33; 1.13.1102a8–10.

⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.8.1099a31–b6, 8.3.1156b12–17, 9.9.1170a4–11; *Rhet.* 1.5.1360b.

⁸⁵ Schollmeier, *Other Selves*, 51.

In considering the intersection of friendship, happiness, and virtue, Aristotle's system of philosophy must address the tension between ἀταρκεία and friendship. Happiness requires self-sufficiency and lacking in nothing,⁸⁶ so it initially appears that the happy, self-sufficient man has no need of friends. In contrast, Aristotle says that it is precisely this person who needs friends "most of all."

For on whom will he confer benefits, or with whom will he dwell? for surely he will not spend his life in solitude. If, then, he needs these things, <an object for his beneficence and a companion,> and cannot have them without friendship, the self-sufficient man will need the society of a friend as well as his own.⁸⁷

Aristotle defines self-sufficiency not as a life apart from others, "since man is by nature a social being." Rather, a self-sufficient thing "merely standing by itself alone renders life desirable and lacking in nothing."⁸⁸ Given that "the good of a man resides in the function of man"⁸⁹ and that man's function is reason,⁹⁰ the happy man ultimately requires other people in his life, not based on utility or pleasure, but because he needs friends with which to engage in virtuous activity. Furthermore, friends serve as objects for beneficence and to gain self-knowledge,⁹¹ and thus they are "a necessary constituent of a flourishing life."⁹²

The self-sufficient man requires friends for self-reflection, "in order to recognize what manner of man he is."⁹³ Aristotle explains that it is impossible for a man to contemplate himself

⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.7.1097b15–21.

⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.15.121b25–34; cf. *Eth. nic.* 9.9.1169b3–1170b19.

⁸⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.7.1097b8–18.

⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.7.1097b25–28.

⁹⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.7.1098a13–16.

⁹¹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.9.1169b3–14, 9.9.1169b31–1170a11.

⁹² John M. Cooper, "Friendship and the Good in Aristotle," *PR* 86 (1977): 291, 294–95, 310.

⁹³ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.15.1213a10–27; cf. *Eth. eud.* 7.12.1245a29–35. That friends share one spirit (μίαν ψυχήν εἶναι τοῖς ἀλλήθως φίλοις) is another element of the friendship topos reiterated in *Eth. eud.* 7.6.1240b4.

directly, because his judgment is so easily clouded. A friend then provides a mirror to a man's body and spirit, because that friend is "another self" (ὁ φίλος ἕτερος ἐγώ).⁸⁴ Aristotle additionally links the idea that a friend is another self to self-love, as all the marks of friendship with another can be said of the relationship between the good man and himself. The good man wants the same things with all parts of his nature, seeks his own good actively, seeks to preserve his life, enjoys his own company, and is aware of his joys and sorrows. Self-love and friendship hold a strong resemblance to each other.⁸⁵

As such, Aristotle also must deal with the possible conflict in friendship between self- and other-interest in friendship, how a man can choose some virtuous action *both* for itself *and* for the sake of his own happiness, and likewise choose to benefit and value his friend. One part of Aristotle's solution is that a friend is another self,⁸⁶ though this still requires the participants to be good so that they are capable of friendship with themselves.⁸⁷ Virtuous actions are chosen for the features that make them virtuous, and, "Since a virtuous action is an actualization of the agent's capacity for virtue, it is chosen for itself precisely insofar as it is chosen for the sake of the agent's *eudaimonia*."⁸⁸ Aristotle cites the proverbs, "Friends have one soul between them" (μία ψυχή), "Friends' goods are common property" (κοινὰ τὰ φίλων), "Amity is equality" (ἰσότης φιλότης), and "The knee is nearer than the shin" (γόνυ κνήμης ἔγγιον), as not only evidence that self-love is natural, but also that friendship is an extension of self-love.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Aristotle *Mag. mor.* 2.15.1213a10–27. He also repeats this saying more broadly in *Eth. nic.* 9.9.1169b3–14 and 9.9.1170b6–7 in service of the idea of why the happy and self-sufficient man is still in need of friends.

⁸⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.4.1166a30–34.

⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.13.1212a28–b24; *Eth. nic.* 9.8.1168b1–13.

⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.11.1210b34–1211b4; *Eth. nic.* 9.4.1166a10–b1.

⁸⁸ Carreras, "Aristotle's Ideals of Friendship and Virtue," 215.

⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.8.1168b1–13.

Other-interest requires εὐνοία, one of the components in Aristotle’s definition of friendship. It is the beginning of friendship¹⁰⁰ and founded upon the same basis as friendship, since they are both “aroused by some kind of excellence (ἀρετή) or moral goodness.”¹⁰¹ Goodwill and friendship are not, however, identical; εὐνοία can be felt towards strangers and can be unknown to the object.¹⁰² Rather, goodwill becomes friendship “when it continues and reaches the point of intimacy” and is not driven by utility or pleasure.¹⁰³

The requirement for friends to be virtuous and maintain goodwill leads to Aristotle’s observation that constancy (τὸ βέβαιον) is a quality in true friendships, allowing for its participants to wish the same good things continuously.¹⁰⁴ Here Aristotle again eliminates the possibility of friendship between or among bad men; they can have no constancy in their relationships because they cannot “remain true to their own characters.”¹⁰⁵ They cannot achieve ὁμονοία, agreement in the interests and concerns of life, which is necessary to fulfill the common interests of all the participants. For this reason, concord often indicates friendship between citizens, though it also applies to friendship between good men. Each citizen or friend, moreover, must be willing to do his duty, because the practical nature of concord carries it beyond thinking the same things to the point of practicing and achieving the same ends.¹⁰⁶

Time and misfortune reveal when goodwill and concord have developed into true

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.12.1211b40–1212a28; *Eth. eud.* 7.7.1241a1–b18; *Eth. nic.* 9.5.1166b30–1167a22.

¹⁰¹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.5.1167a19–22.

¹⁰² Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.5.1166b30–33.

¹⁰³ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.5.1167a11–14.

¹⁰⁴ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1237b10–14, 7.5.1239b17–18.

¹⁰⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.8.1159b7–9.

¹⁰⁶ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.13.1212a15–27; *Eth. eud.* 7.7.1241a16–33, *Eth. nic.* 9.6.1167a23–b16.

friendship, and they reveal the truth of κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων.¹⁰⁷ This proverb moves friendship beyond emotive sharing, in which friends as μία ψυχὴ share each other's joy and grief,¹⁰⁸ to the concrete sharing of goods. From this proverb, Aristotle infers that every κοινωνία involves some φιλία, but this φιλία is limited “to the extent of their association in their common business.” He then defines friendship using κοινωνία as a key word. Partnership or community is the “essence of friendship” (ἐν κοινωνίᾳ γὰρ ἡ φιλία).¹⁰⁹ All friendship involves it (Ἐν κοινωνίᾳ μὲν οὖν πᾶσα φιλία ἐστίν).¹¹⁰ Friendship is κοινωνία (κοινωνία γὰρ ἡ φιλία).¹¹¹ The degree to which friends hold their possessions in common corresponds to the degree of their friendship.¹¹²

Closely related to friendship as community and as a partnership is the equality of friends. Aristotle restates this equality with variations of the proverb (ὡς ἰσότης φιλότης, ἰσότης ἡ φιλότης, and φιλότης [ἢ] ἰσότης).¹¹³ Each of Aristotle's three forms of friendships depends upon equality, “for both parties render the same benefit and wish the same good to each other” and exhibit equality of goodwill towards each other.¹¹⁴ Equality in friendship comes in two types; proportional (κατ' ἀναλογίαν) equality characterizes the friendship between unequals and numerical (κατ' ἀριθμόν) equality the friendship between equals.¹¹⁵ Talk of common property

¹⁰⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1238a16–17; *Eth. nic.* 8.3–4.1156b25–1157a16.

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle *Eth. eud.* 7.6.1240b8–1.

¹⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.9.1159b27–32.

¹¹⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.12.1161b11–12.

¹¹¹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.12.1171b33–34.

¹¹² Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.9.1159b33–1160a8.

¹¹³ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.6.1240b3–4, 7.9.1241b14; *Eth. nic.* 8.5.1157b37.

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.3.1238b15–18; *Eth. nic.* 8.6.1158a1–4, 8.8.1161b34–1163a23.

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.9.1241b34–41; *Eth. nic.* 8.7.1158b29–35, 9.2.1165a14–36; Keener, “Friendship,” 382.

assumes the social equality of friends, but Aristotle's conception of *φιλία* is so intertwined with his theory of virtue that he emphasizes equality of virtue over equality of possessions.¹¹⁶

Proportional equality corresponds to Aristotle's three forms of friendship (utility, pleasure, and goodness), but it also occurs in relationships between father and son, subject and ruler, superior and inferior, or wife and husband.¹¹⁷ In these examples, equality between the friends is maintained by how the inferior friend displays more affection towards the superior one.¹¹⁸ While such unequal friendships are possible, Aristotle acknowledges that friendship between social unequals is difficult to maintain. People are not expected to remain friends when there is any kind of "wide disparity" between them, whether that difference occurs in terms of virtue or wealth or any other factor.¹¹⁹ Only equal parties can be said to be true friends, and the goal of friendship is to achieve this absolute equality.¹²⁰

Finally, Aristotle treats the question of whether one should seek many or few friends. He concludes that the number should correspond to one's character and circumstances, so it is necessarily limited. Besides the difficulty in finding an equal friend, there is a limit to the number of people to whom a person may repay affections, with whom he may live and share himself, and with whom he may truly love for their virtue and for themselves.¹²¹

Aristotle concludes book 9 of *Nicomachean Ethics* with the assertion that being with one's

¹¹⁶ Aristotle, *Pol.* 2.2.1263a24–36; Horst Herfried Hutter, "Friendship in Theory and Practice: A Study of Greek and Roman Theories of Friendship in Their Social Settings" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1972), 94.

¹¹⁷ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.11. 1211b9–18; *Eth. eud.* 7.4.1239a3–4.

¹¹⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.4.1239a10–22; *Eth. nic.* 8.11.1161a20–31, 8.13.1161a35–b5.

¹¹⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.3.1239a6–10; *Eth. nic.* 8.7.1158b33–1159a5.

¹²⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.3–4.1238b19–1239b8; *Eth. nic.* 8.5.1157b37–1158a1, 8.7.1158b12–28; Miriam Griffin, "De Beneficiis and Roman Society," *JRS* 93 (2003): 98.

¹²¹ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.16.1213b4–18; *Eth. nic.* 9.10.1170b20–1171a20.

friends is most desirable, whether in times of prosperity or adversity, because (1) friendship is κοινωνία, (2) a friend is another self, and (3) “whatever pursuit it is that constitutes existence for a man or that makes his life worth living, he desires to share that pursuit with his friends.¹²² Virtuous friends share together in the pursuit of good.¹²³ Although it may be difficult to attain true friendship, the benefits of having a good friend makes the endeavor worthwhile.

Paul’s Greco-Roman Contemporaries on Friendship

The rise of the regional Hellenistic dynasties and the Roman Empire led to new phenomena within friendship, including the issue of distinguishing a flatterer from a friend, a new prominence assigned to frank speech, the rise of “unequal” friendships, and the shift towards choosing friends based on ideals and morals instead of economic equality. Many of these factors converge and are evident in the blurring between friendship and patronage, relationships that are compatible but not synonymous.¹²⁴ On one hand, the use of friendship language—friend (*amici*), faithfulness (*fides*), the cycle of favors (*beneficia, official, merita, gratia*), goodwill and affection (*voluntas, bene velle, amor*)—allow unequal partners to highlight their shared pursuits and values over their socioeconomic differences.¹²⁵ On the other hand, sources such as Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch still hold to the idea that ideal friendship occurs between persons of equal social status and are concerned to protect the “moralistic bases of friendship that cohered elite networks

¹²² Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.12.1171b31–1172a8.

¹²³ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.12.1172a8–14.

¹²⁴ Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 21. See the previous section, “Patronage vs. Friendship,” 33–34.

¹²⁵ Peter White, *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 14; Fitzgerald, “Paul and Friendship,” 329.

by excluding clientelistic relationships from the ‘true’ (elite) definition of friendship.”¹²⁶ They lament that friendship is no longer public, no longer represents a commitment to the larger πόλις, and no longer is connected with the virtuous life. Despite their concern with the ideal of friendship, these thinkers remain aware of reality and address it, as demonstrated with their negative examples and descriptions of how men actually behave.¹²⁷

Cicero

Cicero’s life coincided with the decline of the Roman Republic, something he attributed to a loss of virtue among politicians and lack of commitment to social stability.¹²⁸ His writings on ideal friendship reflect his hope for the restoration of morality in society, which, in turn, would promote the restoration of the Republic. His two most relevant treatments of friendship, *Laelius de Amicitia* and *De Officiis*, reflect both his theoretical interest in friendship and his own experience with politics and friends.¹²⁹

Cicero’s *Laelius* presents itself as a book on friendship written by a friend to a friend.¹³⁰ Gaius Laelius dialogues with his sons-in-law Gannius and Scaevola about his friendships with Scipio and Atticus and about the composition of successful friendships. In the process, Laelius affirms that all humans are bonded by shared reason, and he defines friendship as “nothing other than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection.” As with the Greek thinkers before him, Cicero ascribes prominence to friendship, so that, “with

¹²⁶ Rice, “Paul and Patronage,” 88.

¹²⁷ Griffin, “*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society,” 94.

¹²⁸ Plutarch, *Cic.* 7.1

¹²⁹ Benjamin Fiore, “The Theory and Practice of Friendship in Cicero,” in Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman Perspectives*, 60.

¹³⁰ Cicero, *Amic.* 1.5.

the exception of wisdom, no better thing has been given to many by the immortal gods.”¹³¹

The key elements of Cicero’s definition of friendship—concord, goodwill, and affection—prompt the joy of friendship,¹³² which he considers necessary for happiness.¹³³ Echoing Aristotle, he sees happiness, virtue, and friendship as interconnected. Virtue is a necessary requirement and the means to attain both friendship and happiness, the latter of which “is our best and highest aim.”¹³⁴ Virtue “both creates the bond of friendship and preserves it,”¹³⁵ yet virtue only can “attain her highest aims” in relationship with other people.¹³⁶

From this emphasis on the necessity of virtue for friendship, Cicero necessarily upholds that *vera et perfecta amicitia* can only exist among *viri boni*,¹³⁷ whereas *amicitia vulgaris* or *mediocris* occurs among *boni* and those who belong to the *multitudo*.¹³⁸ Good men are defined as those who are virtuous and self-sufficient¹³⁹ and who “give proof of loyalty and uprightness, of fairness and generosity; who are free from all passion, caprice, and insolence, and have great strength of character.”¹⁴⁰ When good men are friends, their relationship matches the harmony, permanence, and fidelity of virtue.¹⁴¹ Friends are able to maintain complete harmony with

¹³¹ Cicero, *Amic.* 6.21.

¹³² Cicero, *Amic.* 27.102.

¹³³ Cicero, *Amic.* 6.22, 22.84, 23.86–87.

¹³⁴ Cicero, *Amic.* 22.85.

¹³⁵ Cicero, *Amic.* 27.101.

¹³⁶ Cicero, *Amic.* 22.83.

¹³⁷ Cicero, *Amic.* 5.18, 18.65, 26.100.

¹³⁸ Cicero, *Amic.* 5.20, 6.22, 7.23, 21.76–77.

¹³⁹ Cicero, *Amic.* 9.30.

¹⁴⁰ Cicero, *Amic.* 5.19.

¹⁴¹ Cicero, *Amic.* 27.101.

permanency.¹⁴² They are chosen as friends for being firm, steadfast, and constant.¹⁴³ Ideal friends are frank, sociable, and sympathetic, all characteristics that also are conducive to loyalty. Finally, a true friend does not take “pleasure in bringing charges against you nor believe them when made by others.”¹⁴⁴

Cicero further explains that people feel affection for others based on their virtue and uprightness, another reason that the self-sufficient man is the one who most appropriately seeks and cherishes friendships.¹⁴⁵ He determines that, since it is natural to love, friendship too has its root in nature itself, rather than need or pleasure. As a result, true friendship is characterized by an ongoing reciprocal exchange and sharing of resources based in love and goodwill rather than out of need and desire for profit.¹⁴⁶ The benefit of friendship is in the love itself,¹⁴⁷ and the best advantage to be gained from friendship is that the friends have the opportunity to develop their virtue further.¹⁴⁸

Self-interest threatens friendship,¹⁴⁹ as it inhibits the ability to gain a true friend as another

¹⁴² Cicero, *Amic.* 9.32, 17.61.

¹⁴³ Cicero, *Amic.* 17.62.

¹⁴⁴ Cicero, *Amic.* 18.65.

¹⁴⁵ Cicero, *Amic.* 8.28.

¹⁴⁶ Cicero, *Amic.* 8.26–27, 9.32.

¹⁴⁷ Cicero, *Amic.* 9.30. Again, in *Amic.* 14.51, he writes, “For it is not so much the material gain procured through a friend, as it is his love, and his love alone, that gives us delight... And it is far from being true that friendship is cultivated because of need; rather, is it cultivated by those who are most abundantly blessed with wealth and power and especially with virtue, which is man’s best defence; by those least in need of another’s help; and by those most generous and most given to acts of kindness.”

¹⁴⁸ Cicero, *Amic.* 9.32. Later, in *Amic.* 22.83, Cicero details, “virtue cannot attain her highest aims unattended, but only in union and fellowship with another. Such a partnership as this, whether it is, or was, or is yet to be, should be considered the best and happiest comradeship along the road to nature’s highest good.”

¹⁴⁹ Cicero, *Amic.* 10.34, 17.64, 21.77.

self (*tanquam alter idem*)¹⁵⁰ or to join in one soul (*unus animus*).¹⁵¹ In that same vein, equality between friends similarly emerges as important, that the “superior and inferior should stand on an equality.”¹⁵² Cicero specifies that the superior should lower himself to be on the same level as the inferior member of the friendship and to give him aid.¹⁵³ Related to the detrimental effects of self-interest are flattery and hypocrisy, since it is the self-satisfied person who is most susceptible to these.¹⁵⁴ This issue returns to the matters of loyalty (*fides*), love, and virtue. Advising with frankness, but without harshness, follows Cicero’s “first law of friendship,” that one should only ask his friends to do things that are honorable, and that one should only do honorable things for one’s friend.¹⁵⁵

The other work in which Cicero extensively treats friendship is *De officiis*, a letter to his son Marcus on how the final purpose of life defines duties and how duties should be performed; duties are derived from each of virtue’s four divisions of wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance.¹⁵⁶ He cites Plato for the idea that men were created to live in community and to give and receive,¹⁵⁷ so, under the scope of the virtue of justice, Cicero considers and provides some practical rules on kindness, generosity, and beneficence to be demonstrated “in proportion to the

¹⁵⁰ Cicero, *Amic.* 21.80.

¹⁵¹ Cicero, *Amic.* 25.93.

¹⁵² Cicero, *Amic.* 19.69.

¹⁵³ Cicero, *Amic.* 20.71–73. While Cicero allows for some socioeconomic distance between friends, he still assumes a certain degree of equality. For instance, in *Amic.* 27.103, he holds that the idea friends participate in both public and domestic affairs together, something that can only happen if they come from similar stations.

¹⁵⁴ Cicero, *Amic.* 25.91–92, 26.97.

¹⁵⁵ Cicero, *Amic.* 13.44, 25.91.

¹⁵⁶ Cicero, *Off.* 1.15.

¹⁵⁷ Cicero, *Off.* 1.22.

closeness of his relationship,” since this best preserves bonds within society.¹⁵⁸

Cicero instructs that beneficence should not cause harm, should be within the means of the giver, and should “be proportioned to the worthiness of the recipient,” which is according to his moral character, attitude toward and intimacy with the giver, and his services thus rendered to the giver.¹⁵⁹ In judging affection, what matters is its strength and constancy, not its degree.

Additionally, if another person has already bestowed beneficence, then returning gratitude is one’s most important duty.¹⁶⁰ The two types of generosity include initiating a favor and requiting kindness.¹⁶¹ Favors are assessed according to “the spirit, the devotion, the affection, that prompted the favour,” and they should be “performed with judgment, deliberation, and mature consideration” according to the need of the recipient. This contrasts with a favor given for the sole purpose of receiving favors in return.¹⁶²

Cicero talks about the different kinds of social relationships with their varied degrees of closeness, maintaining a balance between the right to hold private property and the existence of common property for the common good as he cites the Greek proverb *amicorum esse communia omnia*.¹⁶³ The most “noble” and “powerful” bond of fellowship is “when good men of congenial character are joined in intimate friendship.” Friendship is formed based on “compatibility of character in good men,” on moral goodness or virtue, such that Pythagoras’ requirement of *unus fiat ex pluribus* for ideal friendship is fulfilled. Cicero continues to acknowledge that the “mutual

¹⁵⁸ Cicero, *Off.* 1.50.

¹⁵⁹ Cicero, *Off.* 1.42–45.

¹⁶⁰ Cicero, *Off.* 1.47.

¹⁶¹ Cicero, *Off.* 1.48.

¹⁶² Cicero, *Off.* 1.49.

¹⁶³ Cicero, *Off.* 1.51.

interchange of kind services” between persons “united by the ties of an enduring intimacy” also creates a “strong bond of fellowship,” but he does not go so far as to name this relationship specifically as friendship.¹⁶⁴ He never expects that a person’s private property should be threatened, but he still maintains the expectation of sharing, especially in the true form of friendship founded upon virtue and goodness.

Cicero considers that moral obligation and material assistance is first prioritized towards one’s country, one’s parents, one’s family, and then one’s kinsmen. Nevertheless, “intimate relationship of life and living, counsel, conversation, encouragement, comfort, and sometimes even reproof flourish best in friendships. And that friendship is sweetest which is cemented by congeniality of character.”¹⁶⁵ With these observations, Cicero maintains ideal friendship as based in agreement of character and as a means of developing virtue. While friendship is not Cicero’s primary concern in *De officiis*, he acknowledges that friendship involves the exchange of some of the best benefits within a community and that giving and receiving take on certain characteristics in keeping with the closeness of the relationship. Friendship, when practiced properly, helps maintain the morality of the entire Roman Empire, as its participants appropriately fulfill their duties towards each other and the larger society.

Seneca

Portions of Seneca’s *Epistulae morales* discuss the traditional aspects of the friendship topos. He highlights the importance of determining a person’s worthiness of friendship, and he characterizes “true friendship” as having open heartedness, bold speech, trust, and loyalty.¹⁶⁶ To

¹⁶⁴ Cicero, *Off.* 1.53–56.

¹⁶⁵ Cicero, *Off.* 1.58.

¹⁶⁶ Seneca, *Ep.* 3.2–3.

Lucilius, he writes that true friendship can “happen when souls are drawn together by identical inclinations into an alliance of honourable desires” on the basis that its participants understand that *omnia habere communia*.¹⁶⁷ If friendship is not sought for its own sake, if it is pursued for usefulness instead of virtue, it is not true and will not last. He elsewhere affirms that the self-sufficient wise man still needs friendships in order to exercise his “noble qualities” and to develop his virtue fully.¹⁶⁸ In fact, it is only the self-sufficient wise man who can be a friend.¹⁶⁹ In this way, Seneca firmly adheres to traditional elements of the friendship topos: mutual trust, reciprocated goodwill, testing the worthiness of friends, the notion that friends hold all in common, true friendship as based in virtue and not need, and the need of friends with which to practice and develop virtue.

Since Seneca does not have his own *De officiis*, a comparison of Cicero’s *De officiis* with Seneca’s *De beneficiis* provides the best opportunity to compare social practices and social attitudes of the Roman elite from the Republic (Cicero) to Principate (Seneca). Cicero and Seneca both were wealthy and concerned to maintain their reputations and influence, and they both write on liberality and gratitude from the perspective of the giver, who would have had some level of social status. Furthermore, they both write in defense of preserving “the traditional aristocratic code: patriotic, generous to the poor, protective of dependents.”¹⁷⁰

The main purpose of Seneca in *De beneficiis* is to treat the social phenomenon of gift-exchange, rather than the specific institutions of friendship or patronage. His second concern is

¹⁶⁷ Seneca, *Ep.* 6.3.

¹⁶⁸ Seneca, *Ep.* 9.1, 3–4, 8; 109.

¹⁶⁹ Seneca, *Ep.* 35.

¹⁷⁰ Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 11; Griffin, “*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society,” 96.

to demonstrate how the exchange of benefits reinforces social cohesion.¹⁷¹ Seneca details the problem of ingratitude, gives instructions on the proper giving and reception of benefits, and establishes the worth of engaging in the cycle of χάρις. The context for gift-exchange and social cohesion occurs primarily within elite horizontal relationships, relationships between social equals or between people treated as social equals.¹⁷² Only when there is equality can Chrysippus' dance of the three Graces be maintained.¹⁷³ Although Seneca is only interested in the cause of *beneficia*, he identifies *De beneficiis* with Stoic discussions of χάρις¹⁷⁴ and acknowledges that the exchange of benefits leads to the creation of friendship, though the exchange is not the purpose of friendship.¹⁷⁵

The first book of *De beneficiis* opens with Seneca's observation that nothing is more disgraceful than not knowing how to give or receive benefits, and nothing is a greater vice than ingratitude. He defines a benefit as

the act of a wellwisher who bestows joy and derives joy from the bestowal of it, and is inclined to do what he does from the prompting of his own will. And so what counts is, not what is done or what is given, but the spirit of the action, because a

¹⁷¹ Pliny's *Letters* verify that Seneca's *De beneficiis* appropriately reflects his day's practices and ideals. Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 49–53.

The relationship treated in *De beneficiis* cannot be patronage, because Seneca is dealing with his equals or betters. At the same time, it cannot be friendship, because Seneca is concerned with the cause for exchange rather than the effect, which is friendship. Furthermore, he has already discussed friendship in a different treatise and so would be unlikely to cover it again here. In Griffin's assessment, Seneca's purpose was to reinforce gift exchange as a means of social cohesion, a shared social ideal for the common good. His fitting in of the Princeps, a new phenomenon, into this social code strengthened *civilitas*. Griffin, "De Beneficiis and Roman Society," 95–98, 101, 103, 113; Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 35.

¹⁷² Griffin, "De Beneficiis and Roman Society," 95, 97; Rice, "Paul and Patronage," 90.

¹⁷³ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.3.2–4.6.

¹⁷⁴ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.3.6–4.6; Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 15; Peterman, *Paul's Gift at Philippi*, 52.

¹⁷⁵ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.5.5, 2.18.5, 2.21.2; Griffin, "De Beneficiis and Roman Society," 95.

In Aristotle, beneficence (εὐεργεσία) plays a part in each of the three types of φιλία (*Eth. nic.* 8.13.1162a34–1163a23), and the wealthy use φιλία as an "outlet for beneficence" (*Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a6–10).

benefit consists, not in what is done or given, but in the intention of the giver or doer.¹⁷⁶

Similar to Cicero, Seneca holds that Roman society was experiencing a decline of morality and virtue, which was going to cause the collapse of social exchange, the system that bound the whole society.¹⁷⁷ The issue begins with a lack of care with choosing recipients for gifts, because an unworthy recipient cannot be expected to be grateful for a poorly given gift,¹⁷⁸ even as benefits should not be given in order to receive a return.¹⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the virtuous man seeks to bestow benefits for the sake of giving them, not with a thought to a return, as he searches for good recipients.¹⁸⁰ Mirroring the ideal from the allegory of the Three Graces, Seneca advises that giving, receiving, and returning should be done willingly and in balance to maintain social stability and cohesion, so that there is an “honourable rivalry” and neither lack nor excess of liberality.¹⁸¹

Book 2 then is able to continue instructions on the proper bestowment of a gift and its appropriate reception. Benefits should be given quickly,¹⁸² forgotten after being given,¹⁸³ consider the interests of both parties,¹⁸⁴ and be proportionate.¹⁸⁵ The purpose of giving of a benefit is, “To be

¹⁷⁶ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.6.1–2.

¹⁷⁷ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.4.2, where giving, receiving, and returning of benefits “constitutes the chief bond of human society”; 1.15.3. The function Cicero and Seneca of holding states together here attribute to the exchange of benefits is replaced by *φιλία* in Aristotle (*Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a23); cf. Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 31.

¹⁷⁸ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.1.1–2, 7.

¹⁷⁹ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.1.10.

¹⁸⁰ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.1.12.

¹⁸¹ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.3.2–4.6.

¹⁸² Seneca, *Ben.* 2.1.2–5.4.

¹⁸³ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.10.4–11.6.

¹⁸⁴ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.14.1–15.3. In 15.1, Seneca writes, “Since the sum total of friendship consists in putting a friend on an equality with ourselves, consideration must be given at the same time to the interests of both. I shall give to him if he is in need, yet not to the extent of bringing need upon myself.”

¹⁸⁵ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.15.3–17.7. He continues in 15.3, “Each one of us should consider his own means and

of service and to give pleasure to the one to whom he gives.”¹⁸⁶ In turn, the beneficiary should discriminately accept benefits according to whom he would have given one and according to whether it will impose obligations of gratitude or friendship.¹⁸⁷ The recipient also should receive benefits with gratitude, public acknowledgment, joy, and immediate consideration of how to return the gift,¹⁸⁸ although Seneca does maintain that proper reception of a benefit can constitute repayment.¹⁸⁹ Most of all, the beneficiary should guard against ingratitude, which is caused by conceit, greed, ambition, and envy¹⁹⁰ and which ultimately leads to the “loss of the pleasure of giving.”¹⁹¹

One final point of interest in *De beneficiis* is Seneca’s response to question of how anyone can give anything to his friend, if they have all things in common.¹⁹² On one level, his solution is that “a thing can belong to both friends in one sense, and still be the private property of one of them, so as to be available as a gift to the other.” Like Cicero, he does not expect people to give up private property, so a friend’s free sharing remains a gift. On a second level, Seneca

resources in order that we may not bestow either a larger or a smaller amount than we are able to give.”

¹⁸⁶ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.31.2. In *Ben.* 4.1.1–3, he explains that giving benefits and returning them are both worthy and valuable acts in themselves. A benefit is and has the same nature as a virtuous act, which is a desirable end in itself.

¹⁸⁷ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.18.3–21.2. When one gives a benefit, he enters an enduring relationship, since benefit exchange bonds the individuals and creates friendship. Thus, Seneca in 2.18.5 writes, “as I would not admit an unworthy man to my friendship, so neither would I admit one who is unworthy to the most sacred privilege of benefits.”

¹⁸⁸ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.22.1–24.4.

¹⁸⁹ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.31.1–35.5; Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 187–9. This discussion on how to receive benefits properly hinges on the fact that a benefit acknowledged by gratitude is a mark of friendship, not a loan. Gratitude indicates that the recipient has returned goodwill with his good spirit. This does not mean that the recipient has freed himself from any “debt,” however, though it does release him from fixating on what he owes so that he may properly continue the cycle of benefits.

¹⁹⁰ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.26.1–30.2. In *Ben.* 2.30.1–2, Seneca asks to whom a man will respond with gratitude, or to whom he will return a gift, if he even denies that he has received the highest benefit of life from the gods.

¹⁹¹ Seneca, *Ben.* 3.17.1–3; Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 207.

¹⁹² Seneca, *Ben.* 7.4.1.

distinguishes what is given from the generous act.¹⁹³ The significance of a benefit then is reinforced as the generosity that accompanies it, not any calculable value that a gift may have.

Benefit-exchange in Seneca's thought takes the place that Aristotle had assigned to friendship as creating the bond of society. Ingratitude was a problem that threatened to undermine acts of beneficence, and Seneca recognized that this was not an issue simply on the part of recipients. Drawing from Chrysippus' Three Graces, Seneca demonstrates that there must be a willing balance at each stage of benefit-exchange, in the initial giving, in the receiving, and in the response. At each stage, the participants must treat a benefit as such, rather than as a loan that demands repayment. Seneca further acknowledges the significance of beneficence with the recognition that it leads to and establishes friendship. That beneficence can be the cause of friendship seemingly causes a paradox to arise – if friends hold all in common, then the only gift that could be given from one friend to another is common property. Seneca's answer goes back to the point of his greater work; even true friends who have become as one and hold all in common should continue to be generous and grateful to each other, continuing the cycle of benefits. When they cease to remember this, gifts cease to be benefits.

Dio Chrysostom

In the Hellenistic age, the new sphere for examining friendship's role was the courtly society, where the circle of a king's advisors was called his friends. The first of Dio Chrysostom's works relevant to friendship is *Kingship 3*, which centers on how kings should avoid flatterers but are in great need of true friends.¹⁹⁴ He details the ills associated with flatterers,

¹⁹³ Seneca, *Ben.* 7.12–13; Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 330–31.

¹⁹⁴ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 14–24, 86–88.

as they pervert and mock the truth and “destroy our belief in virtue” by praising what does not deserve praise.¹⁹⁵ These kinds of people may appear to be friends but cause great harm, a great concern when friends are the good king’s “fairest” and “most sacred” possession.¹⁹⁶ Friends are even more valuable than kin; friends are useful without the familial connection, but near relations are not useful without friendship.¹⁹⁷ Dio continues to explain that, the more powerful a king is, the greater numbers of friends and the greater loyalty from his friends a king needs, “since he is forced to entrust his greatest and most important interests to others or else to abandon them.”¹⁹⁸ In view of their weighty responsibilities, it becomes all the more important that kings should avoid flatterers and instead choose true friends; “the stronger he makes his friends, the stronger he becomes himself.”¹⁹⁹

Dio then affirms how friends in general are both useful and pleasurable.²⁰⁰ Men need friends whether they are sick or healthy, poor or rich, infamous or famous. Friendship “makes everything unpleasant seem less so and magnifies everything good,” and “the severest strokes of misfortune can more easily be borne with friends than the greatest good fortune without them.”²⁰¹ Moreover, drawing upon the proverb κοινὰ ἀποφαίνων τὰ τῶν φίλων, Dio explains that it is a pleasure to both give and receive favors; one experiences both being the giver and receiver simultaneously when showing a friend favor.²⁰² Friendship makes life more worth living, as

¹⁹⁵ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 18–24.

¹⁹⁶ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 86.

¹⁹⁷ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 113.

¹⁹⁸ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 87–88.

¹⁹⁹ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 90.

²⁰⁰ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 94–96, 98–99.

²⁰¹ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 100–102.

²⁰² Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 110.

friends share in each other's happiness.²⁰³

Dio's other relevant oration is *Covetousness*, which makes explicit the intersection of the four topoi of covetousness, equality, friendship, and sufficiency.²⁰⁴ He begins with the admission that he is going to repeat warnings about greed, because, even though every person already agrees that it is "the cause of the greatest evils" both to himself and to his neighbors, "not one man refrains from it or is willing to have equality of possessions with his neighbor."²⁰⁵

Covetousness, as the binary opposite of *ισότης*, poses a detriment to society. Covetousness eradicates the prosperity of family and states; causes "quarrels, internal strife, and foreign wars;" and results in insufficiency for everyone. In contrast, equality establishes peace as it binds friends, cities, and allies.²⁰⁶ Thus, moderation is advantageous, and wealth is best utilized only in service of contentment and not as an end in itself, to the point where Dio believes it is better to sacrifice any excess and leave no opportunity for greed.²⁰⁷ His works affirm the benefits of the pursuit of true friends, both on a personal level and on a broader political one.

Plutarch

Plutarch's thoughts on friendship, most pronounced in his essays *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* and *On Having Many Friends*, emphasize the importance of forthrightness and honesty towards superiors, as opposed to flattery, and of identifying true friends.²⁰⁸ His writings are significant as the bridge between the Greek and Roman thought and conventions about

²⁰³ Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 108.

²⁰⁴ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 17.1–11; Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 154.

²⁰⁵ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 1–7.

²⁰⁶ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 8–11.

²⁰⁷ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 18; cf. 19–22.

²⁰⁸ Konstan, "Patrons and Friends," 333.

friendship. In his treatment, he combines a collection of the Greek discussions preceding him, including Aristotle, with the conditions of friendship he observed in Rome.²⁰⁹

In *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*, Plutarch deals with the ways to detect one's true friends, noting it is important to do so before the times in which one needs friends. He also details the appropriate ways for one friend to speak to another. Determining one's true friends involves locating a balance between the person who is always a cheerful flatterer and the unfriendly person who always finds fault.²¹⁰ This process begins with oneself, with engaging in introspection and ridding oneself of self-love and conceit; this is a requirement so as to not be susceptible to flatterers.²¹¹ The flatterer by his nature adapts himself to the other's interests and strives to appear indispensable.²¹² However, he is identifiable by his "frankness," which does nothing to benefit the other,²¹³ and by how he always lets the other have the upper hand in imitating the good.²¹⁴ The flatterer encourages emotion rather than thinking or rationality²¹⁵ and is jealous of other friends.²¹⁶

In contrast, the true friend is marked by constancy.²¹⁷ He is only ready to imitate and commend the best things, as opposed to being a chameleon,²¹⁸ and he is sometimes disagreeable

²⁰⁹ Edward N. O'Neil, "Plutarch on Friendship," in Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman Perspectives*, 112, 122.

²¹⁰ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 50A–B.

²¹¹ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 65F.

²¹² Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 51B–C.

²¹³ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 51D, 59D–F.

²¹⁴ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 54C.

²¹⁵ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 61E–F.

²¹⁶ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 65B.

²¹⁷ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 52A–B, 53A–B.

²¹⁸ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 53C.

for the purpose of his friend's good and of that which is honorable.²¹⁹ A true friend's language is "simple, plain, and unaffected."²²⁰

Plutarch's concern then turns towards prescription, how to serve as a true friend. Frankness requires courage, but it must be combined with right timing and good manners.²²¹ One needs to be able to recognize when the friend is receptive,²²² to speak in private,²²³ to temper the criticism with praise,²²⁴ and to not answer παρρησία with παρρησία.²²⁵ A friend cannot apply frankness and run away either, because that is painful to the other.²²⁶ Though it takes some work, genuine friendship is worth seeking and maintaining, because it adds pleasure in prosperity but also provides crucial aid in times of need.²²⁷

Plutarch's second essay, *On Having Many Friends* (*Mor.* 93A–97B), maintains that the institution of friendship is εὐνοια καὶ χάρις μετ' ἀρετῆς²²⁸ and explains that the three pursuits of true friendship are τὴν ἀρετὴν ὡς καλόν, καὶ τὴν συνήθειαν ὡς ἡδύ, καὶ τὴν χρείαν ὡς ἀναγκαῖον, the first being most important.²²⁹ As such, Plutarch stresses seeking those worthy of friendship²³⁰ and details the difficulties of having many friends. These problems include spreading

²¹⁹ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 55A–B.

²²⁰ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 62C.

²²¹ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 66B, 68C.

²²² Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 70D.

²²³ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 70E.

²²⁴ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 72B.

²²⁵ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 72E.

²²⁶ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 74E.

²²⁷ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 49D–F. Like other ancient philosophers and authors, Plutarch assumes the social equality of members engaged in friendship. O'Neil, "Plutarch on Friendship," 107.

²²⁸ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 93F.

²²⁹ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 94B.

²³⁰ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 94E, 96A.

out one’s affections too thinly,²³¹ the difficulty of finding many true friends,²³² the tendency of friendship of the many to cause “disunion” and “separation” as opposed to goodwill,²³³ and the inability to gain likeness or resemblance among so many.²³⁴

With these treatises, Plutarch covers many of the same elements of the friendship topos as Aristotle and his traditional Greek predecessors—frankness, goodwill, pleasure, likeness and like-mindedness, constancy, χάρις, virtue, a friend as another self, and κοινωνία—within the Roman customs of social relationships.

Other Relevant Authors on Gift and Friendship

Philo and Clement of Alexandria respectively provide Hellenistic Jewish and Hellenistic Christian adaptations of the friendship topos in service of their theology. They hold to the foundational ideas from traditional Greco-Roman friendship, reformulating them so that they take place among the people of God. Their points of contact with Paul’s thinking allow for the possibility that Paul could have also used friendship as the paradigm for church relations.

Philo

The Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo maintains many of the standard Greco-Roman ideas about friendship. He refers to a friend as “the equal to thy soul”²³⁵ and to friends as having

²³¹ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 93F.

²³² Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 94E.

²³³ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 95B.

²³⁴ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 97A.

²³⁵ Philo, *Heir* 83, citing Deut. 13:6. ὁ φίλος, ὁ ἴσος τῆ ψυχῆ σου.

oneness of mind (ὁμόνοια),²³⁶ harmony (συμφωνία),²³⁷ partnership (κοινωνία),²³⁸ comradeship (ἑταιρεία),²³⁹ and close association (συνήθεια).²⁴⁰ Philo admonishes against flattery²⁴¹ and speaks of the importance of frank criticism in true friendship.²⁴² He warns against counterfeit friends, those who are only flatterers, parasites, or self-interested and greedy.²⁴³ The person who is “at open war with friendship” not only is a flatterer and aims at money or reputation, but this person also ignores equality and fellowship, slow to help, and is faithless.²⁴⁴ The fruit of friendship includes honesty, goodwill, and impartiality, because one desires goodwill (εὐνοια) for one’s neighbor for his own sake.²⁴⁵ All of these ideas follow the customary friendship topos.

Philo combines these Greco-Roman ideas about friendship with the Jewish notion that God provides and maintains the basis of human friendship through his covenant.²⁴⁶ Specifically, Philo considers that worship of God is the basis of the closest kind of friendship among all the Jews.²⁴⁷ He departs from the normal convention that one could at most have a handful of friends, since

²³⁶ Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.70; *Virtues* 35. Philo, *Heir* 246, similarly assumes that friends agree.

²³⁷ Philo, *Sacrifices* 36; *Virtues* 35.

²³⁸ Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.119.

²³⁹ Philo, *Worse* 15.

²⁴⁰ Philo, *Spec. Laws* 4.161. Philo also associates φίλος with συνήθης in *Spec. Laws* 1.68; *Contempt. Life* 41; *Embassy* 268. Cf. *Abraham* 65.

²⁴¹ Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 2.10; 3.182; *Agriculture* 164; *Planting* 104–5; *Confusion* 48; *Migration* 111–12.

²⁴² Philo, *Heir* 21; *Migration* 115–17; *Joseph* 73–74.

²⁴³ Philo, *Planting* 104–6.

²⁴⁴ Philo, *Confusion* 48.

²⁴⁵ Philo, *Planting* 106. The impartiality may reflect the definition of friendship as equality, according to Gregory E. Sterling, “The Bond of Humanity: Friendship in Philo of Alexandria,” in Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman Perspectives*, 208.

Philo closely relates φιλία and εὐνοια in *Planting* 90; *Confusion* 48; *Abraham* 153, 194; *Joseph* 74–75; *Spec. Laws* 1.52, 317; *Alleg. Interp.* 3.182; *Migration* 116; *Flight* 6; *Dreams* 2.108.

²⁴⁶ Wang, “Paul’s Employment of the Friendship Motif,” 42.

²⁴⁷ Philo, *Virtues* 179; *Spec. Laws* 1.51–52, 317; 3.155; *Moses* 2.171.

“friend” involved the entire community. Philo also characterizes the relationship between God and his people as friendship, writing that the most “noble” life involves being “possessed by a love of God and a friendship for God with which flesh and body have no concern.”²⁴⁸ While Philo attributes virtue as having “procured” God’s friendship for man,²⁴⁹ he also notes that God is ready to bless his people and desires to implant *φιλία* and *εὐνοία* in man towards Him.²⁵⁰

Because of Philo’s emphasis on God as the root of friendship, Philo’s writings on *χάρις* and divine giving provide relevant points of comparison with Paul. To begin, God is a generous giver and a lover of gifts because he is the creator,²⁵¹ and, as the creator of all things, he needs nothing and owns everything. Philo affirms this notion with citations from Num 28:2 and Lev 25:23, texts containing a high frequency of the possessive pronoun and gift-vocabulary,²⁵² and he additionally explains how God is “a free giver of all things, pouring forth eternal fountains of free bounties, not seeking a return. For He has no needs himself and no created thing is able to repay His gift.”²⁵³ In other words, God’s work is to give, and mankind’s work is to return *εὐχαριστία* as a return of *χάρις* for their received *χάρις*.²⁵⁴ This thankfulness is man’s “most appropriate work”²⁵⁵ and itself a gift of God.²⁵⁶

Philo considers human virtue, action, and worth to be God’s gifts as well,²⁵⁷ so that God’s

²⁴⁸ Philo, *Flight* 58.

²⁴⁹ Philo, *Contempl. Life* 90.

²⁵⁰ Philo, *Planting* 90.

²⁵¹ Philo, *Names* 46; *Worse* 54–55; *Drunkenness* 118; *Creation* 77.

²⁵² Philo, *Moses* 1.157; cf. *Posterity* 4; *Spec. Laws* 1.294–95.

²⁵³ Philo, *Cherubim* 122–23.

²⁵⁴ Philo, *Heir* 104.

²⁵⁵ Philo, *Plant.* 130.

²⁵⁶ Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 1.82; *Unchangeable* 4–7.

²⁵⁷ Philo, *Heir* 113–24. God causes all virtue to exist (*Alleg. Interp.* 3.10; cf. *Migration* 181–83), and he creates

χάρις “is constitutive of all good human life and action.”²⁵⁸ God’s gift of creation leads to an order, which, in turn, enables the possibility of human gifting and of the creation of communities bound through gifting. The good human life therefore can involve friendship with both God and with others in worship of him, made possible through God’s good gifts.

Clement of Alexandria

Although Clement of Alexandria postdates Paul, he is the Church Father most influenced by Greek philosophy and one of the few early Christian thinkers who utilized the friendship topos. His philosophy of friendship impacts all his major writings and contributes to his doctrines of salvation and of church. As Clement seeks to demonstrate how pagan wisdom can be utilized to discern and interpret true γνῶσις, found in Christianity, he understands salvation in terms of friendship and heirship with God, and he places salvation in the context of the church as the ideal philosophical community of friends, bound together through reciprocity.²⁵⁹

Clement joins the Platonic image of the true philosopher as a lover of wisdom²⁶⁰ with the Pauline understanding of Christ as the embodiment of wisdom in order to depict “salvation as the philosophical ascent to friendship with God.”²⁶¹ Because Christians, the true philosophers, long with ἔξος for Christ, the source of wisdom, they are friends of God. Becoming sons and friends

the love for virtue (*Alleg. Interp.* 3.136–37).

²⁵⁸ Orrey Wayne McFarland, “The God Who Gives: Philo and Paul in Conversation” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2013), 113.

²⁵⁹ David Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers* (Aldershot, England: Routledge, 2006), 93; D. P. O’Brien, “Rich Clients and Poor Patrons: Functions of Friendship in Clement of Alexandria’s *Quis Dives Salveteur?*” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2004), 103.

²⁶⁰ Clement, *Protr.* 11; O’Brien, “Rich Clients and Poor Patrons,” 67.

²⁶¹ O’Brien, “Rich Clients and Poor Patrons,” 67–103.

of God is the goal of man.²⁶²

God does not need anything from a friend, as he is self-sufficient, and man can only give glory to God.²⁶³ Although believers initially seek friendship with God out of utilitarian purposes, that is, to obtain salvation, they eventually come to love God because loving God is worthy in and of itself.²⁶⁴ In Clement's acknowledgement of the three kinds of friendship, the believer's friendship with God eventually corresponds to the best form, based on virtue and involving love on the basis of reason.²⁶⁵

The Christian church, meanwhile, is an expression of ideal community, characterized by friendship and a unity that involves shared possessions.²⁶⁶ The wealthy have a responsibility to share their excess – God provides the proper amount of “common goods” to meet the needs of the whole church – and the wealthy work out their salvation in sharing with their needy friends.²⁶⁷ If someone has superfluous supply, someone has an insufficient one. This sharing gives rise to a sufficiency, in that those who share need nothing.²⁶⁸ Clement advocates for the salvation of the rich man, because his affluence allows him to have something with which to share²⁶⁹ and with which to obey the command to support the needy.²⁷⁰ Other elements of the friendship topos affirmed by Clement include having the same spirit, goodwill, affection, and *κοινωνία* among

²⁶² Clement, *Quis div.* 7, 31–33; *Strom.* 5.14; 6.14; O'Brien, “Rich Clients and Poor Patrons,” 68.

²⁶³ Clement, *Strom.* 2.6; 5.11; 7.3; 7.6.

²⁶⁴ Clement, *Strom.* 7.11; O'Brien, “Rich Clients and Poor Patrons,” 71.

²⁶⁵ Clement, *Strom.* 2.19.

²⁶⁶ Clement, *Strom.* 7.11; *Quis div.* 32–33.

²⁶⁷ Clement, *Paed.* 2.3.

²⁶⁸ Clement, *Paed.* 2.3 and *Strom.* 7.12 together.

²⁶⁹ Clement, *Quis div.* 13.

²⁷⁰ Clement, *Quis div.* 13; 31.

friends.²⁷¹

In Clement's understanding of the church as friendship, he maintains the presence of hierarchical interdependent relationships within the church, ruled by reciprocity and mutual love, which takes place via the sharing of material needs.²⁷² At the top of the hierarchy is the true gnostic, commissioned by God, the conduit of God's *beneficia*, and one who can aid others attain salvation.²⁷³ The wealthy, no longer holding the advantage, can provide for the material needs of these disciples, an act which helps them gain "immortality."²⁷⁴ In this way, both material and spiritual needs are met among friends.

Because Clement believes that Christianity is the true philosophy, he adapts the traditional Greek paradigms of γνῶσις, εὐδαιμονία, and friendship to formulate his understandings of the goal of human existence and the ideal relationships between man and God and among men. In the process, he is able to address pastoral concerns, including the appropriate uses of money, overcoming potentially exploitative institutional hierarchies, and the perfection of salvation. In terms of church relations, Clement offers a practical strategy for the achievement of ongoing reciprocity and the meeting of both material and spiritual needs. Friendship provides him with a means of articulating the new social network within Christianity.

Important Elements of the Friendship Topos

The ancient Greco-Roman topos of friendship, despite involving a stock collection of terms and sayings, was never static but always adapting to the concerns of the writers and the societies

²⁷¹ Clement, *Strom.* 2.9.

²⁷² Clement, *Strom.* 2.19; O'Brien, "Rich Clients and Poor Patrons," 134.

²⁷³ Clement, *Strom.* 2.9; 7.7.

²⁷⁴ Clement, *Quis div.* 32.

that they represented. Appropriately, then, a survey of the historical development of the friendship topos simultaneously reveals its most important elements.

The significance of Homer first involves his focus on the survival of the community through loyal cooperation and interdependence. Here are the beginnings of the close relationship among politics, citizenship, and friendship. Homer's writings also draw attention to the themes of the usefulness of friends, oneness of mind, judging one's true friends, the abuse of friendship and its privileges, and the loss and restoration of friendship.

Plato provides the first explicit discussion of the nature of a friend, which is in service of his political theory: civic friendship is the relationship that binds the πόλις. The Athenian's definition of virtue friendship, friendship based on likeness, in book 8 of *Laws*, establishes parallels between civic friendship and virtue friendship: they both are based upon shared activity, they both foster cooperation, they both seek to increase virtue in its participants, they both involve mutual goodwill. They both arise from the same activity; the difference is that interpersonal relationships allow for more intimacy than civic ones.²⁷⁵

Aristotle formalizes the distinction among the three types of friendship, based upon pleasure, utility, and virtue. In conjunction with the friendship topos, he considers κοινωνία, ισότης, ἀνταρκεία, constancy, and concord. He further establishes that a friend is "another self," so that friends are defined by their mutual recognized exchange of goodwill for the other's own sake, their desire to spend time together, and their pursuit of the same things together.

Cicero and Seneca treat friendship in similar ways, reflecting upon the ideas of accord, mutual goodwill, affection, the cycle of favors, happiness, the requirements of true friendship, and the role of friendship for the full development of virtue. They both consider decline of

²⁷⁵ Plato, *Leg.* 8.837a–b; El Murr, "Philia in Plato," 24.

society as connected to a decline of morality. For Cicero, societal failure involves a loss of virtue among politicians and lack of commitment to social stability.²⁷⁶ Seneca, meanwhile, focuses on the improper giving and receiving of benefits, and he has the goal of providing a code for benefactions that would allow for the ongoing cycle of gifts.²⁷⁷ The purpose is never the bestowal or reception of gift itself, but the spirit and intention of serving each other and bringing each other joy so that the participants are engaging in virtue, in doing good.²⁷⁸

Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch both address the problems associated with flatterers and the need to identify true friends. Dio Chrysostom further discourses on the subject of how covetousness threatens friendship, equality, and sufficiency. Plutarch, conversely, reflects on the natural complications associated with having many friends.

Finally, Philo and Clement of Alexandria affirm the traditional Greco-Roman friendship topos and utilize it in their theology. Philo maintains that the Jews are bound together in the closest form of friendship due to their shared worship of God,²⁷⁹ and God is the superabundant giver and creates all the possibility of human virtue and giving.²⁸⁰ Meanwhile, Clement envisions the church, not only as an ideal friendship community among Christian believers, but as the location that fosters friendship with God.

²⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Cic.* 7.1.

²⁷⁷ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.1.1.

²⁷⁸ Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 78–79, referring to Seneca, *Ben.* 2.15.1; cf. Cicero, *Off.* 1.49.

²⁷⁹ Philo, *Virtues* 179; *Spec. Laws* 1.51–52, 317; 3.155; *Moses* 2.171.

²⁸⁰ Philo, *Names* 46; *Worse* 54–55; *Drunkenness* 118; *Creation* 77; *Alleg. Interp.* 1.82; *Unchangeable* 4–7.

CHAPTER FOUR

FRIENDSHIP AND GIFT IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8–9

This chapter will take the previous findings concerning status' impact on reciprocal exchange and the Greco-Roman friendship topos and establish their relevance in 2 Cor 8–9. Paul adapts the language, concepts, and metaphors of reciprocity as expressed in the Greco-Roman friendship topos and weds them with the ethics found in the Hebrew Bible for his theological purposes in light of the gospel.¹ As a consequence, Paul's system of reciprocity is differentiated from the Greek, Roman, and Jewish systems.

Paul's thought cannot be decisively connected to any one Greco-Roman philosophical school. However, certain broad concepts formed the friendship topos. Largely, the philosophers all follow Aristotle in distinguishing ideal friendships, based on ἀρετή or goodness, from inferior forms of friendship, whether in theory or simply in practice. Secondly, there is the broad idea that friends hold all in common and have a certain kind of ἰσότης, even if that "equality" is not an even split of material resources. There is a strong connection between δικαιοσύνη, which is said to be the highest of the virtues,² and friendship in the ancient philosophical discussions.³ There is furthermore a common concern with determining and maintaining one's true friends,

¹ Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi*, 199.

² Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.1.1130a9.

³ Larry Jerome Waggle, "Just Friends: Justice and Friendship in the Social Theories of Aristotle and Epicurus" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2003), 53–103, 119–212, compares Aristotle and Epicurus on their conceptions and uses of justice and friendship. Both these thinkers consider δικαιοσύνη and friendship as important for ordering and strengthening a community. In the end, they are distinguished by the manner in which Epicurus understands friendship as the key social bond, while Aristotle considers δικαιοσύνη to have a key role in shaping the moral character and social identity of citizens and in harmonizing their joint life.

who are considered beneficial both in times of prosperity and of need. While this should not indicate the lack of diversity of thought among various schools on friendship or cause generalizations of the meaning and function of friendship, different ancient authors used the same proverbs to illustrate their different ends.⁴ Similarly, Paul uses the friendship maxims and vocabulary to achieve a uniquely Christian end as a result of the Christ event.

This chapter will proceed as follows. First, 2 Cor 8–9 will be considered as a whole via a look at its rhetoric as deliberative and with the subject of concord, unity, and friendship. Tied into this is the broader theme within 2 Corinthians of reconciliation between Paul and the Corinthians, as Vegge’s work indicates. Second, each rhetorical unit from 2 Cor 8–9 will be considered in light of the friendship topos and its theological implications. Third and finally, this chapter will contain a more extended investigation of the major theme of *χάρις* as sustained throughout 2 Cor 8–9.

2 Corinthians 8–9 as Deliberative Rhetoric on Unity

The characteristics of 2 Cor 8–9 lead to its identification as an example of deliberative rhetoric on friendship. In deliberative rhetoric, the subject matter is advantage or disadvantage, the function is hortatory or admonitory recommendation or dissuasion, the temporal aspect is future, the type of argument is mostly examples, the communication situation is oration before an assembly, and its given end is the useful.⁵ To this, Margaret M. Mitchell notes that certain subjects are appropriate for deliberative rhetoric, and one such subject is an appeal to seek

⁴ Douglas A. Hume, “Friends of God: Portrayals of the Early Christian Community in Acts 2:41–47 and 4:32–35” (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2009), 67.

⁵ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.3.1358a–b; David Edward Aune, “Rhetorical Genres,” *WDNER*, 419.

concord, unity, or friendship.⁶ This aligns nicely with 2 Cor 8–9. Paul presents his instructions as a recommendation and not a command.⁷ He is sending the Corinthians advice in advance of the arrival of Titus and the two brothers to carry out administrative duties with respect to the collection.⁸ He provides examples of the Macedonians and of Jesus.⁹ He addresses these chapters to the Corinthian congregation. He gives advice regarding what is advantageous and useful for the Corinthian believers.¹⁰ Finally, the topic of friendship is interrelated with the subject of concord, especially alongside the themes of *κοινωνία* and reconciliation.¹¹

Vegge takes up Paul’s rhetorical goal of unity by demonstrating that the second epistle to the Corinthians sustains the theme of reconciliation between Paul and the Corinthian church. In this process, Vegge discusses friendship a number of times. He finds the theme of “the implicit appeal for solidarity and friendship between Paul and the Corinthians in 1:7 and 1:11 (cf. 1:13b–14; 2:3; 5:11; 6:11–13; 7:2–4, 5–16; 8:5, 8, 24; 9:13; 10:15; 12:14–15 and 13:6).”¹² Paul appeals to the Corinthians to be *κοινωνός* in suffering and consolation, which reflects the topos that “friends have everything in common,” and Paul exhorts the Corinthians to strengthen their relationship with Christ and their relationship with Paul in suffering and consolation.¹³ Paul’s

⁶ Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, HUT 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 60–64. Her work, in part, is influenced by Aristotle, *Rhet. Alex.* 1.7–21.1421b37–1422b37, 2.21–22.1424b15–27, who provides numerous arguments on maintaining concord and the common interest, and by Dio Chrysostom, *Consult.* 26.8, who refers to the importance of deliberation *περὶ ὁμονοίας καὶ φιλίας*.

⁷ 2 Cor 8:8.

⁸ 2 Cor 8:16–24.

⁹ 2 Cor 8:1–4, 9.

¹⁰ 2 Cor 8:10, 14; 9:10.

¹¹ 2 Cor 8:4; 9:13.

¹² Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 152.

¹³ 2 Cor 1:7; Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 159–60.

appeal for reciprocity in boasting on the day of the Lord is plausibly a topos for generating concord, reconciliation, and friendship.¹⁴ Vegge connects Paul’s expression “you are in our hearts” (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἐστε) with the friendship topos about friends sharing one soul, especially with the following phrase “to die together and to live together” (εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν) describing the loyalty of friendship.¹⁵ The overall effect is that, “Paul, like many moral philosophers, makes friendship the context for his free and open speech to the Corinthians (6:11b).”¹⁶

Reconciliation and friendship belong to the same linkage group, and the language of reconciliation belongs to the friendship topos. This recalls Homer’s depiction of the reconciliation of friends in the *Iliad*. Fitzgerald writes that καταλλάσσειν and διαλλάσσειν essentially mean “to change from enmity to friendship.”¹⁷ As Marshall argues, the friendship between Paul and the Corinthians had become strained by Paul’s refusal of financial support.¹⁸ The collection provides an opportunity for the Corinthians to demonstrate tangibly their reconciliation.

Vegge only concentrates on reconciliation between Paul and the Corinthians. However, the collection invites the Corinthians to establish friendship with a wider group of people than just the apostle. Vegge alludes to this broader scope of solidarity a number of times, but it is outside the scope of his project to further develop this idea. The Corinthians, however, need to reestablish friendship with God and the wider church in order to participate in the κοινωνία and

¹⁴ 2 Cor 1:13–14; Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 173–75. Likewise, Paul appeals to reciprocity in 2 Cor 2:3b.

¹⁵ 2 Cor 7:3; Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 193.

¹⁶ Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 190.

¹⁷ John T. Fitzgerald, “Paul and Paradigm Shifts: Reconciliation and Its Linkage Group,” in *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pederson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 258.

¹⁸ Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 396–97.

common values of the Christ-centered gospel. Therefore, it is appropriate to locate Paul's instruction in 2 Cor 8–9 on the collection for Jerusalem within the tradition of deliberative rhetoric, intended to persuade the Corinthians to participate in the bonds of friendship made possible by the χάρις of God.

Paul's Parakletic Method

The structure and rhetorical units of Paul's argument in 2 Cor 8–9 draw upon concepts from the friendship topos. This section will note also the specific vocabulary and ideas that point back to the Greco-Roman context and consider the impact of Paul's adaptation of the topos. Finally, some of the theological implications of the friendship topos will be detailed.

The Example of the Macedonians (8:1–6)

Within Paul's deliberative rhetoric on concord and friendship, his primary type of argument is based upon examples. He begins his appeal to the Corinthians with the Macedonian example and a call to imitate them. Simultaneously, Paul wholly grounds the Macedonian response in God's initiating and enabling grace.

The Collection as Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 8:1 begins with δὲ, a conjunction that may connect this chapter with the previous one. Paul just finished highlighting the topic of reconciliation with the Corinthians in 7:5–16, which indicates that he intends that the Corinthian participation in the Jerusalem collection serve “as both the demonstration and further consolidation of what surely must have been a reconciliation-in-process.”¹⁹ Meanwhile, Paul has virtually refrained from addressing the

¹⁹ Jan Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, SP 8 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 142. Cf. Fulton, “A Rhetorical Analysis of Second Corinthians,” 112–14. The context of chapter 7 was pride and boasting; Paul had

Corinthians as “brothers and sisters” in this epistle, so his decision to call them as such now indicates reconciliation between the Corinthians and himself.²⁰ The reconciliation Paul envisions for the Corinthians is also between the Corinthians and God—Paul as a representative of Christ proclaims what God has done and its subsequent offer of reconciliation.²¹ Reconciliation with one is also reconciliation with the other.²²

The Impact of God’s χάρις on the Macedonians

Because of Paul’s confidence that the Corinthians will experience reconciliation *and* in order to spur them to this reconciliation, he transitions to a new topic with the disclosure formula, “γνωρίζομεν ὑμῖν,” in 2 Cor 8:1.²³ That new topic is the τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ, not the collection itself or the Macedonians’ response, and this χάρις will constitute an important theme throughout 2 Cor 8–9, as it recurs in every main rhetorical section and forms an *inclusio* to finish the collection section.²⁴

begun to give reasons why he was proud of the Corinthians. The context prior to chapter 7 included reasons why the Corinthians could be proud of him. Now in chapter 8 Paul presents the Corinthians with opportunities to affirm the pride that he takes in them, which is ultimately tied to the Corinthian submission to his leadership.

²⁰ Raymond F. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 166–67.

²¹ 2 Cor 5–6. Fitzgerald, “Paul and Paradigm Shifts,” 254n70.

²² 2 Cor 5:20, 6:1; McFarland, “The God Who Gives,” 197.

²³ Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 166; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “The Economy of Grace: Reflections on 2 Corinthians 8 and 9,” in *Grace upon Grace: Essays in Honor of Thomas A. Langford*, ed. Robert K. Johnston, L. Gregory Jones, and Jonathan R. Wilson (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 54.

²⁴ The term χάρις occurs in 2 Cor 8:1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 19; 9:8, 14, 15. The root occurs in the compound εὐχαριστία in 9:11, 12.

Further evidence for the *inclusio* is found in 8:1 and 9:14, 8:2 and 9:11 with a chiasm structured as ABB’A’. Paul repeats ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ (8:1 and 9:14), δοκιμή (8:2 and 9:13), περισσεύω (8:2 and 9:12), κοινωνία (8:14 and 9:13), ἀπλότης (8:2 and 9:13), and διακονία (8:4 and 9:13). Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 647; O’Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion*, 94.

James Scott, *2 Corinthians*, NIBCNT 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 175, understands χάρις as a leitmotif. Stephan Joubert, “Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15: Generosity and Gratitude as Legitimate Responses to the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ,” *Neot* 33 (1999): 80–81, calls it a “Stichwort” to underline “God’s involvement

Paul’s choice of the word χάρις is not accidental. He could have utilized a more explicit word for “gift,” such as δόσις,²⁵ δόμα,²⁶ δῶρον,²⁷ or δώρημα.²⁸ While such words are also appropriate to the context of friendship, χάρις allows Paul more theological creativity. The word χάρις means “gift,” but it also goes beyond “gift.” It refers to each moment in the cycle of reciprocity—giving, receiving, thanksgiving, gift, counter-gift, gratitude, and so forth—and it indicates the divine power to achieve feats such as overcoming sin and enabling true giving. Therefore, in 2 Cor 8:1, Paul immediately calls to mind God’s “favor,” “grace,” and “gift” and its expression in the life of Christians, namely that the Macedonians in their reception of God’s χάρις are enabled to give to others.³⁰

Paul’s grammar in 8:1 clarifies that, even though he uses the example of the Macedonians to encourage the Corinthians, they are merely recipients and conduits of God’s χάρις. There is no ambiguity about the origin of the χάρις. The τοῦ θεοῦ in τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ can be read as either a subjective genitive or genitive of source. The χάρις is described as τὴν δεδομένην, a divine passive and a subordinate clause. Finally, the perfect tense of the participle suggests the enduring results of a gift given in the past, so that it “continues to be given”³¹ and that God’s

in the lives of the various parties involved in the collection,” to demonstrate God’s goodness, and to serve as a symbol of Christian fellowship.

²⁵ Phil 4:15.

²⁶ Phil 4:17.

²⁷ Eph 4:8.

²⁸ Rom 5:16. Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity,” 127–8; cf. C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC 7 (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 387, who suggests that the use of χάρις here reflects the generous nature of the gift.

²⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.5.1133a1–5; Seneca, *Ben.* 1.4.2–5.

³⁰ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 319–20.

³¹ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 391.

χάρις continues to operate in Macedonia.³²

The next two verses, 8:2–3, each continue the sentence with the subordinate clause conjunction ὅτι to express the result of the Macedonians' received χάρις. The first clause in 8:2 reveals that the Macedonians abounded εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτῶν. The second clause in 8:4 further clarifies that their abounding was due both to their willingness to participate and to the natural outworking of divine χάρις to go beyond their own ability.³³ As Paul will later clarify, the Macedonians' voluntary participation in the collection parallels Christ's voluntary impoverishment.³⁴ With χάρις as the basis of Greco-Roman reciprocity and a key component of friendship, the Corinthians ought to reconsider their appropriate action in light of their reception of God's χάρις and renew their commitment to the collection.

The Paradoxical Macedonian Experience of Poverty and Wealth

Paul's description of the conditions of the Macedonians contrasts affliction with joy, poverty with wealth.³⁵ The χάρις of God reorients Christian understanding of these states and of any pursuit of happiness and wealth. The paradoxical situation is in "testing," a theme that appears as a common thread throughout 2 Cor 8–9.³⁶ The impact and significance of the term δοκιμή is shaped by the nature of Christian existence; Christian conduct demonstrates the salvation already received, but also an awareness of facing the test of final judgment. In this case, situated within the testing found in θλίψις, the Macedonians have not yet "experienced"

³² Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 560.

³³ The grammatical structure is παρὰ with the accusative, which here expresses opposition.

³⁴ 2 Cor 8:9. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 394.

³⁵ Friedrich Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, NTD 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 318.

³⁶ 2 Cor 8:2, 8, 22; 9:13.

salvation on earth. Instead, they patiently persevere in their earthly situation.³⁷ That the Macedonians gave is a testimony to their perseverance in demonstrating the divine χάρις that they have already received and that has begun to be effective in their lives. Accordingly, they are not waiting to experience all their promised riches to begin giving or responding to God. The Macedonians' present affliction, whether material, social, spiritual, or a mixture of these things, provided them the opportunity to attest their character.³⁸ In comparison, the Corinthians with their relative prosperity have no excuse. Their test is comparatively easier in the material dimension, so they cannot complain that they must lower themselves in social or economic standing or that they will not receive a proper return for their contribution to the Jerusalem saints.

One element of the δοκιμή of the Macedonians is found in their material poverty. The term πτωχεία in 8:2 is interesting in that it only appears in the New Testament in two other instances, 2 Cor 8:9 and Rev 2:9. In these three instances, the term is contrasted with πλούτος or πλούσιος, being rich.³⁹ Moreover, the term πτωχεία arguably indicates the financial destitution of a beggar, whereas πένης refers to the poverty of a day laborer.⁴⁰ The Corinthians consider financial giving and receiving to be appropriate practice among the elite, and they judge that

³⁷ Walter Grundmann, “δόκιμος, ἀδόκιμος, δοκιμή, δοκίμιον, δοκιμάζω, ἀποδοκιμάζω, δοκιμασία,” *TDNT* 2:255–60.

³⁸ This reading spans the two different senses of δοκιμή, first as the test itself and second as character revealed by the test. The preposition ἐν is temporal and points to the accompanying circumstances, πολλή describes the degree of δοκιμή, and then θλίψεως is a subjective genitive, “brought about by affliction.” George H. Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 393; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 561.

³⁹ Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 394–95.

⁴⁰ Aristophanes, *Plut.* 552–54: πτωχοῦ μὲν γὰρ βίος, ὃν σὺ λέγεις, ζῆν ἔστιν μηδὲν ἔχοντα· τοῦ δὲ πένητος ζῆν φειδόμενον καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις προσέχοντα, περιγίγνεσθαι δ' αὐτῷ μηδέν, μὴ μέντοι μηδ' ἐπιλείπειν; cf. W. Den Boer, *Private Morality in Greece and Rome: Some Historical Aspects* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 151; Friedrich Hauck and Ernst Bammel, “πτωχός, πτωχεία, πτωχεύω,” *TDNT* 6:885–915; Friedrich Hauck, “πένης,” *TDNT* 6:37–40.

their possession of wealth and status demonstrate their worthiness of such activity.⁴¹ In contrast, the Jewish background of Christianity means that all members of the community are supposed to give in proportion to their means to help the poor. Paul thus contrasts the Corinthian lack of action for Jerusalem with the Macedonian willingness to give, even though they were poor and acting out of character according to the Greco-Roman system. Furthermore, the Macedonians went beyond the Jewish ethic of giving; they gave beyond their means and eagerly desired to give.⁴²

In this instance, the Greco-Roman understanding of friendship most closely approximates the ideal Jewish covenant community in which members support each other and pursue common goals and activities.⁴³ The language of the friendship topos may have supplied what the more elite Corinthian believers needed to hear in order to think beyond status and honor and to give to recipients in need. For the Corinthian members of the congregation of the lower status, Paul's egalitarian use of the topos language opens up the possibility for them to participate in friendship, a relationship that had been ideologically limited to the upper classes.

Grammatically, 2 Cor 8:3 features a compound subject (ἡ περισσεία τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ κατὰ βᾶθους πτωχεία αὐτῶν) with a singular verb (ἐπερίσσευσεν), although the verb would typically agree with its subject in number and person. There are then a few possible options for understanding the relationship between the subjects and verb: the verb generally agrees with the closest noun phrase (ἡ ... πτωχεία), the more important or logical subject, or both subjects. "The evident wordplay, ἡ περισσεία ... ἐπερίσσευσεν (literally, 'the overflowing

⁴¹ This points back to work in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

⁴² 2 Cor 8:3–4; Deborah Elaine Watson, "Paul's Collection in Light of Motivations and Mechanisms for Aid to the Poor in the First-Century World" (PhD diss., Durham University, 2006), 171–72.

⁴³ Cf. Philo, *Virtues* 179; *Spec. Laws* 1.51–52, 317; 3.155; *Moses* 2.171.

... overflowed' or 'the abundance ... was present in abundance') that links the two subjects together," points to the last possibility, that the verb corresponds to both subjects as a single unit of thought. Both the joy and poverty of the Macedonians combined to create the overflow of πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότης.⁴⁴ Not only is it paradoxical that the Macedonians' poverty was an instrumental element of their overflowing in wealth, but it then becomes ironic that the Corinthians who are not experiencing a state of πτωχεία could remain hesitant to finish their participation in the collection.

Because πλοῦτος means "wealth" or "abundance," many English translations render ἀπλότης as "generosity" or "liberality,"⁴⁵ and its form is accordingly interpreted as a genitive of relation,⁴⁶ an attributive genitive,⁴⁷ or an exegetical genitive.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, there is no attestation to ἀπλότης as directly referring to "generosity," so such a translation is unnecessary when the usual sense of ἀπλότης as "singleness," "simplicity," or "sincerity" make sense.⁴⁹ It refers to attitude, the concern for others, a posture "in which hidden and self-seeking motives are overcome."⁵⁰ The person who displays ἀπλότης is the one whose interior and exterior do not contradict each other. The term then is a genitive of content so that "τὸ πλοῦτος would mean

⁴⁴ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 564.

⁴⁵ Gesila Nneka Uzukwu, "The Poverty and Wealth of the Macedonians: A Grammatical and Rhetorical Analysis of 2 Cor 8:1–5," in Bieringer, *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict*, 323.

⁴⁶ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 564.

⁴⁷ Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 396.

⁴⁸ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 392; Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB 32A, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 400.

⁴⁹ Otto Bauernfeind, "ἀπλοῦς, ἀπλότης," *TDNT* 1:386–87, says that its basic meaning is "simplicity," which leads to value concepts of "noble simplicity," "purity" or "singleness of heart," or "sufficiency" which results in "generosity."

⁵⁰ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 321; cf. Abraham J. Malherbe, "The Corinthian Contribution," *ResQ* 3 (1959): 231; Nickle, *The Collection*, 104–5.

abundant supply of τῆς ἀπλότης.”⁵¹

The connection among ἀπλότης, high morality and nobility, and the giving of generous gifts in the Greco-Roman world suggests that Paul has qualified the “riches” of the Macedonians with ἀπλότης in order to redefine true wealth as the “ability to give sincerely and generously.”⁵² In the context of Jewish ethics, meanwhile, ἀπλότης emerges as a “fundamental concept,” often found in the LXX and NT in the phrase ἀπλότης καρδιάς.⁵³ This background reveals that Paul is likely emphasizing “sincerity of heart” and the motivation of the giver, rather

⁵¹ Uzukwu, “The Poverty and Wealth of the Macedonians,” 324–25, continues to explain that the figurative language in this verse indicates “an abundance of their simple-mindedness, simplicity and the disputed generosity” and that Paul is playing with the ambiguity of the two terms, between “wealth” or “abundance” and between “simple-mindedness” or “generosity.”

⁵² Chang, “Fund-Raising in Corinth,” 206. He draws upon Plutarch, *Ant.* 43.3, on why he received high regard from his soldiers: “And the reasons for this were many, as I have said before: his high birth, his eloquence, his simplicity of manners (ἀπλότης), his love of giving and the largeness of his giving (τὸ φιλόδορον καὶ μεγαλόδορον), his complaisance in affairs of pleasure or social intercourse.” On its association with “high birth,” he refers to Plutarch, *Dion* 8.3 (τὴν ἀπλότητα καὶ τὸ γενναῖον). On the giving of generous gifts, Chang notes the use of the term in conjunction with the quality of a gift in Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 1:12; 2 Cor 9:11.

Here also Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 45–46, is relevant, where the simple life is equated with hospitality and generosity in giving. He refers to Herm. *Mand.* 2.4–7, where ἀπλότης occurs several times in such a context. The second mandate begins with the instruction to “Ἀπλότητα ἔχε” and to be innocent. This simplicity and innocence is demonstrated by avoiding slander and also by giving freely. “For God wishes everyone to be given something from his own gifts” (2.4). In 2.6, the adverb ἀπλῶς is used multiple times to describe the life and ministry of the innocent person who gives freely to all who are in want. In turn, the mandate ends with admonition to keep “this commandment,” referring back to the discussion about avoiding slander and about giving, so that one may be found ἐν ἀπλότητι. Betz’s reference to the Herm. *Mand.* allows for a connection between sincerity and giving at least with the Apostolic Fathers, but this may be traced more to Jewish ethics rather than Greco-Roman morality.

⁵³ 1 Chr 29:17; Eph 6:5; Col 3:22. Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity,” 118.

The term additionally appears numerous times in T. 12 Patr. “But live in integrity (ἀπλότητι) of heart in the fear of the Lord” (T. Reu. 4:1). “Fear the Lord your God with your whole heart, and walk according to his Law in integrity (ἀπλότητι)” (T. Levi 13:1). “Live in the integrity (ἀπλότητι) of your heart, so that God might give you grace and glory and blessing upon your heads” (T. Sim. 4:5). “Live in integrity (ἀπλότητι) of heart, for in it I have observed everything that is well-pleasing to the Lord” (T. Iss. 4:1). “Keep the Law of God, my children; achieve integrity (ἀπλότητα)...” (T. Iss. 5:1).

The references to ἀπλότης in T. Iss. 3–4 most closely parallel to the contrast in 2 Cor 8:2 between θλίψις and ἀπλότης. In 3:8, Issachar notes that his ἀπλότης has been aided by God and that, “In the integrity (ἀπλότητι) of my heart, I supplied everything from the good things of the earth to all the poor and the oppressed” (*OTP*). In chapter 4, he discusses the moral characteristics under ἀπλότης, which includes generosity and excludes covetousness.

than the size of the gift.⁵⁴ The giver is concerned with a single purpose, so the gift is enthusiastic and holds no secret agendas.⁵⁵

Paul's concern is the Corinthian's obedience to their confession of the gospel, rather than giving itself.⁵⁶ His use of ἀπλότης highlights the kind of giving that is appropriate from a person of virtue, a person worthy of being considered a true friend. Furthermore, the paradoxical simultaneity of poverty and wealth experienced by the Macedonians reveals to the Corinthians that they have yet to grasp the new reality inaugurated by God's χάρις or to measure up in their testing.

The Gift and Request of the Macedonians

In 2 Cor 8:4, Paul provides a more concrete sense of what the Macedonians were able to do; they request that they may participate in τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους,⁵⁷ believing that this action benefits themselves.⁵⁸ In doing so, they participate in the wider net of χάρις that goes beyond them and God, as Paul continually reveals that the root of all the Macedonian action is located in God's dynamic χάρις.⁵⁹ The vertical movement of

⁵⁴ Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 118.

⁵⁵ Frederick W. Danker, *2 Corinthians*, ACNT, ed. Roy A. Harrisville, Jack Dean Kingsbury, and Gerhard A. Krodel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 119.

⁵⁶ 2 Cor 9:13. Malherbe, "The Corinthian Contribution," 231.

⁵⁷ The hendiadys means the Macedonian request can be translated as "the privilege of sharing in this mission for the saints." Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 296; cf. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 395; Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 120; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 401; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 323.

⁵⁸ That the Macedonians believed themselves to gain an advantage through participating in the κοινωνία is indicated by the verb δέομαι. Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 397–98, suggests that δέομαι is "often used in the NT of someone either praying or making an urgent request that would have some benefit for the one doing the asking."

⁵⁹ The emphasis that it is God's χάρις still that flows horizontally is an important distinction to make, because it removes the expected logic of reciprocity. Human givers participate in this "free" giving without calculation of a return, as the χάρις of God transcends material sharing. The same divine χάρις even prompts Jerusalem to long for Corinth in 2 Cor 9:14.

χάρις initiated by God to the Macedonians flowed into their horizontal relationships, and the Macedonians saw their horizontal relationship with Jerusalem as a *κοινωνία*, a readiness and willingness to share, not only material resources, but also in the joys and sorrows of life, that served as a function of friendship.⁶⁰

Added to this is the manner in which *κοινωνία*, for the New Testament writers, is dependent upon the precedent set by Jesus. Christian fellowship is possible because of the fellowship of believers with the resurrected Christ,⁶¹ and this *κοινωνία* entails active participation and work together in Christ, not simply coexistence.⁶² The family of *κοινωνία* terms is unsurprisingly then applied to the collection, a project that entails mutuality, participation in a partnership, and the concrete expression of sharing. Not only do the Pauline churches share material resources with Jerusalem, but they also participate together in the dynamic *χάρις* of God, the source of true giving and receiving.⁶³ This participation in God's abundant *χάρις*, in

⁶⁰ Hsieh, "Virtue, Friendship, and Polis," 192, explains that *κοινωνία* is a function of friendship, while friendship serves as "both the necessary and sufficient condition for the *κοινωνία*," so that the existence of each coincides. The proverb "friendship hold all in common" (*κοινὰ γὰρ τὰ τῶν φίλων*) is widespread (Plato, *Phaedr.* 279C; Cicero, *Off.* 1.51), and Aristotle defines friendship in terms of *κοινωνία*: "partnership is the essence of friendship" (*ἐν κοινωνίᾳ γὰρ ἡ φιλία*, *Eth. nic.* 8.9.1159b26–32); "all friendship involves partnership" (*Ἐν κοινωνίᾳ μὲν οὖν πᾶσα φιλία ἐστίν*, *Eth. nic.* 8.12.1161b11); and "friendship is essentially a partnership" (*κοινωνία γὰρ ἡ φιλία*, *Eth. nic.* 9.12.1171b32).

More broadly speaking, *κοινωνία* describes sharing in sacrifices, participation in the *πολιτεία*, festivals or public projects, marriage relationships, and professional associations or business partnerships. Julien M. Ogereau, "The Jerusalem Collection as *Κοινωνία*: Paul's Global Politics of Socio-Economic Equality and Solidarity," *NTS* 58 (2012): 366, 368. However, a survey of about 25 inscriptions and 120 papyri containing the term (IV BCE to VI CE) does not find any occurrence of the meaning as "(monetary) contribution," an assessment confirmed by Peter Arzt-Grabner, *Philemon*, PKNT 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 183–85, with respect to the documentary papyri.

⁶¹ Nickle, *The Collection*, 105.

⁶² That the papyri uses *κοινωνός* in the context of business partnerships to indicate "business partner" or "partnership" hints at this proactive sense of *κοινωνία*. Peter Arzt-Grabner and Ruth E. Kritzer, *2 Korinther*, PKNT 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 414; Sigrid Rutishauser-James, "'Partnership' or 'Fellowship': Which, Today, Is Truer to the Biblical Witness?" *ExpTim* 120 (2009): 328, 330.

⁶³ Rutishauser-James, "'Partnership' or 'Fellowship,'" 328. Cf. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 323: "It is a participation in a dynamic relation of giving and receiving. Before all else, it is a participation in Christ, who stands between givers and recipients in order to join them in common thanksgiving (8:9; 9:15)."

turn, equalizes all the participants in the collection and enables the *κοινωνία*. Since the givers and recipients are now equal before God, the element that matters most, they no longer need to engage in calculations of proportional equality and can simply hold everything in common.

The genitive accompanying *κοινωνία, τῆς διακονίας*, also serves to classify the type of undertaking Paul considered the collection, “as an essential act of Christian fellowship fulfilled in the service of the Lord.”⁶⁴ Rather than indicating benevolent activity or humble, loving service for others, the Macedonians saw themselves as commissioned agents and attendants of God. On behalf of God, they took the responsibility of providing for other Christians in need, and they did so quickly.⁶⁵

The Macedonian giving of themselves, highlighted in 8:5, exemplifies the appropriate response to the reception of God’s *χάρις*, that it was *πρῶτον* to God and then to “us.”⁶⁶ To begin, the verbs *ἐπερίσσευσεν* (8:2) and *ἔδωκαν* (8:5) are constative aorists, “referring to successive acts of giving that are viewed comprehensively.”⁶⁷ The Macedonian overflow of an abundant supply of simplicity manifested itself in their self-giving.⁶⁸ This self-giving takes on two levels of significance. First, their self-giving is their establishment of their union with Christ and other

⁶⁴ Nickle, *The Collection*, 109.

⁶⁵ John N. Collins, *Diakonia Studies: Critical Issues in Ministry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 145–48, 181. He explains that *διακονία* is used with three kinds of activity: (1) message, in which a person serves another as spokesperson or courier; (2) agency, in which a person is a mediator or an agent executing a commission; and/or (3) attendant, in which a person carries out responsibility in doing tasks for another. The term never refers to the context of acting to meet the needs of others or a work of charity. Cf. John N. Collins, “A Monocultural Usage: *διακον*- words in classical, Hellenistic, and Patristic Sources,” *VC* 66 (2012): 296, 301–6.

⁶⁶ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 324: “Giving, if it is truly giving, is a giving of oneself, just as true reception of a gift is the reception of the giver.”

⁶⁷ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 564.

⁶⁸ Constative aorists describe a complete action, that the action has taken place. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 557.

Christians.⁶⁹ In turn, this union bears the marks of ideal friendship. Within the framework of friendship, the pain of Jerusalem is their pain, and the joy of Jerusalem is their joy; they share one soul, and Jerusalem is like their other self. Moreover, from a theological standpoint, the Macedonians join in following the pattern of Jesus in his self-sacrifice. Paul's mention of this serves to communicate to the Corinthians that he is not asking for the funds in a self-serving manner. Second, the Macedonian church shows their submission through their self-giving.⁷⁰ The adverb πρῶτον "speaks of priority or prominence," so that the Macedonians' submission to God holds the highest priority yet consequently results in submission to the Pauline mission.⁷¹ The Macedonians participated in giving money to the Jerusalem collection, while seeing this as participating in the mission of both God and Paul.

Completing the χάρις

A result clause, introduced by εἰς τό, begins 8:6.⁷² The Macedonians' excessive response to God's χάρις caused Paul and his cohort to exhort Titus to complete (ἐπιτελέσῃ) this same χάρις among the Corinthians as well. This verb ἐπιτελέω appears in several different contexts throughout Greek literature and within honorary inscriptions which "[evoke] the image of a benefactor who completes an obligation, whether assigned or self-assumed."⁷³ While ἐπιτελέω is

⁶⁹ Klein, "Die Begründung für den Spendenaufruf," 106, writes, "Die Bindung an den auferstandenen Herrn (κύριος) ist der wichtigste Beweggrund ihrer Spendenaktion. Dahinter steht der Gnaden- und Heilswille Gottes." Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 324, correspondingly notes, "Giving, if it is truly giving, is a giving of oneself, just as true reception of a gift is the reception of the giver." True reception and true gift then binds the parties involved. Reception leads to the relationship; the relationship is not formed by the return.

⁷⁰ Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 122. He explains that, in submitting to the power of God's grace, the Macedonians submitted themselves to God, which meant they also submitted themselves to Paul's authority.

⁷¹ Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 399.

⁷² C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC 8 (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), 221. Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 125.

⁷³ Danker, *2 Corinthians*, 122; cf. Danker, *Benefactor*, 332, 362.

primarily translated as “to complete,”⁷⁴ it is possible to make a strong argument instead for the religious context of the verb.⁷⁵ Hebrews 8:5, 9:6; 2 Cor 7:1; and Josephus, *Ant.* 19.104, are instances in which ἐπιτελέω is used in a context of religious duty; ἐπιτελέω is then related to the “carrying out of ritual duty, the fulfilment of oaths, the carrying out of sacred festivals, the holding of funerary rites, and its use in contexts of religious benefaction.”⁷⁶

The Corinthians wrongly understood the collection as an opportunity for public benefaction, in which they would have received honor for acting as patrons toward Jerusalem. When they hesitated to fulfill this role after their initial commitment to do so, they likely had reassessed the worthiness of the recipients and/or what they could expect to receive in return and decided the cost outweighed the benefits.⁷⁷ As such, Paul was concerned that the Corinthians had not grasped the gospel and reminds them that they are not doing themselves, Jerusalem, or God any favors by finishing the collection.

The context of 8:6 holds that Titus is the one to ἐπιτελέω the work, not the Corinthians. If anyone has the right to be considered a public benefactor, it is Titus serving as one towards the Corinthians, not the Corinthians towards Jerusalem or even Paul. While Paul ensures that the Corinthian believers are guided away from their misunderstanding of how religious benefaction works within the χάρις of God, his goal is not to establish the identity of the best human benefactor. He removes competition from the equation. Religious benefaction, as opposed to

⁷⁴ Ascough, “The Completion of a Religious Duty,” 586.

⁷⁵ Ascough, “The Completion of a Religious Duty,” 599, argues that the Jerusalem collection is not a mandatory administrative task, but it is a religious obligation.

⁷⁶ Ascough, “The Completion of a Religious Duty,” 590.

⁷⁷ In contrast, if the Corinthians understood themselves as friends with the Jerusalem believers, then they would share, according to Jerusalem’s need, based on love and goodwill rather than profit (Cicero, *Amic.* 8.26–27, 9.32; *Off.* 1.15.49; Seneca, *Ben.* 2.31.2).

public, maintains the perspective that the human gift is ultimately a divine one.⁷⁸ Titus had begun the work of reconciliation among the Corinthians, work which was a manifestation of God's χάρις, and so will now help them complete the collection, another manifestation of God's χάρις.⁷⁹ Titus, like the Corinthians, is simply a conduit of the χάρις of God, by which he is exhorted and desires to see the actualization of the same divine χάρις towards the Corinthians in the collection.⁸⁰ Finally, Paul's designation of the collection as an act of χάρις, instead of referring directly to monetary contributions, emphasizes once more how the Christian life is rooted in God's χάρις which triggers further acts of χάρις among Christians.⁸¹

The Rivalry between Macedonia and Corinth (8:7–8)

Paul's description of the Macedonians in 2 Cor 8:1–5, followed by his challenge to the Corinthians in 8:7–8, constructs a rivalry, strengthened by the identification of Macedonia and Corinth as ethnic and political rivals⁸² and the Greco-Roman honor-shame context which emphasized how “the Macedonians did *everything* according to the book.”⁸³ In addition to his theologically based exhortation, Paul gives the Corinthians incentive to participate in the collection through the call of imitation and competition.⁸⁴ While a rivalry would seem to negate any friendly feelings, Paul's challenge to the Corinthian church encourages her to prove herself not a mere flatterer but a true friend and to take pride in the positive attributes of Macedonia, her

⁷⁸ Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles*, 94.

⁷⁹ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 572.

⁸⁰ Gerhard Delling, “ἐπιτελέω,” *TDNT* 8:61–62.

⁸¹ Klein, “Die Begründung für den Spendenaufruf,” 108.

⁸² Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 48.

⁸³ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 174.

⁸⁴ Robert J. Austgen, *Natural Motivation in the Pauline Epistles*, 2nd ed (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1969), 84; cf. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 48, who names Corinth and Macedonia as ethnic and political rivals.

friend, as though they were her own. This latter element of the “rivalry” becomes clear in 9:2, where Paul explains that Macedonia herself had been enthused by his boast about Corinth.

The Rhetorical Function of the Rivalry

First, the idea that Paul encourages Corinthian participation in the collection through imitation of the Macedonians recalls Plutarch’s assertion that a flatterer is driven by envy to mimic a friend.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Plutarch distinguishes that a true friend’s actions are consistently motivated by a commitment to the good, whereas a flatterer fluctuates in attitudes and behaviors in an attempt to exhibit like-mindedness with the other.⁸⁶ The Corinthian believers thereby need to show their authenticity as friends, by finishing what they had promised beforehand. Otherwise, their behavior will demonstrate that they were flatterers or mimics who only had had the appearance of being friends.

Second, Paul’s positive description of the Macedonians in 8:1–5 is followed by his boast about the Corinthians in 9:2; his reciprocal boasting falls within the topos for concord and friendship.⁸⁷ Aelius Aristides’ political theory holds that *φιλία* and *ὁμόνοια* are the cause of good both for a nation and each of its individual cities, whereas *στάσις* causes the “worst evils.”⁸⁸ In response, Aristides instructs that one must praise all the cities among which one desires to establish unity, concord, and friendship. Not only will each individual city be more responsive to advice after being praised, but every city will also learn to take pride in the positive attributes of all the other cities—an important characteristic among friends. Subsequently, the cities will

⁸⁵ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 65B.

⁸⁶ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 52A–B, 53A–B.

⁸⁷ Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 173.

⁸⁸ Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 23.53

increasingly seek to praise each other and act in ways that promote the good of them all.⁸⁸

Paul exhorts the Corinthians to respond appropriately to God's χάρις with the example of the Macedonians,⁸⁹ first by appealing to them to demonstrate themselves as true friends and not flatterers, and second by inspiring them with what the dynamic power of God's χάρις could accomplish within their neighbors. The Macedonian example as another contributor to the collection lowers any potential patronal value of the Corinthian gift,⁹⁰ and the Macedonian gift demonstrated their right relationship with God and their acceptance of his gift of χάρις. The Corinthians have yet to demonstrate the same thing but still have the opportunity to do so.⁹¹ Paul also presents the Corinthians with a paradox. Within normal conventions, Macedonia, in the midst of poverty and persecution, would not be expected to be able to compete with Corinth. However, with respect to divine χάρις, they are succeeding where the Corinthians are currently failing. With this rivalry, Paul helps the Corinthians understand that, at most, they can only attain equality with the Macedonians and all other Christians.

The Triads

In 8:7, as the Corinthians are abounding in all things, so they should also see to it that they should abound in the act of χάρις that is their participation in the collection.⁹² The ἵνα-clause is

⁸⁸ Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 23.5–7.

⁸⁹ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 320, emphasizes that Paul did not mean to promote competition between the Corinthians and Macedonians, because that would “negate the giving, turning it into a mere means of self-assertion.” Rather, the Macedonians “are an example, not of a moral virtue that is to be imitated, but of the grace of God that is to be sought” (p. 317).

⁹⁰ Wan, “Collection for the Saints as Anticolonial Act,” 215.

⁹¹ V. George Shillington, *2 Corinthians*, BCBC (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998), 174.

⁹² This reflects the tenses of Paul's verbs, with περισσεύετε as present progressive and περισσεύητε as subjunctive.

often interpreted to possess an imperatival force, but is more appropriately identified as expressing a wish, which allows room for the spontaneity of χάρις.⁹⁴ Paul reiterates that he is not issuing the Corinthians a command in the next verse, 8:8. As Seneca explains that a benefit must be bequested voluntarily,⁹⁵ the Corinthian contribution to the collection would cease to be a gift if commanded or given for profit, pleasure or glory. It would not be able to create a bond of friendship.⁹⁶ The Corinthians must be freely motivated by χάρις and their love for others,⁹⁷ or else their participation in the collection is not genuine participation in God’s work or, secondarily, in Paul’s mission. With the rivalry still in mind, Paul presents the Macedonian love as a standard by which the Corinthians may demonstrate their authenticity.⁹⁸

Paul in this verse lists six “gifts,” many of which find a place in the friendship topos, in two triads. The first triad (πίστις, λόγος, and γνώσις) is attributed to the congregation in 1 Cor 1:5.⁹⁹ The first virtue, πίστις, can refer to both “faithfulness” and trust,” though the first sense is more uncommon in Paul’s usage. In the context of the collection and the enabling power of χάρις, however, it becomes more plausible to see the active sense of πίστις issue forth its passive sense. In that case, the naming of πίστις would call upon the Corinthians to finish the collection as faithful emissaries of the God in whom they trust¹⁰⁰ and as a sign of their friendship with

⁹⁴ Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:529.

⁹⁵ Seneca, *Ben.* 3.21.2.

⁹⁶ Seneca *Ben.* 4.11.1; 4.12.1; Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 239, 240.

⁹⁷ The form ὑμετέρως for the second person possessive pronoun makes it unambiguously the Corinthian love for others; it eliminates the option of interpreting the phrase as a subjective genitive.

⁹⁸ The construction διὰ τῆς ἐτέρων σπουδῆς expresses means or agency; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 440.

⁹⁹ Richard R. Melick Jr., “The Collection for the Saints: 2 Corinthians 8–9,” *CTR* 4 (1989): 108; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 326.

¹⁰⁰ Danker, *2 Corinthians*, 124, identifies πίστις as a term that “generally refers to the honorand’s sense of honor in carrying out an assignment and is frequently found in association with other virtues.”

Jerusalem.¹⁰¹ The second and third qualities of the triad, λόγος and γνώσις, reflect “the association of deed and word that is so common in Greco-Roman literature.”¹⁰² The virtues in 2 Cor 8:7a are “an idealized eulogy of the Corinthians,” a form of idealized praise meant to undergird the appeal in 8:7b.¹⁰³ Accordingly, it is not actually evident that the Corinthians possess these virtues, even as Paul praises them for having them, since they are considering not fulfilling their previous pledge. His decision to praise them expresses his confidence that they will demonstrate these qualities of which he knows they are capable.

The second triad (σπουδή, ἀγάπη, and χάρις) are qualities more directly related to the collection, and the Corinthians will demonstrate their possession of these qualities through successful participation.¹⁰⁴ Paul’s listing of σπουδή, a term related to the benefaction theme of enthusiasm and the giver’s attitude towards his or her recipient,¹⁰⁵ is meant to motivate the Corinthians to action, recalling how their initial eagerness spurred the Macedonians.¹⁰⁶ The love described by ἀγάπη is considered to shed patronal connotations and describe friendship at its best.¹⁰⁷ Paul speaks of this love as ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀγάπη, which stresses Paul’s good heart

¹⁰¹ Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 33, has observed that the term πίστις is a designation for one’s closest companions. Furthermore, the related term πιστός is complementary to φίλος. In the *Iliad*’s description of Patroclus, φίλος and πιστός “function like two formulaic epithets attaching to the same hero.”

¹⁰² Danker, *2 Corinthians*, 124.

¹⁰³ Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 223.

¹⁰⁴ Melick, “The Collection for the Saints,” 108; Shillington, *2 Corinthians*, 178.

¹⁰⁵ Danker, *Benefactor*, 320.

¹⁰⁶ 2 Cor 9:2.

¹⁰⁷ According to David Horrell, “Imitating the Humility of Christ: Paul’s Philippian Christ-Hymn and the Making of Christian Morality,” conference volume from *Paul-Philippi: Two Thousand Years of the European Vision of the Apostle Paul*, Philippi-Kavala, May 2011, 4, ἀγάπη, κοινωνία and harmony “all reflect the qualities that were thought to characterise friendship at its best.”

Cicero, *Amic.* 8.26, notes that the cause of true friendship is love. Furthermore, the words *amicitia* and *amor* are both derived from *amando* (*Amic.* 27.100), and *amicitia* is derived from *amor* (*Amic.* 8.26).

towards the Corinthians while inviting them to express their love through acceptance of Paul's apostleship and through participation in the collection.¹⁰⁸ Finally, χάρις is paradoxically both a quality of all the "virtues" in Paul's list, as "gifts" divinely bestowed to the Corinthians, and a quality in itself that the Corinthians must exercise in order to claim the others.¹⁰⁹ The Corinthians prided themselves on their demonstration of χαρίσματα, so they need to show themselves to be true possessors of spiritual riches by using them to express favor towards others in their actions, which here entails meeting others' material needs through the collection.¹¹⁰ The χάρις of God in the Corinthians' lives works to cause them to abound in the virtues of πίστις, λόγος, γνῶσις, σπουδή, ἀγάπη, and further χάρις that allows further giving to others.

The Example and Gift of Christ (8:9)

Paul continues to encourage the Corinthians to complete the collection through a reminder of the gospel based upon the prime example and gift of Christ.¹¹¹ The previous verse's mention of ἀγάπη may have prompted "Paul to appeal to the highest illustration of love-in-action,"¹¹² which is captured by the Ultimate Giver's gift of χάρις and by Jesus' self-giving. The Christ-event serves as "the key enactment and the focal expression of the *cascade* of divine grace, from God, in Christ, through believers, to others."¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 327.

¹⁰⁹ Shillington, *2 Corinthians*, 178.

¹¹⁰ 1 Cor 12; Melick, "The Collection for the Saints," 108.

¹¹¹ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 329.

¹¹² Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 440.

¹¹³ John M. G. Barclay, "Manna and the Circulation of Grace: A Study of 2 Corinthians 8:1–15," in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J.R. Wagner, C.K. Rowe, and A.K. Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 410.

The Christ Event as the Ground of Giving

The initial verb in 2 Cor 8:9, γινώσκετε, parallels the typical biblical usage, “where recourse is made to a paradigm of divine action in order to enforce an ethical call.”¹⁴ The conjunction γάρ introduces an explanation, that the love of the Corinthians is based upon τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The present verse is a traditional Christological formula, which parallels Phil 2:6–11 and 2 Cor 5:21 with its references to Christ’s pre-existence, incarnation, death, and resurrection.¹⁵ Its incomplete parallelism—“he became poor, being rich, in order that you by his poverty might become rich” rather than “he became poor, being rich, in order that you, *being poor*, might become rich”—keeps the emphasis on Christ rather than on the Corinthians.¹⁶ Whereas the Corinthians have the tendency to be self-focused in their considerations of reciprocity, Paul directs their attentions to Christ, whose χάρις is identified with his self-giving in the entire event of his pre-existence, incarnation, death, and resurrection. Essentially, Jesus provides the basis of the Corinthian “riches” and love; he is both enabling gift to the Corinthians and their example. As a result, Jesus provides the means, ability, motivation, and model for the Corinthian contribution to the collection and for understanding their social relationships within the Church in terms of friendship.

Christ’s Riches and Poverty

Most often, the participial phrase πλούσιος ὢν in 2 Cor 8:9 is interpreted as concessive, as “although he was rich he became poor.” This allows Christ’s riches to be identified as “the

¹⁴ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 440.

¹⁵ Schoenborn, “La Inversion de La Gracia,” 209.

¹⁶ Gaventa, “The Economy of Grace,” 56.

quality of his heavenly, pre-existent status,” which he then renounces,¹¹⁷ so that his poverty is traditionally interpreted to be the total event of his incarnation. Other suggestions include that Jesus’ poverty rests with his voluntary acceptance of human, material poverty or that it is his identification during his historical lifetime with the spiritual poverty of fallen humanity; these all involve his incarnation somehow.¹¹⁸

Barclay provides a second possible interpretation of the participle ὄν, reading it as causal, rather than concessive.¹¹⁹ His next interpretational move is to understand πλούσιος as Christ’s “wealth” of generosity, paralleling the Macedonians in 8:2.¹²⁰ Christ became poor because he was so generous. The result is that Christians are able to experience the riches of salvation. In this new schema, wealth no longer depends on what one has, and χάρις should transform the Corinthians into grace-formed givers.¹²¹ Barclay’s explanation is satisfying in that he can address the connections between the spiritual and material realms, that believers experience salvific riches through Christ’s riches and that the poor become enriched through the sharing of resources.¹²² However, the parallels between this verse and Phil 2:6–11 beg for some stronger reference to Jesus’ incarnation, death, and resurrection.

¹¹⁷ Barclay, John M. G., “‘Because he was rich he became poor’: Translation, Exegesis and Hermeneutics in the Reading of 2 Cor 8.9,” in Bieringer, *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict*, 333.

¹¹⁸ For πλούσιος ὄν as referring to Christ’s preexistence, Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:532–34; McFarland, “The God Who Gives,” 218.

For πλούσιος ὄν as referring to Christ’s earthly self-giving, see James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 121–23; McFarland, “The God Who Gives,” 219.

¹¹⁹ Barclay, “Because he was rich he became poor,” 339; cf. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 329n45.

¹²⁰ Barclay, “Because he was rich he became poor,” 340.

¹²¹ Barclay, “Because he was rich he became poor,” 338; cf. Barclay, “Manna and the Circulation of Grace,” 421.

¹²² Barclay, “Because he was rich he became poor,” 338.

The best option, therefore, is to follow Seifrid’s suggestion. He likewise disagrees with the concessive interpretation of the participial expression πλούσιος ὢν, because Paul does not have “in mind a sequence of poverty and wealth.” Instead, the participle is modal, “for your sake he became poor, being rich.” These two realities are present simultaneously and paradoxically, just as “the resurrection is merely the manifestation of the righteousness that was hidden under sin in the cross (5:21).”¹²³ In the same manner that the Macedonians in the midst of the depth of their poverty were paradoxically able to abound in the wealth of their simplicity,¹²⁴ Jesus in the midst of his poverty experiences wealth.¹²⁵

Christ’s wealth and poverty, as well as the riches that God confers through him, can be seen to envelope both the spiritual and material realms, just as Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection happened in the material realm of existence.¹²⁶ Meanwhile, 2 Cor 8:9, with its emphasis on δι’ ὑμῶν and ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ, communicates to the Corinthians that they have been enriched by Christ’s voluntary impoverishment.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, πλουτήσητε focuses not on the Corinthians’ economic wealth or material security but their spiritual riches. These riches conferred onto believers involve the “righteousness of God”;¹²⁸ the “overflow” of χάρις that results in the spiritual gifts of πίστις, λόγος, γνώσις, σπουδή, and ἀγάπη;¹²⁹ and,

¹²³ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 329.

¹²⁴ 2 Cor 8:2.

¹²⁵ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 329.

¹²⁶ Brändle, “Geld und Gnade,” 264–65; Fred B. Craddock, “Poverty of Christ: An Investigation of 2 Corinthians 8:9,” *Int.* 22 (1968): 165–70; Barclay, “Because he was rich he became poor,” 338.

¹²⁷ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 408.

¹²⁸ 2 Cor 5:21–6:1.

¹²⁹ 2 Cor 8:7. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 408–9.

most importantly, “all the blessings of eschatological salvation.”¹³⁰ Salvation includes the forgiveness of sins,¹³¹ reception of the Spirit,¹³² and reconciliation and right relationship with God and, subsequently, with other Christians.¹³³ Therefore, one crucial element of the Christ-event that Paul desires the Corinthians to grasp is its nature as a gift. This sense of χάρις overlaps inseparably with a second critical aspect of the Christ-event, that Jesus’ self-giving serves as an example to the Corinthians of how that divine gift works within its recipients to cause them to give to others.¹³⁴

The parallels between Paul’s two examples, that of the Macedonians and that of Christ,¹³⁵ highlight self-giving as a model for Christian behavior and shed further light on the expectations Paul held for the Corinthians and their accompanying motivations. Through the Christ-event, God has bestowed spiritual riches upon the Corinthians for the purpose of sharing these riches with others. Furthermore, considering the nature and implications of these spiritual riches that they are to share, they then are also called to share their material ones, which also find their

¹³⁰ Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:534; cf. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 330.

¹³¹ 2 Cor 5:19.

¹³² 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5.

¹³³ 2 Cor 5:18; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 578–79; Barclay, “Because he was rich he became poor,” 336.

¹³⁴ As Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 330–31, notes, “Christ’s riches include, yet transcend, his grace of giving,” so that the gift of salvation is “a grace that does not become a private possession, but a self-communication of the Giver.”

Paul’s theology of the χάρις of giving *both* enacts the new creation reality *and* exhorts recipients to display the presence of this χάρις in their lives by enriching others. His choice of χάρις incorporates the Greco-Roman gift-giving conventions into the theological realities of salvation, with the result that it binds “indicative” and “imperative” together. The imperative grounds and confirms the indicative. Ruben Zimmerman, “Jenseits von Indikativ und Imperativ: Entwurf einer ‘impliziten Ethik’ des Paulus am Beispiel des 1. Korintherbriefes,” *TL* 132 (2007): 259–84, esp. 274–76.

¹³⁵ Both the Macedonians and Jesus “gave themselves,” and both are described as being πτωχεῖα (8:2, 5, 9).

origin in God.¹³⁶

The Corinthians have failed to grasp the paradox between wealth and poverty, that “the riches of Christ, hidden in his poverty, are the riches that make the Corinthians rich.”¹³⁷ Their mistake is to consider only material wealth, to question the worthiness of contributing to the collection. Based on the divine origin of even their material wealth, the Corinthians should not think of a monetary gift as a way of gaining leverage or status at the expense of the recipients. They forget that they stand to gain spiritual wealth through the giving of themselves to God and to other Christians via sharing their financial resources, that they will more deeply experience the impact of God’s gift and self-communication of salvation. In addition, sharing with other Christians furthers their reconciliation and friendship, reinforces their bond as one body and one mind, and even strengthens the Corinthians’ right relationship with God.

Expediency and Goodwill (8:10–12)

As is fitting for deliberative rhetoric, Paul appeals to expediency and goodwill in order to persuade the Corinthians to finish the collection and to do so willingly and without further delay. It is advantageous for their contribution to demonstrate goodwill towards the Jerusalem recipients and for them to demonstrate the proper attitude for presenting a true gift.¹³⁸ Otherwise, their participation in the project will present little benefit to themselves, much less any involved party.

¹³⁶ Craddock, “Poverty of Christ,” 169–70.

¹³⁷ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 330.

¹³⁸ In Cicero, *Off.* 1.20, *benignitas* is the virtue that causes a man to do good, the feeling of *benevolentia* (goodwill) in action. It implies voluntariness, sincerity, and altruism and is the source of *beneficia*. Koenraad Verboven, “Friendship among the Romans,” *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195188004.013.0019.

The Advantage of Finishing the Collection

Expediency (συμφέρον) is a stock argument in deliberative rhetoric, and, for the Greek, it involved asking what was advantageous to the well-being of the city-state, not merely the individual.¹³⁹ Hence, Paul's use of συμφέρον in 8:10 indicates that generosity in giving both benefited the individual giver but also promoted the “general well-being” or the “general good” of the Corinthians.¹⁴⁰ His argument hinges on (1) how the work has already been begun and mostly finished, (2) that desire should be matched by action, (3) that finishing with the resources the Corinthians do possess is better than leaving the project incomplete, and (4) the initial enthusiasm of the Corinthians would be worthless without their finishing their goal.¹⁴¹

The Role of προθυμία in Giving

2 Corinthians 8:11 contains the imperative, ἐπιτελέσατε, directed to the Corinthians. The verb previously occurs in 8:6, where Titus is exhorted as a conduit of divine χάρις to complete the work among the Corinthians so that God's χάρις would be actualized towards them.¹⁴² In contrast, here the Corinthians themselves are exhorted to allow this χάρις to be realized fully in them. The natural result, then, is renewed relationship with and worship of God.¹⁴³ Their reception of divine χάρις had previously prompted them to be eager to participate in the collection, so their continued experience of χάρις should likewise incite them to resolve to complete it.

¹³⁹ The stability of the πόλις is related to unity, concord, and friendship among her people. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.3.1358b; Austgen, *Natural Motivation in the Pauline Epistles*, 89; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 63.

¹⁴⁰ Austgen, *Natural Motivation in the Pauline Epistles*, 90.

¹⁴¹ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 64.

¹⁴² Since any notions of them serving as patrons have already been corrected in 2 Cor 8:6, they can now be prompted to finish the task at hand.

¹⁴³ Downs, *The Offering to the Gentiles*, 135, argues for the collection to be understood as an act of cultic worship.

Finishing their contribution to the collection would indicate that their previous willingness (προθυμία) is matched by action. Seneca notes the importance of the giver's intention, that he "by his very hesitation has shown that he made his bestowal unwillingly has not 'given'" and does not have goodwill towards the recipient.¹⁴⁴ In that light, the quality of προθυμία was a mainstream term for praising civic friendship,¹⁴⁵ and Xenophon's Hiero recognizes that a friend's "service rendered is due to no compulsion."¹⁴⁶ In this way, Paul furthers his argument that he is not coercing or obligating the Corinthians to contribute to the Jerusalem collection; his desire is to help them see the expediency of it for themselves personally and for the larger Christian community of which they are a part.

An Acceptable Corinthian Gift

In 2 Cor 8:12, Paul continues to explain that the important element of the Corinthians' gift is their προθυμία put into action, rather than the amount. Their contribution is καθὸ ἐὰν ἔχη εὐπρόσδεκτος, οὐ καθὸ οὐκ ἔχει. Paul also used the word εὐπρόσδεκτος in 6:2, where he explains that νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας for the Corinthians to be reconciled to God lest the χάρις they received from him be in vain. It follows then that the Corinthians here in 8:12 are prompted to act in ways that are εὐπρόσδεκτος to their "salvific reconciliation." This connection indicates that, "Paul is thinking of giving as a natural act flowing from one's status of being reconciled to the Creator," especially in light of the

¹⁴⁴ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.1.2.

¹⁴⁵ *I.Ephesos* 2001, ll. 6–7, *I.Magnesia* 93. Although these references are to allied cities and nations, Verboven, "Friendship among the Romans," notes that they could carry the same title of *amicus* and the "same moral obligations and sanctions of *amicitia*" as between individuals.

¹⁴⁶ Xenophon, *Hier.* 1.37.

enrichment that Christians receive from Jesus' self-giving in 8:9.¹⁴⁷

Paul's insistence on the acceptability of a Corinthian gift "according to what they have" echoes a general biblical motif. It appears in Deuteronomy, with its themes about giving generously without a grudging heart (15:10, 14) and according to the blessings that they have received from God (16:17).¹⁴⁸ It also emerges in Tobit 4:8, found within a passage on almsgiving: "If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have."¹⁴⁹ The Corinthians were likely reluctant to give only a small amount to the collection in their desire to present an impressive gift worthy of a patron. With this verse, Paul expresses that he wants them to do what they said that they had committed to do and does not demand that the Corinthians give something they do not have. They do not necessarily need to give beyond their means as the Macedonians did.¹⁵⁰

Though Paul here tells the Corinthians that they only need to give in proportion to what they have, the recently given examples of the Macedonians and Jesus are difficult to ignore. The Macedonians and Christ represent opposite ends of the spectrum, giving themselves in the midst of extreme poverty and riches, respectively, while the Corinthians are placed in the middle of

¹⁴⁷ Paul Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture: Paul's Use of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians 4.7–13.13*, LNTS 519 (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 119.

¹⁴⁸ Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 119.

¹⁴⁹ RSV. A number of commentators suggest that Paul alludes to Tob 4:8 here without engaging in discussion. Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:538n224; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 407; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 413n53; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 66n215. David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC 29 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 381, also references Tob 4:6–11. The context of Tob 4:5–11 discusses the connection between practicing righteousness and giving alms to the poor (4:6–7) in proportion according to what one has (4:8), as a means of storing up treasure for the "day of necessity" (4:9, this may have some similarity to 2 Cor 8:13–14) and as a means of presenting an offering to God (4: 11). Cf. Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 117–18.

Related, Pliny, *Ep.* 9.30.1–2, argues that friendship requires almsgiving and being generous especially towards *amicis dico pauperibus*.

¹⁵⁰ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 413.

that spectrum.¹⁵¹ Concurrently, the rivalry between the Macedonians and Corinthians challenges the Corinthians not to out-give the Macedonians, but to be transformed equally by the rule of God’s χάρις in their lives.¹⁵² All the spiritual and material wealth that the Corinthians and Macedonians hold originates in God, who has given his χάρις “that motivates an anticipated ‘gracious act’ of giving.”¹⁵³ With his emphasis remaining on this divine χάρις, Paul is able to reconcile his call for the Corinthians to give “according to what one has” with his examples of giving “beyond means.”

Equality and Reciprocity (8:13–15)

The inverted parallelism featuring ἰσότης, περίσσευμα, and ὑστέρημα in 8:13–14 points to open sharing among all friends for the maintenance of equality. As Paul has structured his chiasmus, introduced and concluded with ἰσότης, the pivot point is focused on equality and the establishment of friendship with the act of giving, rather than material lack or surplus.¹⁵⁴ This contrasts with how the Roman elite gave in order to maintain their power and wealth and to uphold societal inequalities.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, Paul’s citation of Exod 16:18 helps to clarify the type of equality that he envisions in this exchange.

¹⁵¹ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 581; cf. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 184; Jacob Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace: A Plutocritical Reading of Grace and Equality in Second Corinthians 8:1–15” (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2007), 237, who writes that Paul does not pressure the Corinthians to display “excessive” generosity even as he has just reminded them of the “disproportionate” generosity of Jesus and of the Macedonians.

¹⁵² Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 238; cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 418; Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 184.

¹⁵³ Roetzel, *2 Corinthians*, 47.

¹⁵⁴ ἐξ ἰσότητος in 8:13 and ὅπως ... ἰσότης in 8:14.

Downs, *The Offering to the Gentiles*, 137; Faye, “The Nature and Theological Import,” 123; and Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 205, recognize here that Paul is drawing upon friendship conventions with his use of the term ἰσότης.

¹⁵⁵ Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 120–21.

A New Christian *ισότης*

The ancient Greco-Roman philosophers all prized the virtue of *ισότης*, which appeared in legal, social, political, and moral discourses and so took on various forms, including distributive justice, rectification, and friendship.¹⁵⁶ In the civic context, *ισότης* refers to equality and fairness with respect to justice (*δικαιοσύνη/τὸ δίκαιον*) and the law (*νόμος*), so that a person is given what is appropriate for his status and role.¹⁵⁷ As Plato and Aristotle maintain, the equal distribution of things to persons of unequal merit is unequal.¹⁵⁸ Nonetheless, *ισότης*, as the basis of *ὁμόνοια*, creates the foundation of the city and of society.¹⁵⁹

When *ισότης* appears in the context of human relationships in Greco-Roman discussion, it appears with two different connotations: (1) the equality of status between a giver and recipient and (2) the appropriate amount of aid to be given to a person based on his or her position in the social order.¹⁶⁰ These both point to equality in the sense that persons are “equal by

¹⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.4.1131b31, 8.5.1157b36, 8.7.1158b29, 8.8.1162a35.

¹⁵⁷ Ogereau, “The Jerusalem Collection as *Κοινωνία*,” 365, says that this refers to juridical justice. Aristotle, (*Eth. nic.* 5.3.1131a25–33; cf. 5.5.1133a19–25; 9.2.1165a14–33) indicates that this juridical justice is one that is proportional. Similarly, Seneca’s (*Ben.* 1.15.4; 1.14.1) discussion of the worthiness of recipients and of the giver upheld the maintenance of the balance of power and control of resources within society.

Vassiliadis, “Equality and Justice,” 55, in turn notes that equality in the New Testament is not this legal form in which “everyone can demand his or her rights; it refers rather to the primary act of divine grace.” This grace gives rise to the Church, which gives reality to the kingdom of God within social order. Social reality is seen through relationships, which returns the topic to friendship.

¹⁵⁸ Plato, *Laws*, 744b–c; 757a–d; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.3.1131a15–24; cf. Garnsey, “Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire,” 3.

¹⁵⁹ Aristotle *Pol.* 2.1.1261a30–31; Ps. Aristotle, *Mund.* 5.397a3–4.

¹⁶⁰ Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity,” 56; Watson, “Paul’s Collection in Light of Motivation and Mechanisms for Aid,” 53.

acknowledgment of the same rights,”¹⁶¹ and they indicate the possibility of friendship.¹⁶² Equality is found in definitions of friendship, and equality produces the solidarity of friendship (κοινήν φιλίαν).¹⁶³ Aristotle thus explains that his three kinds of friendship are all dependent upon ισότης,¹⁶⁴ but, more significantly, that the “friendships” between those with unequal social status on the basis of proportional equality are not examples of true friendship.¹⁶⁵ This is because the Greco-Roman world conceived of equality from the perspective of the giver, that the “giver should not be made to suffer loss.”¹⁶⁶

Philo provides a contemporaneous context through which to compare and contrast Paul’s

¹⁶¹ Gustav Stählin, “ισότης,” *TDNT*, 3:346. Holding equal rights within the Corinthian congregation, much less within the larger Church, have already appeared as issues of table fellowship (1 Cor 11:17–33) and in court (1 Cor 6:1–8), both situations which traditionally give preference to those with higher social status.

Ancient Greco-Roman discussions of ισότης in conjunction with aid assume the maintenance of social order and the reinforcement of the status quo. Distributive justice comes into play so that “equality” means giving a person what is appropriate for his place. A person receives aid according to his standing and related standard of living. Note that that ισότης does not require or anticipate economic equality, because wealth is merely one aspect of social status.

¹⁶² Friendship is not present just because of the presence of this term ισότης, because there is still overlap between friendship and patronage.

¹⁶³ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 7.10. Philo similarly treats treats ισότης in relationship to κοινωνία in *Spec. Laws* 4.187 and *Decalogue* 162a.

¹⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.3.1238b15–18; *Eth. nic.* 9.1.1163b32–1164a13.

¹⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.3.1238b19–1238b39, 7.4.1239b5–8; *Eth. nic.* 8.5.1157b34–1158a1.

¹⁶⁶ Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006): 174. Cf. Watson, “Paul’s Collection in Light of Motivation and Mechanisms for Aid,” 124; Garnsey, “Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire,” 3–24.

Aristotle (*Pol.* 2.2.1263a1–24), Cicero (*Off.* 1.11–22), Seneca (*Ben.* 7.4.2; 7.12.3–5), Plutarch (*Amat.* 767E; *Quaest. conv.* 644C–D), and other philosophers used and interpreted the friendship topos to maintain the social order of their day, as they all upheld private ownership. Mitchell, “The Social Function of Friendship,” 264; Neal Wood, “The Economic Dimension of Cicero’s Political Thought: Property and State,” *CJPS* 16 (1983): 743, 753.

use of *ισότης*.¹⁶⁷ Philo considered equality to be the highest good,¹⁶⁸ especially as something created by God,¹⁶⁹ reflected in God's creation,¹⁷⁰ and desired by God.¹⁷¹ While Philo advocates a proportional equality that would maintain the socio-hierarchy within his society,¹⁷² Paul does not consider the "relative worth" of persons or seek to maintain the socio-hierarchy of the larger culture.¹⁷³ On the other hand, Philo acknowledges the close relationship between *ισότης* and *κοινωνία*, such that people should pursue these both in addition to *φιλανθρωπία*. This "heals" inequality and guards against greed and enmity.¹⁷⁴

Dio Chrysostom is a second contemporary of Paul, whose oration on greed is relevant to the discussion of *ισότης*. In *Avar.* 1–11, he demonstrates the relationship among *πλεονεξία*, *ισότης*, *φιλία*, and *αυτάρκεια*.¹⁷⁵ Dio's adaptation of Euripides' *Phoenician Women* (531–40) juxtaposes *πλεονεξία*, which brings ruin, and *ισότης*, which restores and builds relationships among friends, city-states, and allies, as morally opposite deities.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, the pursuit of

¹⁶⁷ Philo refers to *ισότης* 79 instances in 28 different writings, according to the concordance by Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth, and Roald Skarsten, *The Philo Index: A Complete Greek Word Index to the Writings of Philo of Alexandria* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 180; Cherian, "Toward a Commonwealth of Grace," 133–34. Philo's work that features the term with the highest frequency (20 times) is *Who Is the Heir?*, with the references concentrated in *Heir* 133–206. The other text of Philo with many occurrences of *ισότης* (16 times) is *De specialibus legibus IV*; the majority of those mentions is in *Spec. Laws* 4.231–38, which discusses the relationship between *ισότης* and *δικαιοσύνη*.

¹⁶⁸ Philo, *Spec. Laws* 4.165–66; *Heir* 141–206.

¹⁶⁹ Philo, *Spec.* 1.265; *Heir* 143.

¹⁷⁰ Philo, *Heir* 146–60.

¹⁷¹ Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.34, 204; 4.74, 169, 235.

¹⁷² Philo, *Heir* 145; *Names* 232; Cherian, "Toward a Commonwealth of Grace," 147.

¹⁷³ Cherian, "Toward a Commonwealth of Grace," 149.

¹⁷⁴ Philo, *Spec. Laws* 1.295; 2.21–22; *Good Person* 79; *Confusion* 48.

¹⁷⁵ Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 154.

¹⁷⁶ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 9; Cherian, "Toward a Commonwealth of Grace," 152–53.

ισότης leads not only to δικαιοσύνη, but also to φιλία and ἀντάρχεια among all.¹⁷⁷ While Dio speaks of a geometric or proportional equality, he still had some expectation of moderation for the wealthy so that a balance and “sufficiency” could be achieved among everyone.¹⁷⁸

Modern scholars suggest a spectrum of interpretations for the significance of ἰσότης to Paul. Cherian divides the different interpretations of ἰσότης into the following streams of thought: (1) as a divine cosmic power (Georgi); (2) as a principle of fairness or balance, as mutual give-and-take (Betz, Joubert); (3) as the principle of proportional giving (Furnish, Sondra Wheeler, Murray Harris); and (4) as a life-ideal to inspire solidarity (Iori).¹⁷⁹

First, to understand ἰσότης as a divine cosmic power, Georgi follows the Hellenistic-Jewish Gnostic understanding of ἰσότης as a personified divine force to be identified with God, who brings about salvation. God is the source of δικαιοσύνη, the causative basis of ἰσότης, so he is therefore the source of righteous activity and of giving and receiving.¹⁸⁰ However, it goes beyond the textual evidence in Philo to say that ἰσότης could be identified with God himself,¹⁸¹ and nobody follows Georgi’s interpretation.¹⁸²

Second, under the rubric of ἰσότης as mutual give-and-take, both Betz and Welborn argue that the Corinthians need to make a material gift to meet the gift of spiritual wealth from the Jerusalem saints in order to restore equality.¹⁸³ Joubert provides a variant of this view, as he holds

¹⁷⁷ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 10–11.

¹⁷⁸ Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 166.

¹⁷⁹ Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 86–103.

¹⁸⁰ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 86.

¹⁸¹ Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 148; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 86.

¹⁸² Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 227; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 407–8.

¹⁸³ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 67–69; Welborn, “That There May Be Equality,” 80.

In the sphere of democracy, Welborn, “That There May Be Equality,” 85, sees a “... dangerous reversal of the logic of inverse proportion: the politically superior inhabitants of a Roman colony must demonstrate their

the expectation that the Corinthian and Jerusalem Christians in their reciprocal relationship ought to benefit “equally” from the exchange; therefore, the Corinthians should not cause themselves to enter into affliction on behalf of another and do not need to give excessively.¹⁸⁴ This relates to the following category through which *ισότης* has been understood.

Third, the interpretation of *ισότης* as a principle of proportional giving, “relative equality” between abundance and lack, is a common reading.¹⁸⁵ For Furnish, Paul parallels Philo in understanding *ισότης* as proportional,¹⁸⁶ so that the Corinthians give in proportion to their available resources. “The needs of the poor are to be met out of the *surplus* of others.”¹⁸⁷ Harris finds that a natural goal of *κοινωνία* is equality in the meeting of needs within the community via proportionate giving of whatever resources the believers have at hand.¹⁸⁸ While there is no conflict between *ισότης* as mutual give-and-take or as proportional giving, these readings do not capture the whole of the radicalness of what Paul is trying to express to the Corinthians with the Christian ethos. The next interpretative category begins to address this issue.

Fourth, Iori’s work categorizes *ισότης* as a life-ideal to inspire solidarity. This equality takes on a sacramental quality, as it is a divine gift that transforms a person’s heart and life.¹⁸⁹ The Corinthians have received the spiritual gifts from Jerusalem in the form of the grace of Christ,

submission to conquered provincials in Jerusalem, in order to achieve ‘equality.’” Considering all the contexts of *ισότης* leads him to the conclusion that Paul desires to see voluntary redistribution with the purpose of equalization of all resources.

¹⁸⁴ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 140, 142.

¹⁸⁵ Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 89–91; Frank J. Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 192–93.

¹⁸⁶ Philo, *Heir* 145.

¹⁸⁷ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 419.

¹⁸⁸ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 590–92.

¹⁸⁹ Iori, “Uso e Significato,” 431.

and now they bring about equality through material generosity back towards Jerusalem. The two groups already had theological-sacramental equality, and now that equality is reflected at the material level as well.¹⁹⁰ Vassiliadis similarly contends that the biblical understanding of equality went a step beyond the ancient Greek concept based on juridical justice in order to refer to the “primary act of divine grace.” Paul envisioned the equal distribution and permanent sharing of material wealth to give reality to the kingdom of God within the present social order.¹⁹¹ While Cherian warns against conflating *ισότης* in Paul with a “NT equality,”¹⁹² he does emphasize that it is important to remember that “human initiative is somehow seen as a radical but an inevitable *fruit* of grace.”¹⁹³ The idea that all Christians have theological-sacramental equality, equality in their status before God, again builds upon the idea that all Christians could be friends and relate to each other as such.

Finally, other responses that do not fit in the categories above include the following.

Ogereau concludes that Paul is promoting a new order of socio-economic equality and solidarity as a practical expression of *κοινωνία*, especially when it is considered in conjunction with the use of *ισότης*.¹⁹⁴ In contrast, there is never an indication that the Jerusalem collection was meant to be more than a one-time occurrence. Theissen’s scheme of love-patriarchalism “takes social differences for granted” but interprets them through love to place obligations on the “socially stronger.”¹⁹⁵ However, it would appear that Paul asked all persons of the Corinthian congregation

¹⁹⁰ Iori, “Uso e Significato,” 436–37.

¹⁹¹ Vassiliadis, “Equality and Justice,” 55, 59.

¹⁹² Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 100.

¹⁹³ Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 99.

¹⁹⁴ Ogereau, “The Jerusalem Collection as *Κοινωνία*,” 377.

¹⁹⁵ Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 107.

to contribute to the Jerusalem collection, not only the socially superior or wealthier members. Barclay speaks of Paul's equality as "less the eradication of hierarchy than its continual inversion" so that honor is redefined to give "prestige to those traits that promote social cohesion and mutual construction" with an ongoing, yet non-competitive, cycle of reciprocity among the Pauline communities as the result.¹⁹⁶ Finally, Seifrid similarly understands *ισότης* in terms of a dynamic reality of exchange of differing goods for differing needs, as opposed to a static understanding of equality.¹⁹⁷

Barclay and Seifrid are correct to highlight that the *ισότης* of Paul's vision maintained the differences that existed among the members of the *ἐκκλησία*, so that the normal structures of worth are transcended but not removed. Such a conception of *ισότης* fits with how the Macedonians and Christ experienced poverty even in the midst of riches. Paul cannot be talking about the maintenance of proportional equality, in which each person receives what he deserves. Nor can Paul be saying that members of the Church should now be homogenized in terms of power and money they possess. Therefore, both Barclay and Seifrid highlight the functional experience of *ισότης* to explain how all needs are met within the new covenant community, Barclay with his notion of the continual reversal of structures and Seifrid with dynamic equality.

Nevertheless, just as God's *χάρις* both enacts a new creation reality and issues in an exhortation to those who have received it to act according to a new ethical system, *ισότης* here involves both an ontological and functional reality. What gives rise to the functional expression

¹⁹⁶ Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 436. In doing so, he builds upon Alain Badiou's "reciprocal asymmetry," which effects a dynamic and ongoing cycle of reciprocity in which "inegalitarian rule" is reversed. This is part of his larger focus upon the incongruity of God's gift, that God gives without regard to the worthiness of the recipient, so that all structural values are turned upside down.

¹⁹⁷ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 334–37.

of *ισότης* described by Paul is the ontological reality enacted by divine *χάρις*, that there is a new *ισότης* of status before God.¹⁹⁸ This status before God overrules any other social markers of worth, whether they included money or prestige. With regards to salvation, all Christians have equal standing and privileges before God. They have received the same *χάρις*. Concurrently, one of the purposes of *χάρις* is to establish the *ισότης* that serves as a chief expression of friendship among Christians in order that their new ontological reality of equal status holds true within the *ἐκκλησία* as well, not simply before God.¹⁹⁹ God enriches all its members so that they have something to give, even in the midst of their poverty. Each person gives according to what he or she has, and his or her “affection” is calculated as “equal,” no matter the quality or “value” of the gift; there is no superior or inferior party.²⁰⁰ With the competitiveness of social status removed, everyone is able to receive sufficiency and to benefit equally.²⁰¹

Within this perspective of *ισότης*, all Christians engage in a balanced friendship. It is because they all hold the same high status in the view of God that they are able to attain this friendship. For the Corinthians, the implications of an equality of social status means that they should not think that they are too good to share their material wealth with the Jerusalem Christians. Friendship is not merely a euphemism for the relationship between superior and

¹⁹⁸ It is distinctively not an economic equality or socialism, as many interpreters have supposed with their focus on the achievement of material equality through the collection.

¹⁹⁹ Faye, “The Nature and Theological Import,” 123; Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 205–6; Johnson, “Making Connections,” 167.

²⁰⁰ The interchange between a static and dynamic equality also gives rise to the matter in which Paul can maintain hierarchical establishments within the church and even in society. It also hints to the manner in which Christians are not “equals” in a traditional power-based sense with God, even as Jesus has elevated Christians to being his “friends.” Ontologically, Christians are friends of God. Functionally, Christians are the slaves of God. Cf. John 15:14–15, where Jesus elevates the status of Christians to friends.

²⁰¹ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 140. “The chiasmic structure, as well as the repetition of the ‘*Stichwort*’ *ισότης* (in vv. 13 and 14), highlights one of the basic principles inherent in reciprocal relationships, although wrapped in the terminology of Paul’s theological reflection, namely that both parties should benefit equally from their social interaction.”

inferior parties. The friendship topos, then, highlights the following repercussions. All Christians, as friends, share in life together. All Christians have something to contribute and to give to the partnership found in friendship. All Christians hold everything in common, in which case they are released from calculations of debt to each other and therefore from the potentially burdensome counter-obligations of a gift economy. All Christians seek the highest good and what is expedient for the group, which is, in this case, advancing the kingdom of heaven.²⁰² Their equality becomes the basis for friendship, peace, concord, community, and dynamic sharing.

The Timing and Content of the Practical Expression of ἰσότης

In 2 Cor 8:14, Paul utilizes a chiasmus to describe the reciprocity that will take place between the Jerusalem and Corinthian believers. This exchange happens due to the equality already established by God's gift of χάρις (ἐξ ἰσότητος, 8:13) while also working to produce equality (ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης).

In the first half of the chiasmus, Paul continues his exhortation to the Corinthians. The fixed expression ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ captures both material and spiritual implications of the Corinthians presently finishing the collection. On the one hand, when found in official documents, the phrase “refers to periods of crisis, such as food shortages or military threats,”²⁰³ so it is appropriate for the Corinthians to aid their friends in Jerusalem in such a time of crisis. On

²⁰² This explanation of ἰσότης coincides well with Paul's Jewish background. Ideally, every Jew was an equally important member of the covenant community, all of which had the responsibility to care for the poor. Meanwhile, the poor still had their own responsibilities towards the community; they still participated in atonement, worship, battle, and so forth. The principles of ideal friendship match up in many ways with the ideal Jewish covenant community.

²⁰³ Danker, *2 Corinthians*, 129, referring to two inscriptions, *SIG* 306.55 and 700.10.

It is entirely possible that the Jerusalem collection was occasioned by a famine or other short-term crisis, so Paul is not simply addressing the long-term alleviation of poverty through communal sharing of property within the church.

the other hand, ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ is eschatological and refers to the new covenant and creation enacted by the Christ-event,²⁰⁴ one manifestation of which is renewed and reconciled social relationships, i.e., friendship. The Christian community now is enabled to live in social and economic harmony, holding all things in common. Though there is a significant difference in understanding the referent of τῷ νῦν καιρῷ as a crisis event or as an eschatological reference, Paul holds the two together. The new covenant and creation have already been enacted, although they are not yet fully realized, and the crisis in Jerusalem provides an urgent opportunity for the Corinthian believers to respond presently as friends. In both these dimensions, the situation is right for the Corinthians to respond immediately with financial gifts to Jerusalem.

In contrast, the reciprocity that Corinth would receive from Jerusalem is less immediately clear. Paul could be explaining that the Jerusalem church shares (1) from their present spiritual abundance²⁰⁵ or (2) from a future material abundance.²⁰⁶ The chiasmus is based on the pronouns (your ... their ... their ... your), rather than then the nouns (abundance ... lack ... abundance ... lack).²⁰⁷ If the parallelism were based upon abundance and lack (your abundance ... their lack ... your lack ... their abundance), then the implied pivot point and significance of the chiasmus would be related to two-way exchange with give-and-take on both sides to establish equality,²⁰⁸ and it would indicate that Paul envisions reciprocity happening now. However, since the chiasmus is structured based on the pronouns, the pivot point is arguably focused on equality and

²⁰⁴ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 415.

²⁰⁵ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 69; Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 142–43; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 444.

²⁰⁶ Cherian, “Toward a Commonwealth of Grace,” 113; McFarland, “The God Who Gives,” 225.

²⁰⁷ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 414.

²⁰⁸ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 68.

the establishment of friendship, rather than material lack or surplus.²⁰⁹ In this case, Paul provides “a formal statement of the principle of equality” without a specific response from Jerusalem in view.²¹⁰ Right now, the Corinthian church holds a monetary surplus, so that is what her members share. In turn, whatever abundance Jerusalem has, she shares with Corinth; this involves spiritual riches now, but it could very well include material wealth later on. In light of the friendship topos, this is the most appropriate perspective on the exchange between equal friends, and it contrasts sharply how the Roman elite would give in order to maintain their power and wealth, to establish societal inequalities.²¹¹ The context of κοινωνία first promotes open sharing. Then, πλεονεξία, which Paul develops further in 9:5–6, is the opposite of friendship; the Corinthians do not need to be so calculating in regard to whether they will suffer loss. Instead, they need to extend benefits to the Jerusalem saints as equal friends, with faith in God the Ultimate Giver and with faith in their friends that their needs would also be filled.

Paul’s Citation of Exodus 16:18

With the use of the Exodus manna narrative, Paul finishes his rhetorical unit on equality by clarifying the type of ἰσότης he envisions the covenant people of God to have. A citation formula in 8:15 clearly introduces Exod 16:18, which draws upon the larger narrative of Exod 16:11–36.

2 Corinthians 8:15²¹²

²⁰⁹ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 141, nears a similar conclusion. “Therefore, in verse 14 Paul implies that this principle of equality could be fully realised, only within the parameters of a long-term balanced reciprocal relationship, where the duties and responses of both benefactors and recipients were viewed as of equal importance.”

²¹⁰ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 420.

²¹¹ Richard Gordon, “The Veil of Power,” in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 132.

²¹² Citations (from the LXX, with verbatim citation in **bold**, related words underlined)

καθὼς γέγραπται: **ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν.**

Exodus 16:18

καὶ μετρήσαντες τῷ γομορ **οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν ὁ τὸ πολὺ, καὶ ὁ τὸ ἔλαττον οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν,** ἕκαστος εἰς τοὺς καθήκοντας παρὸ ἐαυτῷ συνέλεξαν.

Paul uses the LXX of the verse, first omitting the opening phrase, καὶ μετρήσαντες τῷ γομορ.

This serves to bring the Corinthians' focus to the central and most relevant point of the whole narrative, "the equality of Yahweh's provision for his people."²¹³ Two other changes may be noted: (1) Paul moves ὁ τὸ πολὺ to the beginning of the sentence, and (2) he uses ὀλίγον, the opposite of πολὺ, in place of ἔλαττον. These two differences create a more exact parallelism between the two clauses.

A number of interpretations of Paul's use of Exod 16 lead to the conclusion that the Corinthians were now responsible to enforce equality voluntarily, rather through miraculous and divine means as with the manna.²¹⁴ Nonetheless, this is a false dichotomy, and Paul holds together the transformative work of God's grace and human accountability, in the same way that the manna tradition within the Hebrew Bible and within post-biblical Jewish texts does. These narratives demonstrate "God's consistent and gracious provisions to an often unbelieving and ungrateful people" and his miracle of sufficiency so that there was neither overabundance nor scarcity, but also his reinforcement of Sabbath observance and establishment of opportunities for the Israelites to demonstrate faith in God and obedience to him.²¹⁵

²¹³ Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, SNTSMS 74 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 231.

²¹⁴ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 594.

²¹⁵ Cherian, "Toward a Commonwealth of Grace," 170–75; Stephen A. Geller, "Manna and Sabbath: A Literary-Theological Reading of Exodus 16," *Int* 59 (2005): 10; Barclay, "Manna and the Circulation of Grace," 412.

The other Hebrew Bible texts that reflect the manna tradition include Num 11; Deut 8:2–6; Josh 5:12; Neh 9:6–38; and Pss 78, 105. Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.199, reinforces the idea that God gave exactly what was sufficient,

Exodus 16 illustrates the tension between God’s and man’s work with its lesson regarding manna and the Sabbath.²¹⁶ As though God’s provision of the manna did not already push the ordinary bounds of creation, the gathering of manna differed for the sake of the seventh day—the Israelites were to gather twice as much on the sixth day, the leftover manna would not spoil, and no manna would appear on the Sabbath. As with the Gen 1–2:4 creation narrative, “God completed his work by ceasing.”²¹⁷ The significance of this parallel, that God invites the Israelites to rest as well, is that the Israelites, by following God’s directives with regard to manna on the Sabbath, “mimic God’s negative but creative act of ceasing,” “become imitators of the divine action,” and partner with God in his ongoing creative process to enact his vision for the world.²¹⁸ The “manna economy” shapes both a new identity for the Israelites and a new paradigm for the way they live; the manna narratives invite them to trust God as their ruler and to participate in bringing God’s way of life to the nations.²¹⁹

The manna narratives reinforce the parallels between the Israelites and the Corinthians. Just as the Israelites had to follow the directives of God regardless of miraculous equalizations, the Corinthians’ faith was also tested with respect to whether or not they gave to the collection. Parallel to the manner in which God’s χάρις materialized in the form of manna for the Israelites, the Corinthians were to show proof of their love through their material possessions. The issue

enough that everyone could eat but not so much that the people could hoard. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.29–30, draws upon Exod 16:18 in order to explain that the Hebrews were to “gather the manna equally,” each an omer, so that even the weaker members of the assembly could get their share without competing against stronger members.

²¹⁶ Exod 16:22–30.

²¹⁷ Geller, “Manna and Sabbath,” 13.

²¹⁸ Geller, “Manna and Sabbath,” 14.

²¹⁹ Ann Fristchel, “Exodus 16 as an Alternative Social Paradigm,” *CurTM* 41 (2014): 38.

here is whether God’s people will trust in his provisions²²⁰ and “whether one gathers as God had instructed them (Exod. 16.4).”²²¹ As the new people of the exodus, the Corinthians have a new identity and a new way of life. They have more material resources available to them than they needed, so the collection provides them with the opportunity to use their “manna” in a way characteristic of a new social order, “illustrative of a community of friends, not clients and patrons” and “illustrative of what may be called ‘a manna economy.’”²²² The Corinthians are afforded the opportunity to participate in God’s giving and to help effect his kingdom order on earth. In such a context in which God provides enough for everyone to thrive if each person guards against hoarding, which would always be to the detriment of others, the Israelites and Corinthians now can relate to others within their respective communities in generosity and trust, just as ideal friends would.²²³ Hoarding results in loss, failure to heed God’s instructions causes a dearth of resources, but faithfulness results in all having enough and without anyone having a claim of superiority over anyone else.

The Christological formula in 2 Cor 8:9 and the story of manna in 8:15 together steer attention to how “the Corinthians have become rich because of *someone else’s* sacrificial giving,”

²²⁰ Scott J. Hafemann, “Paul’s Use of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians,” *Int* 52 (1998): 253; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 338.

²²¹ Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 123.

²²² Allen Verhey, *Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 296–97. Verhey explains that the “manna economy” entails an economy in which “hoarding is futile, loafing is foolish, daily needs are met, and God is trusted to provide.” He then applies it the situation of the collection and the Corinthians. “To remember Jesus is to hope for a manna economy. It is to participate in a community of friends that transcends the verticality of Roman society and the divide between Jews and Gentiles. It is to share in a community of voluntary fellowship where the needs of any are met out of the abundance of others (2 Cor. 8:14). To remember Jesus is to be a community where the poor are already blessed, already welcomed, included, and honored” (297).

²²³ The willingness to supply other’s needs is a demonstration in God’s sufficient provision, and Paul’s later citations from Ps 111:9 LXX and Prov 22:8 LXX help prove this. Hafemann, “Paul’s Use of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians,” 253.

and, “their wealth is ultimately not their own.”²²⁴ Significantly, Exod 16:18 indicates that every Israelite had an omer of manna, despite how much they gathered. Whether they gather little or much was irrelevant. The human work aspect is irrelevant to how much each individual possessed. Everything centers upon God’s action and gift, but there is room for each individual to rebel against God’s instructions and therefore fail to enjoy God’s miraculous provision to its full extent.

There is a sort of reverse parallelism here with the situations of the Macedonians and the Corinthians. On one hand, the Macedonians give much in that they give beyond their ability. They do not necessarily “gain” much from their extraordinary effort. From the opposite perspective, their net giving is not much, but it still counts as sufficient. On the other hand, the Corinthians are reluctant to give and to finish the project, perhaps because they cannot come up with as abundant a gift as they had originally imagined. What they have to give is enough. Even though this total gift likely would still exceed that of the Macedonians, the Corinthians have no advantage. In the end, the Macedonians and Corinthians both have equally experienced and responded to God’s χάρις if they participate in the collection. Meanwhile, if the Corinthians choose not to give, then they would be missing out on God’s χάρις entirely. The manna narrative does detail that the people who disobediently failed to gather twice the amount they normally did on the day before Sabbath went hungry. Those who did not gather did not miraculously have enough; they went without.

The Gift-Delegation (8:16–23)

Paul’s commendation and authorization of the envoys being sent to Corinth is found in 2

²²⁴ Wan, “Collection for the Saints as Anticolonial Act,” 213.

Cor 8:16–23.²²⁵ The convention of recommendation letter writing (συστατική ἐπιτολή) is grounded socially in the technical language of friendship,²²⁶ and the ultimate purpose of the delegation was to promote concord and friendship. They were to help the Corinthians finish the collection and to display a singleness of purpose and unity of heart. The stellar character of Titus and the two brothers embodied friendship and the work of the gospel in their lives.²²⁷

The Character of the Envoy

Paul commends Titus and the two brothers with descriptions of their merit, qualities that are rooted in the χάρις of God and qualify them to be entrusted with the task of delivering the collection. Moreover, having a good reputation was an important factor in being able to procure good friends,²²⁸ and this envoy consisted of reputable men. Paul’s praise of the men seeks to procure the goodwill of the Corinthians, but also to encourage the Corinthians to allow the χάρις of God to move their behavior in the appropriate direction, just as it had for the delegation.

More specifically, Titus has a God-given σπουδή towards the Corinthians and the collection,²²⁹ so he came voluntarily and willingly to help the Corinthians complete the

²²⁵ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 417.

²²⁶ L. Michael White, “Morality between Two Worlds: A Paradigm of Friendship in Philipians,” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeke (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 211. He asserts that the moral paradigm of friendship provides the “semantic fields for the social conventions of patronage, hospitality, and letters of recommendation, as well as consensual contracts and commercial exchange.”

²²⁷ Dio Chrysostom, *Fel., Alex., 2 Tars., Nicom., Nicaeaen., Conc. Apam., Apam.*; and Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 23, 24, feature speeches on the theme of concord by rhetors who acted as ambassadors to negotiate treaties or to establish civic unity and friendship. Plutarch, *Praec. ger. rei publ.* 824D, says that the chief goal of the diplomat is “to instil concord and friendship ... and to remove strifes, discords, and all enmity.”

²²⁸ Cicero, *Quinct.* 49; *Rosc. com.* 16.

²²⁹ 2 Cor 8:17.

collection.²³⁰ The first unnamed brother has received ἐπαινός throughout the churches²³¹ and has been appointed by the churches to help administer the act of χάρις, observations that Paul utilizes to involve Corinth in the larger ἐκκλησία.²³² The second unnamed brother has been tested and also shown to be ἐν πολλοῖς πολλάκις σπουδαῖον ὄντα.²³³ Titus is Paul’s friend as κοινωνός and συνεργός, and so he is also friend with the Corinthians.²³⁴ Finally, the brothers reflect or “promote” the glory of God, which again points to the work of the collection as a “work of divine grace.”²³⁵ As appropriate within the benefaction system and with the acknowledgment that all gifts are rooted in God’s initial gift of χάρις, all glory returns to God, not to any human participants in the collection. Following the same vein, the collection benefits both “those who give as well as to those who receive (8:4), as a genuine ‘work of grace.’”²³⁶ This framework removes the need for Christians to compete or strive against each other to gain more honor.

Accountability through the Envoy

That Titus and brothers are trustworthy is especially important in light of the Corinthian mistrust of Paul in financial matters. In 8:20–21, Paul states his concern to avoid suspicion of

²³⁰ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 597, highlights the link between 2 Cor 8:15 and 16. “The same God who gave the Israelites manna in the wilderness gave Titus a zealous devotion for the Corinthians; Titus’s σπουδή, like the Israelites’ manna, was supernaturally supplied.” Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 341, further notes a connection between Titus’ voluntary coming to the Corinthians here and the Macedonians’ voluntary participation in the collection in 8:1–4.

²³¹ 2 Cor 8:18.

²³² Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 342.

²³³ 2 Cor 8:22.

²³⁴ 2 Cor 8:23.

²³⁵ 2 Cor 8:19, 23; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:555.

²³⁶ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 433.

fraud or personal profit from the collection, mirroring Cicero’s sentiment that “the chief thing in all public administration and public service is avoiding even the slightest suspicion of self-seeking.”²³⁷ Paul makes clear to the Corinthians that he is seeking to strengthen the trust between them and to prove himself a genuine friend; he is not merely a flatterer with an end goal of his personal profit. In fact, Paul redirects attention away from money by referring to wealth metaphorically. He employs here the term ἀδρότης to reflect on God’s provision of agricultural bounty.²³⁸ The focus is on remaining in relationship with the God who gives these blessings, on allowing the collection to honor God.

Arguably, 2 Cor 8:21 contains a citation of Prov 3:4 and closes the section and sentence about the first unnamed brother being sent to accompany Titus.

2 Corinthians 8:21

προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων.

Proverbs 3:4

καὶ προνοοῦ καλὰ ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων.

Based on the preceding verse in Prov 3:3, Paul’s adaptation of this passage includes emphases on charity and loyalty, two qualities important in reciprocal relationships and in Paul’s admonitions to the Corinthians.²³⁹ Foremost, Proverbs instructs that one should hold fast to acts of charity and loyalty to find favor from God. Moreover, the broader context of the chapter involves the command to trust God,²⁴⁰ is a process that involves remembering his

²³⁷ Cicero, *Off.* 2.75.

²³⁸ The term ἀδρότης reflects a “fatness” (ἀδρός) and expresses an abundance.

²³⁹ Jim Wilson, “The Old Testament Sacrificial Context of 2 Corinthians 8–9,” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the IBR, Atlanta, 20 November 2015), 24.

²⁴⁰ Prov 3:5. This echoes the command to trust God for daily provision in 2 Cor 8:15.

commandments,²⁴¹ honoring him with one's wealth,²⁴² and responding appropriately to his discipline.²⁴³ These themes would resonate with the Corinthians. If the Corinthians trust God and remember his provision for them, then their lives reflect their trust in practical ways. Honoring God with their wealth results in plenty and sufficiency. In the meantime, Paul and the envoy will reflect the appropriate behavior of God's people; their desire to administer the collection admirably points to their trust in God and good intent to not manipulate others for their own personal gain. The individuals in the delegation all have demonstrated the outworking of the gospel in their lives. They call the Corinthians to behave similarly, as friends.

The Bridge (8:24)

Paul concludes his letter of commendation with a direct appeal to the Corinthians in 8:24.²⁴⁴ The appeal in 8:24 bridges the preceding and proceeding sections of the letter. Titus and the messengers are delegates of Paul and representatives of the churches. Thus, the Corinthian completion of the collection also represents their acceptance of and friendship with Paul, the other churches, and Christ.²⁴⁵

In this verse, the verb ἐνδείκνυμι is paired with the noun ἐνδειξις to create paronomasia.²⁴⁶ The participle ἐνδεικνύμενοι is often translated with imperatival force,²⁴⁷ but Paul does not demand that the Corinthians participate in the collection. His entreaty is that they give

²⁴¹ Prov 3:1.

²⁴² Prov 3:9.

²⁴³ Prov 3:11.

²⁴⁴ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 595; Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 175.

²⁴⁵ Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, 229.

²⁴⁶ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 427.

²⁴⁷ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 425; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 458; and BDF §468 explain it as a Semitism. Even though it does not fit the typical usage of the Hebrew participle with imperatival force, the textual variants and opposing voices still find other reason to translate it that same way; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:556.

proof before the other churches of how divine χάρις has worked in their lives.

The Corinthian evidence of their confession of the gospel looks backward at Paul's boasting to Titus and the two brothers, and it looks forward towards his boasting about them to Macedonia. The delegation has served as friends to the Corinthians, having shown evidence of their reception of διακαιοσύνη from Christ and the outworking of divine χάρις. To prove themselves as equal friends, there is the expectation that the Corinthians demonstrate the same character in return.²⁴⁸ They should be as eager to participate in the collection as the envoy is towards finishing the project with them. Titus and the two brothers additionally serve as witnesses of the Corinthians' demonstration of love and ensure that the collection is conducted properly so that Corinth does not become inferior to Jerusalem.²⁴⁹

Paul's Pride in the Corinthians (9:1–5)

This section turns to the envoy's purpose of helping the Corinthians finish the collection prior to Paul's arrival with the Macedonians.²⁵⁰ Paul does not want the Corinthians to be discouraged or to have their eagerness to participate in the collection dampened because he has

²⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156b8–24, 8.4.1157b1–3; cf. *Mag. mor.* 2.11.1209b12–16. One of the bases of friendship is likeness, and the most ideal form of friendship is between people who are alike in being virtuous.

²⁴⁹ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 340.

²⁵⁰ Since Hans Windisch, *Der Zweite Korintherbrief*, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 278–88, proposed that 2 Cor 8 and 9 are independent letters, other scholars have built upon this argument in various ways. One of the most convincing defenses of their separate compositions comes from Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 90, based on the contention that *περὶ μὲν χάρις* is a rhetorical device, a denial, to indicate that a subject has become tiresome. However, 9:1 provides grammatical evidence that points to the continuation of chapter 8. First, although *περὶ* often introduces a new topic in Paul's writing, here it is paired with *μὲν χάρις*. The phrase as a whole finds parallel with Demosthenes' use of *καὶ περὶ μὲν* to introduce an apologetic observation in his speech *Cor.* 50 and can be translated as “now, of course” (Danker, *2 Corinthians*, 135). This means that the reader “can expect a modified explanation to balance a preceding statement” (Shillington, *2 Corinthians*, 191). It signals that Paul's main point in the next few verses is the Corinthian reception of and preparation for the delegation in light of Paul's boasting, not their contribution or liberality (Stanley K. Stowers, “Peri Men Gar and the Integrity of 2 Cor. 8 and 9,” *NovT* 32 [1990]: 347).

sent the delegation in his stead to assist with the collection.²⁵¹ For that reason, he begins with an affirmation of his pride in the Corinthians and their zeal for the project.

Paul's *καύχησις*

The theme of *καύχησις* first arises in 2 Cor 8:24 and continues in 9:2–5.²⁵² The present tense of *καυχῶμαι* in 9:2 indicates that Paul is still boasting to the other Christians about the Corinthian *προθυμία* and *ζήλος*,²⁵³ and the content of Paul's boasting is an appeal to Corinthian honor and a strong motivating factor for them to complete the collection.²⁵⁴ The Corinthians will not want to gain a bad reputation for themselves, or even to shame Paul, by failing to fulfill their previous promise and by showing themselves unworthy of his claims.²⁵⁵ For this reason, Titus and his two unnamed companions now will arrive in Corinth before the Macedonians to help them finish their contribution.

Paul here additionally takes up the other half of the reciprocal boasting topos for concord and friendship, that it was the Corinthian zeal that prompted much of the Achaian response to the Jerusalem collection.²⁵⁶ Meanwhile, that the Corinthians prompted the Macedonian giving with

²⁵¹ Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology*, 221.

²⁵² Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 428.

²⁵³ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 621.

²⁵⁴ Dio Chrysostom, *Conc. Apam.* 3–4. “For there is nothing more weighty, no debt bearing higher interest, than a favour promised. Moreover, this is the shameful and bitter kind of loan, when, as one might say, because of tardy payment the favour turns into an obligation, an obligation the settlement of which those who keep silent demand altogether more sternly than those who cry aloud. For nothing has such power to remind those who owe you such obligations as your having utterly forgotten them”

²⁵⁵ Austgen, *Natural Motivation in the Pauline Epistles*, 92.

²⁵⁶ Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 23. The first part of the reciprocal boasting took place at the beginning of 2 Cor 8 with Paul's description of the Macedonians. This allows for Paul's boasting about the Macedonians and Corinthians to be consistent, contra Michel Quesnel, “Circonstances de Composition de la Seconde Epitre aux Corinthiens,” *NTS* 43 (1997): 261.

their eagerness means that Paul is making them “equals.”²⁵⁷ This further minimizes any competitive rivalry between the two groups; they are to relate in friendship.

The Corinthian Contribution as an εὐλογία

The “gift” is designated as a εὐλογία, which is likely a word play on λογεία.²⁵⁸ Though in Greek usage εὐλογία generally means “fame” or blessing,” often associated with the result of generosity,²⁵⁹ the Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible are thought to have influenced this term’s meaning in the New Testament more than Greek culture.²⁶⁰ This bears two points of significance. First, the Septuagint uses the verb form εὐλογεῖν in reference to man’s response of praise and thanksgiving to God as a result of his experience of divine grace.²⁶¹ Paul here anticipates the theme of the next session, how any Corinthian fulfillment of their promised “blessing” finds its origin in God’s χάρις. Second, the Septuagint uses εὐλογία in several instances to express something presented from one party in honor of their relationship, so Paul establishes a connection between friendship and the collection gift with his choice of the word.²⁶² Therefore, Paul’s description of the Corinthians’ contribution to the collection as εὐλογία indicates that it is (1) a blessing to all its participants, (2) a natural response to reception of God’s χάρις, and (3) a symbol representing the friendship between the Gentile and Jewish Christian communities.

²⁵⁷ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 348.

²⁵⁸ The word λογεία is used to designate the collection in 1 Cor 16:1.

²⁵⁹ Danker, *2 Corinthians*, 137.

²⁶⁰ Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, “εὐλογέω, εὐλογία,” *TDNT* 2:754–63.

²⁶¹ Beyer, *TDNT* 2:759.

²⁶² Gen 33:11; Josh 15:19; Judg 1:15; 1 Sam 25:27; 2 Kgs 5:15; Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity,” 157; cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 428; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 93.

Avoidance of πλεονεξία

Within this section, Paul warns that the Corinthian gift is at risk of becoming ὡς πλεονεξίαν, “affected by covetousness,” in contrast to being ὡς εὐλογίαν. Here, Paul is not talking about greed on his part, but on that of the Corinthians. It is not that Paul is extorting or compelling the Corinthians inappropriately to contribute to the collection so that he appears to be exacting money in a covetous way.²⁶³ Rather, it is that the Corinthians are in danger of hindering the χάρις of God and of inhibiting ἰσότης, by “always wanting more than one’s position and attainments warrant.”²⁶⁴ Paul’s catalogues of sins of unbelief often contain πλεονεξία,²⁶⁵ likely because a desire to have more is at odds with a life that trusts God for sufficient provision.

In the broader Greek context, the antithesis of ἰσότης is πλεονεξία,²⁶⁶ and so πλεονεξία is directly opposed to friendship. It often leads to στάσις, which is a disruption of the stability of a community or πόλις.²⁶⁷ Within this context, πλεονεξία occurs mainly in two forms of papyri, regulatory decrees and petitions, where it refers unsurprisingly not only to “greed” but also to self-serving individuals.²⁶⁸ While “material wealth was perhaps the supreme social value in popular morality,” it “was often negatively regarded in moral teaching because of its close association with the vice, greed – πλεονεξία and φιλοχρηματία.”²⁶⁹

²⁶³ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 439.

²⁶⁴ Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity,” 159. In contrast, the issue is not one in which the greediness is attributed to Paul, as though he is trying to secure the Corinthian participation in the collection through exhortation.

The etymological meaning of πλεονεξία is evident in its construction, πλεὸν ἔχειν, which belies the desire to “have more.”

²⁶⁵ Rom 1:29; Eph 4:19; 5:3; Col 3:5.

²⁶⁶ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 6; Menander, *Mon.* 259; Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 154.

²⁶⁷ Plato, *Rep.* 372b–c, 470b; Aristotle, *Pol.* 5.1.1301a20–2.1303b17.

²⁶⁸ Arzt-Grabner, *2 Korinther*, 431.

²⁶⁹ Chang, “Fund-Raising in Corinth,” 208; cf. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 25; Seneca, *Ep.* 19.7: “Would you rather be poor and sated, or rich and hungry? Prosperity is not only greedy, but it also

One point of the previous rhetorical unit about the envoy led by Titus to help the Corinthians finish the collection was to call their attention back towards friendship, fellowship, and unity with the other churches and towards the pursuit of their “common good.”²⁷⁰ It also makes sense to understand *πλεονεξία* as Paul picking back up on his reference to Exod 16:18 in 2 Cor 8:15, where the meaning of *πλεονάζω* is “have too much.” The Israelites who “had too much” had their amounts of manna miraculously adjusted to what they needed. The Corinthians likewise had no need of excess, especially when considering the situation of the Jerusalem church. A “desire to have more” would be inappropriate of friends and of the members of the Christian covenant community. The Corinthian love for their friends in Jerusalem should override any love they have for wealth and any desire they have to hoard it.²⁷¹

The Corinthians may choose to give with the attitude of either generosity or with greediness.²⁷² As Betz explains,

A gift of blessing is given in response to blessings received, while greed represents a failure to respond in kind, owing to one’s failure to receive anything as a gift... Greed is identical with ingratitude, and signifies stubbornness and immobility, in contrast to the whole chain of activities set in motion by the gift of blessing: receiving, enjoying, and giving.²⁷³

Unlike the typical Greco-Roman cycle of benefits between two parties, the exchange here

lies exposed to the greed of others. And as long as nothing satisfies you, you yourself cannot satisfy others.”

²⁷⁰ For Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.9.1160a8–20, each kind of friendship involves cooperation to accomplish common, mutually beneficial goals. For Paul, however, the common good no longer is merely the maximization of social utility but instead entails a *κοινωνία* in Christ that is initiated and sustained through the vertical and horizontal communication of the *χάρις* of God. Again, God initiates the giving of *χάρις* to his people, which in turn enables and prompts those recipients to allow that same *χάρις* to flow horizontally to others.

²⁷¹ Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 573; Chang, “Fund-Raising in Corinth,” 209; Plutarch, *Frat. amor.* 479A, 482E.

²⁷² Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 630.

²⁷³ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 97.

involves three participants—Corinth, Jerusalem, and God—and is driven by God’s χάρις.²⁷⁴ The Corinthians have received χάρις from God, and now they are invited to respond to that blessing with participation in the collection, an act of χάρις as well, to benefit the members of the Jerusalem church. The normal expectation would be that Corinth should give back to God directly, the one who originally bestowed blessings upon them. However, God needs nothing; his giving places no demands for a return.²⁷⁵ Rather, the purpose of his gift is to invite his recipients to renewed relationship, both with him and with other people.²⁷⁶

This dimension of God’s χάρις establishes friendship among Christians; the new creation reality is characterized by such ισότης and sufficiency because all its members operate on the basis of trust in God’s provision and subsequent cooperation with each other. The Corinthians can respond appropriately to God’s χάρις with more χάρις, an act that would strengthen the bonds of friendship with other Christians. Alternatively, they could respond with πλεονεξία, grasping in order to gain more than their share through the calculated measurement of unequal reciprocity. A response of πλεονεξία would be a rejection of the divine gift and a sign of ingratitude,²⁷⁷ and it would cause lack for the other churches.²⁷⁸

God’s Gifts (9:6–15)

In this final part of Paul’s collection text in 2 Corinthians, he roots the entire project, the collection as a gift ὡς εὐλογίαν from the previous section, in the abundance of God’s gifts. Together, God’s gifts of χάρις, material provision, and δικαιοσύνη provide the orienting guide

²⁷⁴ Seneca, *Ben.* 1.3.2–4.6.

²⁷⁵ Philo, *Cherubim* 122–23; Clement, *Strom.* 2.6; 5.11; 7.3; 7.6.

²⁷⁶ Oswald Bayer and Mark A. Seifrid, “The Ethics of Gift,” *LQ* 24 (210): 460, 462.

²⁷⁷ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 97.

²⁷⁸ Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 8–11; Clement, *Paed.* 2.3 and *Strom.* 7.12 together.

for not only how the Corinthians should relate vertically back to God, but also horizontally among Christian believers, i.e., in friendship. Everything that Paul writes returns to the gospel and the new creation realities being brought about by that gospel. The spiritual and material impacts of the gospel are inseparable, with the result that, as a result of friendship in Christ, gift and reciprocity are transformed from being self-focused to being other-oriented.

Paul utilizes and transforms three Hellenistic *topoi* common to discussions of benevolence. First, he grounds willing, generous giving as pleasing to God, as it acknowledges God as the source of all which one has and demonstrates trust in God for daily provision. Second, he reveals that God responds to givers with an ἀντάρκεια that promotes interconnectedness, as opposed to “the self-sufficiency of independent human discipline.” Third, the appropriate response of gratitude to the giver is directed always to God, the Ultimate Giver, rather than the Corinthians, who serve as human intermediary givers.²⁷⁹

God’s Gift of Creation

In 2 Cor 9, the collection is depicted as rooted in the action of God in creation, and the agricultural motifs acknowledge God as the source of all growth and prosperity.²⁸⁰ These agricultural metaphors in 9:6–10 reinforce the inherent equality of humankind by pointing to

²⁷⁹ Bart B. Bruehler, “Proverbs, Persuasion and People: A Three-Dimensional Investigation of 2 Cor 9.6–15.” *NTS* 48 (2002): 223.

²⁸⁰ Klein, “Die Begründung für den Spendenaufruf,” 129.

Philo additionally repeats the idea throughout his writings that God is the cause of all things, all of which are good, and that he is the Maker of the Universe (*Moses* 1.157; *Spec. Laws* 1.294–95; *Names* 28; *Cherubim* 84). In the same goodness that spurs his creative work, God chooses to benefit others generously and excessively. All creation is a gift from God, and all humans need God’s benefactions, even as they lack the ability to add or return anything back to God (*Spec. Laws* 1.152; *Worse* 54–55; *Drunkenness* 117–19). Nevertheless, Philo maintains the expectation that humans ought to be good stewards of what they have been entrusted by God and that God designed creation to require reciprocity and fellowship (*Cherubim* 117–118). In a similar way, Paul here connects God as the creator and source of all things to how the Corinthian Christians should now act as friends and extend their hand openly to the saints in Jerusalem.

God as the creator and provider of all sustenance to man.²⁸¹ Humankind cannot flourish and be fruitful apart from God.²⁸² Furthermore, this concept of God as creator grounds Paul's assertion that the Corinthians have no claim to status or superiority; God has been generous to the Corinthians as the supplier of all their material needs and possessions, and he has given them everything that they have.²⁸³ The instructions in this section additionally center around the concept of ἀπλότης;²⁸⁴ this key term again emphasizes the manner in which God enables generosity²⁸⁵ and, subsequently, "the results of generosity, the benefits of generous giving."²⁸⁶

Paul's first of the agricultural metaphors, reaping and sowing, was a common one in antiquity often used to equate "fruit" with "profit" and, more importantly, was used to describe benefaction and reciprocity.²⁸⁷

2 Corinthians 9:6

Τοῦτο δέ, ὁ στείρων φειδομένως φειδομένως καὶ θερίσει, καὶ ὁ στείρων ἐπ' εὐλογίαις ἐπ' εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει.

²⁸¹ Klein, "Die Begründung für den Spendenaufruf," 109.

²⁸² 1 Cor 3:6.

²⁸³ 1 Cor 4:7.

²⁸⁴ 2 Cor 9:11, 12.

²⁸⁵ Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 446.

²⁸⁶ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 631.

²⁸⁷ The reaping and sowing metaphor is found in Plato, *Phaedr.* 260c–d; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.3.1406b; Cicero, *De or.* 2.261; and Philo, *Confusion* 152, *Names* 269, *Embassy* 293. Within the Hebrew Bible, similar sayings are found in Job 4:8; Prov 11:18b; Prov 11:25; Prov 22:8; and 3 Bar 15:3.

Aristotle merely refers to sowing and reaping as a proverb. However, the rest of these texts feature the metaphor in terms of reciprocity. Sowing and reaping appear in Plato's *Phaedrus* in the midst of a conversation about how an orator must know good from bad in order to be a good speaker; the orator will reap "no very good harvest" if he has convinced a crowd to pursue evil that he has praised as good. In Cicero, the metaphor appears to explain that if one man speaks against another, he will be reviled in return. Philo's utilization of the sowing and reaping metaphor appears in his analysis of the Tower of Babel in *Confusion* ("having sown injustice, they reaped impiety"), in his description of the agricultural blessings reaped by the one who sows the gifts of God in *Names*, and in his detailing of how Agrippa and Augustus even knew to pay honor to the temple in *Embassy* ("they took good care not to sow the seed of impiety, lest they should be compelled to reap its fruits which bring utter destruction"). The citations from the Hebrew Bible, meanwhile, all continue to emphasize that the one who sows injustice, iniquity, or calamity, likewise sow; the one who sows virtuously reaps a reward.

Proverbs 11:24

εἰσὶν οἱ τὰ ἴδια **σπεύροντες** πλείονα ποιοῦσιν, εἰσὶν καὶ οἱ συνάγοντες ἐλαττονοῦνται.

Proverbs 22:8

ὁ σπεύρων φαύλα **θερίσει** κακά, πληγὴν δὲ ἔργων αὐτοῦ συντελέσει.

Although Paul could be said to be drawing from the general metaphor, and although NA²⁸ identifies 2 Cor 9:6 as an allusion to Prov 11:24, it is most likely that Paul has Prov 22:8 in mind. Not only does Prov 22:8 feature better parallels with word order and vocabulary, but Harris and Seifrid also point out that Paul continues in 2 Cor 9:7 to allude to the next sentence in Proverbs.²⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the larger context of Prov 22 centers suitably upon the importance of a good name and good favor over and above wealth.

The meaning of Τοῦτο δέ in 2 Cor 9:6 is, “the point is this.”²⁸⁹ While Seneca is concerned with the proper human recipient who displays virtue, likely has wealth of his own, and will demonstrate gratitude for a benefit,²⁹⁰ Paul is focused on the goal of blessing others. In this verse, φειδομένως and ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις are parallel adverbial terms that indicate the proper attitude in giving.²⁹¹ This attitude remains concerned with the gift’s effect on the recipients, so the manner and measure in which the Corinthians give determines the benefits and results of their gift, in terms of what both the Corinthians themselves and the saints in Jerusalem will experience.²⁹²

After the maxim present in verse 6, Paul continues to develop his emphasis on the inner orientation of the giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

²⁸⁸ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 634; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 353n112.

²⁸⁹ Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:573; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 469.

²⁹⁰ For Seneca, *Ben.* 4.9.2, sowing is never a disinterested act, “since even the farmer does not commit his seeds to sand.” In *Ben.* 1.10.4–5, he discusses that the proper recipient demonstrates gratitude.

²⁹¹ Bruehler, “Proverbs, Persuasion and People,” 213.

²⁹² Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 353; Bruehler, “Proverbs, Persuasion and People,” 214; Seneca *Ben.* 1.1.8, 2.1.2.

ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται **τῇ καρδίᾳ**, μὴ ἐκ **λύπης** ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης· **ἰλαρὸν** γὰρ **δότην** ἀγαπᾷ **ὁ θεός**.

Deuteronomy 15:10

διδούς δώσεις αὐτῷ καὶ δάνειον δανιεῖς αὐτῷ ὅσον ἐπιδέεται, καὶ οὐ **λυπηθήσῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ** σου διδόντος σου αὐτῷ, ὅτι διὰ τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο εὐλογήσει σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου ἐν πάσιν τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ ἐν πάσιν, οὐ ἂν ἐπιβάλης τὴν χεῖρά σου.

Proverbs 22:8a

ἄνδρα **ἰλαρὸν** καὶ **δότην** εὐλογεῖ **ὁ θεός**, ματαιότητα δὲ ἔργων αὐτοῦ συντελέσει.

2 Cor 9:7a–b again emphasizes willingness in giving with the location of the intention in the **καρδία** and with the term προήρηται, “to choose deliberately.” In the Hebrew Bible, in Judaism and early Christianity, and also in Greek philosophy after Chrysippus, the heart was regarded as the place where plans and decisions were made.²⁹³ Meanwhile, the verb προαιρέω calls to mind the noun form προαίρεσις. Aristotle utilizes προαίρεσις for a “free act of moral choice,”²⁹⁴ which bears resemblance to Epictetus’ discourse on the freedom of decision to assent to truth and reject what is false,²⁹⁵ and an honorable benefactor was often described with this term for “giving ‘freely’ without compulsion.”²⁹⁶ Accordingly, for Aristotle, generosity is judged according to the spirit with which a gift was given, not according to the amount or value of the gift.²⁹⁷ The virtuous person gives liberally and experiences pleasure in doing so, since the act of giving itself is a

²⁹³ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 105; Friedrich Baumgärtel and Johannes Behm, “καρδία,” *TDNT* 3:605–13; Seneca, *Ep.* 81.30: “nothing is more honourable than a grateful heart”; Hesiod, *Op.* 357–60: “For whatever a man gives willingly, even if it is much, he rejoices in the gift and takes pleasure in his spirit; but whoever snatches, relying upon shamelessness, this conceals his own heart, even if it is little.”

²⁹⁴ David J. Williams, *Paul’s Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 39, 47; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 3.3.1113a9–13.

²⁹⁵ Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.17.21; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 95.

²⁹⁶ Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 213; cf. Seneca, *Ben.* 2.2.2; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 4.74; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:577; Charles H. Talbert, “Money Management in Early Mediterranean Christianity: 2 Corinthians 8–9,” *RevExp* 86 (1989): 366.

²⁹⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.1.1120b7–11.

virtue and thereby cannot cause pain.²⁹⁸ Hesiod likewise speaks of willing giving as joyful and delightful for the giver,²⁹⁹ and Seneca of the need for one to give a benefit spontaneously and quickly so that it maintains the appearance of a gift and not as an extortion from oneself.³⁰⁰

The connection of the two terms καρδία and λυπή in 9:7 may allude to Deut 15:10 LXX. With similar vocabulary and inverted word order, Wilson suggests that 2 Cor 9:7a is a calque of the verse,³⁰¹ found within the instructions on the sabbatical year and in the context of possible scarcity from allowing the fields to rest every seventh year.³⁰² The Deut 15:10 allusion indicates that, “giving under compulsion is regretful giving,” a thought reiterated and confirmed by the following Prov 22:8a allusion.³⁰³

Paul alters the LXX text in Prov 22:8a to avoid reluctant or pressured giving, most notably altering the verb so that God ἀγαπᾷ in 2 Corinthians, although he εὐλογεῖ in Proverbs. While both gnomic present verbs inherently offer axiomatic realities,³⁰⁴ a number of reasons are proposed for Paul’s change from εὐλογεῖ to ἀγαπᾷ, roughly divided into (1) whether Paul was drawing upon a later verse³⁰⁵ or (2) whether he wanted to (a) deemphasize reward,³⁰⁶ (b) elevate the Corinthians’ motivations,³⁰⁷ and/or (c) reflect God’s delight in a certain kind of giving. This final

²⁹⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.1.1120a26–28.

²⁹⁹ Hesiod, *Op.* 357–58.

³⁰⁰ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.1.2.

³⁰¹ Wilson, “The Old Testament Sacrificial Context,” 32.

³⁰² Deut 15:7–11; Bruehler, “Proverbs, Persuasion and People,” 214.

³⁰³ Joubert, “Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15,” 83; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:576.

³⁰⁴ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 636, highlights that both verbs are “gnomic presents, expressing timeless truths.”

³⁰⁵ Prov 22:11: ἀγαπᾷ κύριος ὁσίας καρδίας; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 107.

³⁰⁶ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 636.

³⁰⁷ A higher motive could include a desire for God’s love. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 636; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:576.

option is the most intriguing, based on the Corinthian situation and the larger theology of 2 Cor 8–9.

Based on the emphasis on blessing others, the admonition to sow and reap ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις, in the preceding verse, 2 Cor 9:6, the reader may have been easily tempted to focus on a three-way reciprocity involving God, Corinth, and Jerusalem with a final expectation of blessing from God.³⁰⁸ Therefore, it is logical that Paul wanted to avoid a Corinthian emphasis on material or supernatural reward and instead draw their attention towards God’s unconditional love towards his people and towards the results of his love. Paul transforms the conventional Hebrew Bible notion of εὐλογία so that God’s unconditional love for humanity, as demonstrated through the Christ-event, abounds yet again to the ones who respond to his love by imitating him in cheerful giving, μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης.³⁰⁹ Harris points out the emphatic position of both ἰλαρόν and ὁ θεός so that, “It is the cheerful giver that is loved by God.”³¹⁰ To this, Han notes that ἀγαπάω is more tightly associated with the idea of “affection” rather than of “approval,” which is a possibility based on its use in some Wisdom traditions.³¹¹ Paul then is not trying to motivate the Corinthians to contribute to the collection according to the norms of their broader honor-shame culture or patronage system, nor is he communicating the idea that God prefers that they only

³⁰⁸ That is, Corinthian giving to Jerusalem constituted giving to God, for which the Corinthians could anticipate a reward from God. The Hebrew Bible provides precedent for this line of thinking, especially considering some of the similarities between Paul’s writing and Prov 11:21, 24–26, as pointed out by Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 213.

³⁰⁹ 2 Cor 9:7; Shillington, *2 Corinthians*, 194. Binz Antony, “‘He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food’: The Pauline Characterization of God in 2 Corinthians 8–9,” in Bieringer, *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict*, 310, concurs, “The replacement of εὐλογεῖ by ἀγαπάω seems to be Paul’s deliberate choice in order to drive home the specific nuance of God’s love in this generous initiative.” Cf. Danker, *2 Corinthians*, 140; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 96; Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 133.

³¹⁰ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 636.

³¹¹ Wis 7:28, “For God loves nothing so much as the man who lives with wisdom”; Sir 4:14, “the Lord loves those who love [wisdom]”; Prov 22:11 LXX, “The Lord loves holy hearts.” Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 133; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 441.

give a small amount cheerfully if they would be reluctant to give more. He calls upon his audience to recall the gifts of God the Creator and the unconditional love of God as demonstrated by Christ's life, death, and resurrection. When the Corinthians enter into this reality, they will desire to reflect God's type of giving with their own actions and lives, an idea that is interrelated with the "reward" they will receive.³¹²

Paul names the "reward" for giving in 9:8–9 as χάρις and δικαιοσύνη, gifts that enable the Corinthians to abound in δικαιοσύνη and to give. The repetition of περισσεύω³¹³ and "all" vocabulary (πάσαν, παντὶ, πάντοτε, πᾶσαν, πᾶν) indicates the greatness of God's grace and the greatness of the response the Corinthians should have,³¹⁴ and it also emphasizes abundance.³¹⁵ Paul continues to reiterate God's provision for the Corinthians as he establishes in 9:10 that God is the one who provides, supplies, multiplies, and causes to grow.³¹⁶ Not only does God provide what the Corinthians presently need, but their future in him is also secure. As Betz reveals, "seed for the sower and bread for food" indicates (1) seed for this year's sowing, (2) seed for next year's sowing, (3) bread for present consumption. The harvest with God is plentiful.³¹⁷ God remains the source of every blessing and is identified as "the creator of cheerful givers," givers who then act beneficently on behalf of others.

³¹² Horrell, "Paul's Collection," 79; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 407.

³¹³ Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 147, draws attention to the manner in which translators assume that περισσεύω is transitive in 9:8a but intransitive in 9:8b. This distinction emphasizes how God is the source of the blessings that enable the Corinthians to give *and* that God's blessings causes its recipients to overflow so that they pour out blessings upon others.

³¹⁴ Mitzi Minor, *Second Corinthians*, SHBC 25b (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2009), 175; cf. Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 184; Barclay, "Because he was rich he became poor," 342, "[T]he purpose of 'enrichment' or 'abundance' is not that believers may possess more, but give more."

³¹⁵ Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 171.

³¹⁶ Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 411.

³¹⁷ Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 113.

God's Gift of ἀυτάρχεια

In 2 Cor 9:8, Paul describes the Corinthians as having ἀυτάρχεια as a result of God making all χάρις abound to them. In fact, God as the Creator is the basis for all Corinthian ἀυτάρχεια. Commentators have argued that Paul's understanding of ἀυτάρχεια involves material sufficiency,³¹⁸ a more general contentment with basic resources,³¹⁹ a “complete inward contentment” in believers from God so that they desiring nothing from others,³²⁰ or a combination of these.³²¹ Undoubtedly, Paul holds that God provides for material needs, but he continues to transform the Hellenistic ideal of “sufficiency” by affirming that it is a gift of God, as opposed to something one accomplishes through self-discipline, and by considering it something that allows one to relate more fully to others, rather than withdrawing from them.³²²

All Greco-Roman ethicists prized the virtue of ἀυτάρχεια, which generally referred to contentment with material resources and detachment from worldly values.³²³ By definition, in order to be a true friend and to do and wish good for the sake of the other, a person required ἀυτάρχεια.³²⁴ This, in turn, prompts the question of the place of friends for the virtuous man who

³¹⁸ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 98; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 447; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 427; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:579, who notes that P Oxy 729:10 gives the sense of the word as “sufficient supply.”

³¹⁹ Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 213.

³²⁰ Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:579; cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 471; Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 237.

³²¹ According to Joubert, “Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15,” 83, the principle of sowing and reaping applied to God's χάρις results in ἀυτάρχεια in the lives of the Corinthians, which here is something that “does not lead to independence from others in terms of financial and spiritual needs” but allows them to use God-given resources to help fellow believers.

³²² Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 448.

³²³ William J. Asbell, Jr., “Αυταρχεια: Self-Sufficiency from Parmenides to Boethius” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1996), 91–124; Hsieh, “Virtue, Friendship, and Polis,” 324.

³²⁴ Aristotle's definition of friend is found in *Eth. nic.* 9.4.1166a2–10. In *Eth. eud.* 7.12.1244b17–21, Aristotle notes, “For when we are not in need of something, then we all seek people to share our enjoyments, and beneficiaries rather than benefactors; and we can judge them better when we are self-sufficing than when in need, and we most need friends who are worthy of our society.” Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 357,

has attained αὐτάρκεια.³²⁵ A number of philosophers conclude that having friends is necessary to be virtuous and to be self-sufficient; needing others is not mutually exclusive with αὐτάρκεια, especially since a friend is “another self.”³²⁶ Aristotle resolves the tension between having αὐτάρκεια and needing friends through his understanding of εὐδαιμονία, which he maintains must be self-sufficient.³²⁷ It does not mean living in isolation from other people, but it refers to “a thing which merely standing by itself alone renders life desirable and lacking in nothing,” which is to be equated with εὐδαιμονία itself.³²⁸ Paul’s understanding of αὐτάρκεια that God causes to abound to the Corinthians then may be understood to be only loosely tied to material sufficiency. Instead, Paul’s mention of sufficiency calls the Corinthians to human flourishing within the kingdom of God. Man, as a “social animal,”³²⁹ was made to be in relationship.

Paul maintains that αὐτάρκεια remains a gift from God so that one only has αὐτάρκεια “in relationship to the God who acts toward us in grace.”³³⁰ God chooses to bestow his gifts on man and not to exploit him, but he also gives *himself* to man through his gifts.³³¹ The Giver and his gift are inseparable so that his recipients are transformed to be givers, just like God. The

affirms that “self-sufficiency” is generally accepted as being free of need, a prerequisite to true giving.

³²⁵ Asbell, “Αὐτάρκεια,” 153–59.

³²⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.9.1169b22–1170a13, explains that the “supremely happy man,” the good man, needs good friends, though he does not require useful or pleasant friends; cf. *Eth. nic.* 1.7.1097b9–11, 9.9.1169b18–19. Seneca, *Ep.* 9.5, states that the wise and self-sufficient man “can do without friends, not that he desires to do without them.” Cf. Ken L. Berry, “The Function of Friendship Language in Philippians 4:10–20,” in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (New York: Brill, 1996), 114.

³²⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.7.1097b20–21.

³²⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.7.1097b8–18.

³²⁹ Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.1.1253a3; Brad Inwood, “Politics and Paradox in Seneca’s *De Beneficiis*,” in *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. André Laks and Malcolm Schofield (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 246.

³³⁰ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 358.

³³¹ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 358; Hafemann, “Paul’s Use of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians,” 253.

Corinthians are “more than mere dependents, beneficiaries, and clients,” and they are “granted participation in God’s very giving.”³³² The result is that they are enabled to engage in mutually beneficial friendship with all other members of the Church, instead of remaining complacent in self-contentment or pursuing greed.³³³ Sufficiency is a gift from God that promotes *interconnectedness* rather than independence.³³⁴

God’s Gift of δικαιοσύνη

The theme of δικαιοσύνη emerges in 2 Cor 9:9–10, verses in which Paul draws from Ps 112:9, Isa 55:10, and Hos 10:12. Here, the two main interpretational issues that arise include (1) the relationship between God’s righteousness and that of the Corinthians and (2) the proper activity of the righteous person. The following points and conclusions emerge. First, the Corinthians become δικαιοσύνη through the Christ event; δικαιοσύνη is a divine gift that always remains external to the Corinthians.³³⁵ Second, this δικαιοσύνη provides the basis for the Corinthian participation in the Jerusalem collection and all giving. Third, Greek ethical discussions of δικαιοσύνη traditionally linked it strongly to ἀρετή, “virtue.” The culmination of these factors suggests that Paul’s usage of δικαιοσύνη and omission of ἀρετή in the midst of a

³³² Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 358; cf. Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W. J. Montague, NTL (London: SCM, 1969), 168, 170, 174.

³³³ In the context of the friendship topos, it is significant that this ἀυτάρχεια means being free from πλεονεξία. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 638; Asbell, “Αυταρχεια,” 166.

Here Paul’s use of ἀυτάρχεια also fits closely with Aristotle’s political theory and idea of political friendship, in which he puts forth the idea that the πόλις as a whole could attain ἀυτάρχεια; there is no real sufficiency apart from God and outside of his community (cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.1252b27–1253a1). For the Corinthian situation, the implications include that their “virtue” is incomplete without friends with which to engage in a “virtuous life.” As the philosophers would maintain, being able to do without friends is possible but never preferable. They may already have attained sufficiency through God’s gift, and now their friendships with other Christians are driven from attraction to virtue and not need.

³³⁴ Bruehler, “Proverbs, Persuasion and People,” 216.

³³⁵ Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, 168, 173, emphasizes the gift-nature of divine righteousness.

conversation about relationship and κοινωνία shifts the basis of the ideal friendship to δικαιοσύνη, in place of ἀρετή or goodness.

Backgrounds for Understanding δικαιοσύνη

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a comprehensive overview of the complex theological concept of δικαιοσύνη. Nevertheless, the most relevant backgrounds that affect the interpretation of Pauline δικαιοσύνη include the Hebrew Bible, the Gospels, and broader Greek culture. This provides two initial senses of the term, first as a personal quality in terms of “uprightness” or “moral rightness,” to indicate that a person’s behavior has been δίκαιος or disposed to acting δίκαιος, and second as “an impersonal, universal, norm: righteousness, what is right, that which is right.”³³⁶ Third, there is the possibility that δικαιοσύνη indicates some aspect of God’s salvific work.³³⁷

³³⁶ Based on these two senses, the LXX generally links δικαιοσύνη to the interrelated ideas of the vindication of God as judge, relationship with God, and the moral uprightness of man before God. Within the New Testament, δικαιοσύνη has forensic and ethical dimensions, respectively that man be held accountable before the law and that man should conduct relationships with each other appropriately. The standard is dependent upon the measure set by God, who is righteous. Mark Seifrid, “Paul’s Use of Righteousness Language against Its Hellenistic Background,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 2:44.

The Greek topos on δικαιοσύνη also relates primarily to the legal and ethical spheres, as it touches upon the concepts of due reward, fairness, balance, proportionality, and reciprocity within the ideal πόλις. Thom, “The Mind in Its Own Place,” 572.

One other point of interest is that the Jewish rabbis instructed Israel to be righteous, to be faithful to the covenant through obedience to the Torah and atoning for transgressions. This meant that righteousness took on the extended meaning of giving charity as a demonstrable action that fulfilled the requirements of the covenant relationship under law. Jesus similarly refers to almsgiving as righteousness in Matt 6:1–4. Adrian M. Leske, “Righteousness as Relationship,” in *Festschrift: A Tribute to Dr. William Hordern*, ed. Walter Freitag (Saskatoon, SK: University of Saskatchewan, 1985), 131.

³³⁷ Peter Stuhlmacher, through the published version of his dissertation under Ernst Käsemann, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus* (2nd ed.; FRLANT 87; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), and his later New Testament theology, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments 1: Grundlegung. Von Jesus zu Paulus* (3rd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005, esp. pp. 334–36), was instrumental in initiating the 20th century discussion about the *Gerechtigkeit Gottes*. He contended that “the righteousness of God” was a set Jewish apocalyptic term that could unite the expression of God’s righteousness as wrath and judgment with its expression as the right of God which establishes itself in the world and salvation. Significantly, the righteousness of God is both an ontological and eschatological reality, involving both divine salvific activity and divine gift. God simultaneously reestablishes right

The Pauline Context of δικαιοσύνη

In the context of 2 Cor 9:9–10, the question of the meaning of the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ also is relevant, since God ἀξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν. In the Pauline corpus, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ occurs often in the context of justification.³³⁸ Four of the main options for understanding the genitive θεοῦ are as follows: (1) possessive genitive, in which righteousness is a moral quality of God; (2) subjective genitive, where righteousness signifies God’s salvific power; (3) genitive of origin, where righteousness is a righteous standing given to a person from God; and (4) objective genitive, in which righteousness is understood as a quality before God.³³⁹

With respect to these options for interpreting the genitive, Moore finds it unsatisfactory to understand θεοῦ as an objective genitive and δικαιοσύνη in terms of human righteousness before God, since Paul holds that God is the one who justifies man and gifts δικαιοσύνη to man. He discards θεοῦ as a subjective genitive and δικαιοσύνη as God’s saving activity as the

order through the Christ-event and empowers Christians to stand acquitted at the final judgment.

Richard K. Moore, “Issues Involved in the Interpretation of *Dikaiosynē Theou* in the Pauline Corpus,” *Colloq* 23 (1991): 63; Michael F. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective*, PBM (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2006), 14; and Denny Burk, “The Righteousness of God (*Dikaiosynē Theou*) and Verbal Genitives: A Grammatical Clarification.” *JSNT* 34 (2012): 356–57, continue Stuhlmacher’s line of thinking. They find that it is possible that the attribute of a certain nominalized adjective can stand metonymically for a related noun. In Ps 98:2 [97:2], righteousness can then be understood as “an attribute of God that stands metonymically for God’s salvation. It is God’s *righteous* nature that motivates his salvific and redemptive acts.” God’s righteousness grounds and motivates salvation, so it is simultaneously an attribute and a saving activity.

Similar to N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2009), 64, 71; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 375–78, focuses on δικαιοσύνη in terms of conformity to a standard, a concept under which both ethical and forensic aspects of the term fit. Furthermore, God’s δικαιοσύνη indicates his restoration of things to the proper order of things, something accomplished through his saving work. However, it is not clear that their interpretations fully integrate God’s saving righteousness, as found in Isa 51 and Ps 98.

³³⁸ Rom 1:17; 3:21, 22; 10:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9.

³³⁹ Burk, “The Righteousness of God,” 348.

possible meaning based upon the lack of an equivalence of the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in the Hebrew Scriptures. For different reasons, Burk also eliminates the possibility of θεοῦ as an objective or subjective genitive, because neither the subjective nor objective makes linguistic sense—δικαιοσύνη does not imply a verbal idea but is instead an abstract formed from the adjective. Therefore, the subjective and objective genitives should be removed as possibilities, because they only serve to confuse interpreters.³⁴⁰

Moore concludes that it makes most sense to understand δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in terms of the genitive as a genitive of origin, thus emphasizing the gift aspect, when the article is present.³⁴¹

Burk agrees that this is possible, that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is “righteousness from God” and approaches the Lutheran “objective genitive” in that, “It would be a righteous status that comes from God as a gift and which (by implication) would avail before God at the judgment.”³⁴²

However, he prefers to read δικαιοσύνη as a possessive genitive and therefore as a personal attribute of God, so that it stands metonymically for God’s salvation. God’s righteous nature motivates his redemptive work through Christ; δικαιοσύνη as attribute of divine nature and δικαιοσύνη as saving activity both remain in view.³⁴³ Both these options are intriguing, but the first fits better in the immediate context of 2 Cor 9 with its emphasis on the gift-nature of δικαιοσύνη. God will increase the fruits of this gift that the Corinthians have received.

Nevertheless, the second option, that δικαιοσύνη points to an attribute of God, is not irrelevant.

³⁴⁰ Burk, “The Righteousness of God,” 347, 349, 350. Only a noun that implies a verbal idea can be modified with an objective or subjective genitive, and the nominalized form of δικαιοῦν is δικαιοσύνη and not δικαιοσύνη. Therefore, Paul’s audience would have thought of δικαιοσύνη as the nominalization of an attribute and not of a verb.

³⁴¹ Moore, “Issues Involved in the Interpretation,” 66.

³⁴² Burk, “The Righteousness of God,” 358.

³⁴³ Burk, “The Righteousness of God,” 357, 359.

His redemptive work is tightly related to his ruling and judging in order to reestablish order in the world and to establish justice for his people and for himself.³⁴⁴ In the Corinthian context, the friendship among all Christians enabled by their received gift of δικαιοσύνη helps to establish the ideal πόλις or community, and it works to restore relationships and justice.³⁴⁵ Participation in the collection would help increase the fruits of this restorative work that occurs within friendship.

The Pauline Connection between δικαιοσύνη and ἀρετή

Christians experience God’s δικαιοσύνη as imputed righteousness through the Christ-event, and this δικαιοσύνη forms the basis of Christian κοινωνία and participation in Christ. This δικαιοσύνη is never a virtue that the Corinthians or other Christians can acquire or develop, in contrast with Josephus and other Hellenistic authors.³⁴⁶ It is instead tied to God’s people as a new creation, as a result of their having been justified by and existing in Christ. God’s reestablishment of right order in the world opens the opportunity for ideal expressions of κοινωνία.

Every κοινωνία includes δικαιοσύνη and φιλία,³⁴⁷ and, by definition, this Christian

³⁴⁴Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*, NSBT 9 (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos [InterVarsity Press], 2000), 40, 43, 47; cf. Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 32.

³⁴⁵Plato, *Resp.* 4.433a, is concerned with demonstrating the means through which justice can be achieved in both an individual and the πόλις. He bases his utopia upon δικαιοσύνη, which he defines as τὸ τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττειν καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν δικαιοσύνη ἐστίν.

³⁴⁶Josephus, *Ant.* 4.214, 11.155, 18.117, speaks of δικαιοσύνη as ἀρετή that could be cultivated; Seifrid, “Paul’s Use of Righteousness Language,” 48, 54. Cf. Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study*, SPB 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 184–86; and Hans-Friedrich Weiss, “Pharisäismus und Hellenismus. Zur Darstellung des Judentums im Geschichtswerk des jüdischen Historikers Flavius Josephus,” *OLZ* 74 (1979): 427–28, who write on Josephus’ depiction of the virtues and vices of biblical characters to promote observance of God’s laws and Judaism as the means of attaining εὐδαιμονία.

³⁴⁷Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.12.1161b11.

participation in κοινωνία entails that all its participants are equal³⁴⁸ and share a common purpose.³⁴⁹ However, κοινωνία covers a range of relationships that differ in degree and basis, so the κοινωνία that Paul envisions within the Church is the best kind, because its basis is found in the gifts of God the Creator. God enables restored and reconciled relationship, between Christians and God and also among Christians, and, in terms of ancient philosophical theories on ethics and politics, that best and most ideal form of κοινωνία is virtue friendship.³⁵⁰ That is to say, Christians do not relate to each other out of a desire to pursue pleasure or to fulfill utilitarian needs, but they attain the ideal community, one that is bound by friendship and allows all its members to attain stability and peace, ισότης, sufficiency, and the best circumstances for the pursuit of εὐδαιμονία, which is itself reoriented by the Christ-event.³⁵¹

Functionally, then, a distinctively Christian δικαιοσύνη replaces the central place of ἀρετή within the friendship topos. The Hellenistic doctrine of virtue, ἀρετή, itself is fundamentally absent in the Pauline writings, since its emphasis is on human accomplishments and merit.³⁵² In its place, the term δικαιοσύνη figures heavily in Paul's theology, redefined so

³⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.9.1159b34–1160a8.

³⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Pol.* 7.1328a25–27.

³⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156b8–24, 8.4.1157b1–3; cf. *Mag. mor.* 2.11.1209b12–16; Cicero, *Amic.* 5.18, 18.65, 26.100; Seneca, *Ep.* 9.1, 3–4, 8; and Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 93F.

³⁵¹ In essence, Christians find that their “πόλις” is the best kind. Plato, *Leg.* 5.743c; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a22–29; Dio Chrysostom, *Avar.* 8–11.

³⁵² Otto Bauernfeind, “ἀρετή,” *TDNT* 1:457–61.

Phil 4:8 is the one occurrence of ἀρετή in the Pauline corpus, and Paul appears to use ἀρετή here to refer to virtue as a whole. Interestingly, Paul does provide several lists of virtues and vices, indicating that virtue is a concern in terms of the shape of the renewed Christian life. Within the undisputed Pauline epistles, these catalogs are found in the following: Rom 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 6:6–10; 12:20–21; Gal 5:19–23; and Phil 4:8.

In contrast to Paul's avoidance of the word ἀρετή, Craig S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), Google Play edition, ch. 7, “Virtue among the Virtues,” observes based on searches using Accordance that Philo uses the term ἀρετή “roughly one thousand times,” and Josephus nearly three hundred. Meanwhile, “the *Letter of Aristeas* defines ἀρετή as the fulfillment of

that it no longer retains any of the sense that it may be gradually developed within a person.

In Greco-Roman philosophy, ἀρετή provides the orienting principle for the pursuit of εὐδαιμονία. To reach one's potential in ἀρετή meant to have the character qualities that would enable one to live an ideal life of εὐδαιμονία. As a disposition or ἕξις of mind, it involved habituating feelings and reasoning so that the virtuous person always acts well, properly identifying εὐδαιμονία and using his or her resources appropriately to contribute to his or her εὐδαιμονία.³⁵³ In this way, ἀρετή serves as an organizing principle for an individual's "state of mind" and also for the entire community.

The Hellenistic virtue of δικαιοσύνη is closely related to ἀρετή. Plato considered δικαιοσύνη to be the core value of ἀρετή that determined all the other values. The best political state and the best individual mind is equated with the just state and the just mind.³⁵⁴ Aristotle called δικαιοσύνη the sum of ἀρετή, the primary virtue under which all other virtues fell,³⁵⁵ the virtue that "produces and preserves the happiness (εὐδαιμονία), or the component parts of the happiness, of the political community."³⁵⁶ Cicero similarly understands *virtus* as interdependent with the existence of the *res publica*³⁵⁷ and *iustitia* as "the sovereign mistress and queen of all the virtues."³⁵⁸

good works."

³⁵³ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.8.1103a3–7, 2.5.1106a1–2.

³⁵⁴ Plato, *Resp.* 441c–444d; cf. Andries G. Van Aarde, "The Righteousness of God, Begging for the Poor and Paul's Apostolic Mission according to His Letter to the Romans." *HTSTS* 68 (2012): 4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v68i1.1223>; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Paul, Virtues, and Vices," in Sampley, *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, 610.

³⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.1.1129b30–32; 5.2.1130a9.

³⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.1.1129b17–19.

³⁵⁷ Timothy Hill, *Ambitiosa Mors: Suicide and the Self in Roman Thought and Literature*, SC 10 (New York: Routledge, 2004), 58–59.

³⁵⁸ Cicero, *Off.* 3.28.

Not only is δικαιοσύνη the highest of the virtues and virtue the basis of the best form of friendship, but δικαιοσύνη itself plays a requisite role in Hellenistic friendship. Friendship and δικαιοσύνη create bonds to hold the community together and develop social identity among its members.³⁵⁹ Friendship is a completion of δικαιοσύνη, which provides the standard for good and truth that “is needed as a condition for friendship.”³⁶⁰ A friend must be δίκαιος to understand the true good for the other and how that true good can be achieved. Without δικαιοσύνη, self-interest causes a person to seek his own or her good rather than that of his or her friend. The resulting ability to rely upon a mutual sense of goodwill further strengthens the bond of friendship.³⁶¹

In the Pauline context, God’s δικαιοσύνη and pronouncement of justification indeed hold together the Church and form the basis of its identity. Instead of human effort to create the conditions for survival and success, Paul points the Corinthians to an acknowledgment of God’s kingship, his creational work, and his granting and upholding of the δικαιοσύνη necessary to create the conditions for friendship and a “good life.” God’s δικαιοσύνη provides the standard for good and truth, and friendship is the natural consequence of abiding according to that standard. By referring to δικαιοσύνη instead of ἀρετή, Paul focuses only on God’s accomplishments and never on human achievement or effort.³⁶² It is not the individual virtue of

³⁵⁹ Waggle, “Just Friends,” 3.

³⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a28.

³⁶¹ Robert Sokolowski, “Phenomenology of Friendship,” *RevM* 55 (2002):462.

³⁶² According to Aristotle’s understanding of natural virtue (ἀρετὴ φυσικῆ), a person can be (1) virtuous, (2) self-controlled, (3) weak in self-control, or (4) vicious, depending on his moral reason and inclinations. In the (1) virtuous person, reason and inclination both desire what is right. The (2) self-controlled person’s moral reason is right, but his inclinations are not. The (3) person weak in self-control cannot bring his inclinations into line with his reason. Finally, the (4) vicious person has both bad reason and bad inclinations. Virtue is the way that a person consistently lives and becomes the foundation of that person’s character (ἦθος) and habits (ἔξῆς). In this way, virtue reveals human nature, “since the nature of a thing is most truly displayed when the thing is working at its best.” Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology* (Notre Dame: University of

the Corinthians that enables them to achieve the ideal friendship with others but the gift of δικαιοσύνη they have received from God in Christ. The Corinthians give out of their received δικαιοσύνη; they do not gain δικαιοσύνη from their giving.³⁶³ They have done nothing to merit friendship or to gain the status of δικαιοσύνη; any claim to δικαιοσύνη stems from participation in Christ and God's giving in and through Christ. The resultant ἕξις reflects God's δικαιοσύνη and the order that he has established.

God's δικαιοσύνη, fulfilling the traditional role of ἀρετή within Hellenistic friendship, provides the basis for friendship among Christians. With God's self-giving in the death and resurrection of Christ, he revealed his righteousness, worked the justification of his people, and defeated his enemies. God's creative and salvific work spans both eschatological and ontological reality, "making things right, and establishing order and life."³⁶⁴ His justification of his people involved creating them anew to be human "truly," to have the disposition and ἕξις that allow them to exist in proper relation to God and to others in κοινωνία and friendship. Paul re-envisions and elevates friendship and its basis even beyond Philo and Clement,³⁶⁵ because he sees

Notre Dame, 1982), 64; cf. 56–58, 63, 69; cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.5.1106a6–13; 7.1.1145a35–b2.

For Aristotle, when a person can be said to be virtuous, that person is operating at his or her full potential. In contrast, Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 26, 39, say that God's restoration of a person's restoration is also a restoration of his or humanity, fulfilling what a person is meant to be. When Christians operate according to the δικαιοσύνη of God, they regain what was lost at the Fall. To summarize, the Christian claim to δικαιοσύνη replaces and supersedes all efforts to attain ἀρετή. By God's δικαιοσύνη, the Corinthians are able to realize their potential. God's δικαιοσύνη provides the foundation of Christian character and habits. God's δικαιοσύνη brings everything into proper order, within the individual Christian and the corporate Christian community.

³⁶³ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 360.

³⁶⁴ Peter Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 62–63; Scott Hafemann, "The 'Righteousness of God': An Introduction to the Theological and Historical Foundation of Peter Stuhlmacher's Biblical Theology of the New Testament," in *How to Do Biblical Theology*, by Peter Stuhlmacher, PrTMS 38 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1995), xxiv.

³⁶⁵ Philo, *Flight 58*, considers that worship of God is the basis of the closest kind of friendship among all the Jews. Clement, *Strom.* 2.19, considers the Christian's friendship with God to begin as a utilitarian relationship and become gradually become one based on virtue. Friendship within the church is additionally conceived as primarily

these relationships in the context of the Creator’s provision and giving. In turn, the Corinthians and all other members of the Church, embrace their roles as generous participants in God’s work of giving. God’s δικαιοσύνη provides the basis of the Corinthian contribution to the Jerusalem collection and their ability to relate to the Jerusalem saints properly in friendship.

Paul’s Hebrew Bible Citations in 2 Corinthians 9:9–10

Psalm 112:9 is introduced with a clear citation formula, “as it is written,” in 2 Cor 9:9. The broader chapter praises the Lord and describes the characteristics of a righteous person as one who fears the Lord and greatly delights in his commands³⁶⁶ and who is gracious, merciful, and righteous.³⁶⁷ Seifrid points out that “righteousness” here has two senses, first, the blessings upon the righteous that arise in the context of right relationship with God, and, second, “the relationship of fear and trust in the Lord in which all good, including material good is to be found.”³⁶⁸ In effect, the righteous person has experienced God’s goodness and so freely shares his or her material possessions with the needy.³⁶⁹ Giving does not gain the person righteousness, but, instead, that person’s righteousness provides the source for giving.³⁷⁰

2 Corinthians 9:9
καθὼς γέγραπται· ἔσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν, ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ
μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

utilitarian (*Strom.* 7.11; *Quis div.* 32–33).

³⁶⁶ Ps 112:1.

³⁶⁷ Ps 112:4.

³⁶⁸ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 359; cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 471 (“The righteous man in Israel is known for his almsgiving [Dan 4:27 (4:24)]; and ‘righteousness’ [δικαιοσύνη] tended to be equated with giving charity in early Judaism (Str-B 3:525) ... ”); J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*, SNTSMS 20 (New York: Cambridge, University Press, 1972), 134; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 99.

³⁶⁹ Joubert, “Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15,” 84.

³⁷⁰ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*

Psalm 112:9 [H: 111:9]

ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν, ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, τὸ κέρας αὐτοῦ ὑψωθήσεται ἐν δόξῃ.³⁷¹

The scattering and giving to the poor from the Psalm citation is linked to Paul’s language in 2 Cor 9:6–7. Nevertheless, in 2 Cor 9:9, it is inconclusive who Paul intends to be the referent of ἐσκόρπισεν and ἔδωκεν and what is meant by “his righteousness.” The difference determines whether it is God who gives to the poor or whether Paul is asking the Corinthians to identify with the man as they are called to liberal giving.³⁷²

In considering the referent of ἐσκόρπισεν and ἔδωκεν, the implied subject of the verbs ἐσκόρπισεν and ἔδωκεν is the pious man in the context of the Psalm. Further reasons to understand the subject as the human giver include the following: “you (Corinthians)” as the subject of the immediately preceding subordinate clause;³⁷³ how ἐσκόρπισεν looks back to ὁ σπείρων;³⁷⁴ the way in which ἔδωκεν picks up the implied verb δότω (or διδότη);³⁷⁵ that τοῖς πένωσιν refers to τοὺς ἀγίους,³⁷⁶ who are οἱ πτωχοὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ;³⁷⁷ and how the

³⁷¹ Because Paul’s citation so exactly parallels the LXX, it is evident that he is quoting from the LXX rather than the Hebrew Bible.

³⁷² Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 440; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 111; Matera, *II Corinthians*, 205.

For Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 107–9, the “informed audience” would have seen the subject as man, whereas the “competent audience” and “minimal audience” would have understood the subject as God, based on the context of Paul’s argument rather than the original context of his biblical citation. However, Stanley thinks that the rhetorical impact of Paul’s reference to the Psalm would have remained the same for all three audiences: the God of the Scriptures will take care of the Corinthians if they give generously to the collection.

³⁷³ 2 Cor 9:8b.

³⁷⁴ 2 Cor 9:6, twice.

³⁷⁵ 2 Cor 9:7.

³⁷⁶ 2 Cor 9:1.

³⁷⁷ Rom 15:26.

individualized ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ becomes the corporate τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν.³⁷⁸ If the subject is the righteous man, then the δικαιοσύνη is human too, in which case it is typically understood to refer to “almsgiving” specifically or “moral conduct” more broadly. As the pious man in Ps 112:9 gives to the poor because he delights in God’s goodness and δικαιοσύνη, so then the Corinthians also contribute to the collection in an expression of the δικαιοσύνη that they have already received as a result of their relationship with God and their reception of the gospel.³⁷⁹ Then the entire clause ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα indicates that the Corinthians’ received righteousness is inexhaustible and contains the gifts that they are to give forth.

On the other hand, context of the preceding psalm (111 [H: 110]) and the next Hebrew Bible citation of Paul also make it possible for God to be taken as the subject. To begin, the phrase (καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος) in Ps 112:9 [111:9] is applied to God in Ps 111:3 [110:3]. Furthermore, God is the explicit subject of 2 Cor 9:8a, and God is the implicit subject in 9:10.³⁸⁰ In 9:8 and 9:10, Paul repeats the same idea that God as the supplier of abounding χάρις to the Corinthians and the source of their seed for every good work. God provides for the poor via the Corinthians.³⁸¹ Then Paul’s reference in 9:9 to divine

³⁷⁸ 2 Cor 9:10; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:583.

³⁷⁹ Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 238; Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 186; Scott J. Hafemann, 2 *Corinthians*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), Kindle edition, “The Theological Ground and Purpose of the Collection (9:6–15).”

³⁸⁰ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 439–40; Reimund Bieringer, “The δικαιοσύνη of God and the δικαιοσύνη of the Corinthians (2 Cor 9:9–10)” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting for the SBL, San Diego, California, November 22–25, 2014), 2; Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 111–12; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 98.

³⁸¹ Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 140; H. H. Drake Williams, III, “The Psalms in 1 and 2 Corinthians,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark), 178–79.

δικαιοσύνη could state (1) that God’s covenant faithfulness is steadfast,³⁸² (2) that the “divine righteousness which meets the needs of the poor is everlasting,”³⁸³ and/or (3) that “Christ’s righteousness in Christians” remains forever.³⁸⁴ All of these possibilities fit within the context of Paul’s message to the Corinthians.

The third, final, and most fitting possibility is that Paul intentionally leaves the subject of ἐσκόρπισεν and ἔδωκεν as ambiguous.³⁸⁵ The audience would recognize that the psalm describes the pious man, but the relationship between Pss 111 and 112 implies that all human δικαιοσύνη has its root in and is dependent upon God’s δικαιοσύνη. God’s righteous desire is to provide for the poor through the Corinthians and other members of the Church, who understand that their generous giving is “embedded in and is an extension of divine giving.”³⁸⁶

Δικαιοσύνη is to be understood in communicative terms and is bound up in the χάρις of God. It entails abundance, blessing, and right order in the world. The righteous person enjoys prosperity from God and shares that prosperity with others.³⁸⁷ Because God’s δικαιοσύνη is everlasting, the Corinthians can also remain in its reality forever as they participate in it.³⁸⁸ In summary, Paul affirms that God is the Ultimate Giver, the Corinthians’ δικαιοσύνη and ability to give is a gift from the Giver, and the Corinthians naturally give to others as a result of the δικαιοσύνη that they have received.

³⁸² Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 440; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 448.

³⁸³ Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:582.

³⁸⁴ Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 440–41; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:581.

³⁸⁵ Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 99; David Starling, “Meditations on a Slippery Citation: Paul’s Use of Psalm 112:9 in 2 Corinthians 9:9,” *JTI* 6 (2012): 247, 249.

³⁸⁶ McFarland, “The God Who Gives,” 221.

³⁸⁷ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 359–60.

³⁸⁸ Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 448–49; Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 139; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 641; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:582.

2 Corinthians 9:10, which includes citations from Isa 55:10 and Hos 10:2, is initially much more straightforward than the previous one; God is the clear subject and the supreme benefactor.³⁸⁹ As the recipients of God’s gifts in turn give to others, God would continue to supply and multiply the seed for sowing and increase the harvest of the Corinthians’ righteousness.

2 Corinthians 9:10

ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρώσιν χορηγήσει³⁹⁰ καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν.

Isaiah 55:10

ὡς γὰρ ἐὰν καταβῆ ὑετὸς ἢ χιὼν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστραφῆ, ἕως ἂν μεθύσῃ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐκτέκῃ καὶ ἐκβλαστήσῃ καὶ δῶ σπέρμα τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρώσιν,

Hosea 10:12

σπείρατε ἑαυτοῖς εἰς δικαιοσύνην, τρυγήσατε εἰς καρπὸν ζωῆς, φωτίσατε ἑαυτοῖς φῶς γνώσεως, ἐκζητήσατε τὸν κύριον ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν γενήματα δικαιοσύνης ὑμῖν.

Paul’s use of Ps 112:9 in 2 Cor 9:9 established that δικαιοσύνη is a gift from God and remains external to the Corinthians. In the current verse, 9:10, δικαιοσύνη produces γενήματα. These “fruits” presuppose God’s creational activity, which, in turn, is a “sign of his effecting eschatological salvation.”³⁹¹ Here, the impact of the allusion to Isa 55:10 and its broader context of the promise of eschatological salvation reaches its height. The psalmist describes the effective word (τὸ ῥῆμα) of God the Creator to accomplish its purpose, namely to make a covenant with

³⁸⁹ Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:582–83, draws attention to the δὲ in 2 Cor 9:10, which might indicate a change in subject from verse 9.

³⁹⁰ The tenses of the verbs differ among various manuscripts. The NA²⁸’s chosen reading (following κ^* B C D* P 33 81 326 1175 2464 *pc* latt) holds that the verbs are most original in future indicative form as χορηγήσει, πληθυνεῖ and αὐξήσει. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 632 (cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 472) finds this tense to be appropriate for expressing “calm confidence” in the context of God’s ability to supply all the needs of the Corinthians over “expressions of prayerful desire by means of the aorist optative” (χορηγήσαι, πληθύναι, αὐξήσαι) provided in the majority of manuscripts (found in κ^* D⁺ Ψ 0209 0243 1739 1881 \mathfrak{M}), though he acknowledges that, “Scribes may have altered the original indicatives to the optative to avoid having Paul suggest that God would invariably act in a particular way.” Still other witnesses mix the optatives and future indicatives, attributing one mood to the first two verbs and the other mood to the last verb.

³⁹¹ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 87.

and to redeem God's people.³⁹² He will provide for the physical needs of his people, and he will redeem the people of his new covenant. In response, all of creation, including mankind, recognizes and praises God for his creational work and good purposes for that creation.³⁹³

Paul's second use of the Hebrew Bible in 2 Cor 9:10 is drawn from Hos 10:12; he draws from its first word (σπείρατε) and the last expression (γενήματα δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν). The context of Hos 10 involves the Lord declaring judgment upon Israel, though that punishment is meant to bring refinement and ultimately restoration. The specific verse to which Paul calls his audience is the only one in the chapter to utilize imperative verbs—σπείρατε, τρυγήσατε, φωτίσατε, and ἐκζητήσατε—instead of indicatives. This change in verbs, according to Han, “leaves the audience with a hope for restoration” in the midst of judgment pronounced for the sins of Israel. In particular, the last expression, γενήματα δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν, points to the redemption of God's covenantal people.³⁹⁴ Paul therefore uses his Hebrew Bible references, not only in these immediate chapters but also throughout the entire epistle, to allude continuously to restoration within a new covenant framework. Christ has ushered in a new eschatological reality.³⁹⁵ The juxtaposition of the two citations from Isaiah and Hosea equates the seed that God

³⁹² Isa 55:3, 10; Florian Wilk, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus*, FRLANT 179, ed. Wolfgang Schrage and Rudolf Smend (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 336, 408.

³⁹³ Isa 55:12–13. Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 144–45; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 87.

Though Paul mixes the analogy of rain and snow, God's word, and seed and bread from Isa 55 in order to fit it into the Corinthian context, the point remains the same: God will effectively accomplish his plan.

³⁹⁴ Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 145.

Cf. J. Andrew Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 153, who, although he comments on the Hebrew text rather than the LXX version, comments that Hos 10:12 depicts Israel's work as sowing, reaping, and tilling in order to produce (agriculturally) for the household. These actions are part of the “covenant ethos” and in preparation for the “real harvest.” This harvest involves the gathering of righteousness, another key element of the covenant ethos. God will send righteousness “as if it was the life-giving rain,” which triggers “a chain reaction of corporate blessings.”

³⁹⁵ Hafemann, “Paul's Use of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians,” 255; Han, *Swimming in the Sea of Scripture*, 146.

gives to the sower in Isaiah with righteousness in Hosea. Ultimately, the seed and harvest refer to both the material and spiritual blessings which God bestows upon the Corinthians as they enter into the redeemed reality of the covenant community.³⁹⁶

The genitive τῆς δικαιοσύνης in καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν may be interpreted in different ways. The first option is that τὰ γενήματα could be δικαιοσύνη, in which case it is a genitive of apposition or material. The second option is that τὰ γενήματα could be produced by righteousness and justice, so that the genitive is subjective or one of production.³⁹⁷ In the agricultural context of reaping and sowing painted by Paul, the first option makes most sense. The first clause of Hos 10:12 is the command, σπείρατε ἑαυτοῖς εἰς δικαιοσύνην, with an implicit contrast between sowing righteousness and wickedness. Within Paul's instructions, the implication is that the Corinthians have no means of harvesting righteousness if they do not sow righteousness.

Paul in 2 Cor 9:10 further draws out the principle from 9:9 that the δικαιοσύνη attributed to the Corinthians is extrinsic to them; the seed that the righteous man sows is a blessing God has given him. Meanwhile, the sowing of the seed involves receiving and giving, being in relationship with both God and others.³⁹⁸ The wealthy members in the Corinthian church may have considered their material wealth to be a tool in order to gain honor and wield influence. They are not seeing themselves in proper relationship to God, the Creator and Ultimate Giver; their giving should not be motivated by obligation or with an expectation of what they will profit from the exchange. Instead, their material resources present them with an opportunity to respond

³⁹⁶ Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:584.

³⁹⁷ Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 91, 95, 104.

³⁹⁸ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 359.

to God and to participate in his work of giving.

Returning to Paul's use of Isa 55:10 and Hos 10:12, God as the Creator of the world not only has provided the Corinthians with everything they have through his χάρις, and so he has enabled all giving from a material perspective, but the Christ event has also effected a new covenant status for them. This new covenant status provides the basis for which the Corinthians can trust in the ἀντάρθεια they receive from God to fill their needs, a confidence that enables them to fill the needs of others, such as those of the Jerusalem Christians in the collection, ἐπ' εὐλογίαις.³⁹⁹ It also points to Paul's expectation that the Corinthians would be transformed by the gospel "in accordance with the power of the Spirit being poured out under the new covenant,"⁴⁰⁰ and it is God's δικαιοσύνη that provides the basis for their new creation.

The resultant δικαιοσύνη of the Corinthians remains rooted in Christ and restored through the Christ-event.⁴⁰¹ Because justification involves a forensic declaration that restores "what it means to be human" and returns a person to what God envisioned humans to be when he created them,⁴⁰² δικαιοσύνη is recognizable in the Christian life and relationships and hence has a transformative aspect as an essential part of its forensic one.⁴⁰³ Δικαιοσύνη is recognizable

³⁹⁹ 2 Cor 9:6, 8

⁴⁰⁰ Hafemann, "Paul's Use of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians," 255.

⁴⁰¹ Righteousness as a gift from God is mostly clearly seen in Phil 3:9 and Rom 5:17. God is furthermore seen as the origin of righteousness in 1 Cor 1:30. The gift nature of righteousness also seems evident in 2 Cor 9:9–10.

Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, 162, highlights the foundational importance of the Christian's union with Christ for being able to speak about the individual's righteousness, "This righteousness then is not a moral quality inherent in the believer, not a possession, but exists only in the 'in Christ', faith relationship."

⁴⁰² Kolb and Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 26, 39; cf. Mark A. Seifrid, "The Narrative of Scripture and Justification by Faith: A Fresh Response to N. T. Wright," *CTQ* 72 (2008): 38. In contrast is the position that δικαιοσύνη should be understood in terms of right relationship with God presented in Leske, "Righteousness as Relationship," 136.

⁴⁰³ This may be connected to the two kinds of righteousness found in Lutheran theology, wherein the passive righteousness of faith effects salvation and a restored relationship with God and the active righteousness of works involves care for one's neighbor (Kolb and Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 31). More simplistically, Luther himself in the last thesis (28) of his Heidelberg Disputations says, "The love of God does not find, but

because it is characterized by sharing “in Christ’s gracious self-impo­verishment for the benefit of others,”⁴⁰⁴ and, in the context of 2 Cor 8–9, δικαιοσύνη provides the proper orientation for social relationships among all Christians to be friendship. The Corinthians are able to give on the basis of δικαιοσύνη not only to meet the needs of the Jerusalem Christians but also to bring thanksgiving to God. They give because of their received δικαιοσύνη, not to earn it, and their participation in the collection is proof of their confession of the gospel and their “participation” or κοινωνία with all believers.⁴⁰⁵ In this way, Paul has modified the traditional Greek understanding of bestowing gifts, the return of gratitude, the roles of ἀρετή and δικαιοσύνη, and social relationships to fit the new covenant status of Christians and life within God’s new creation. The success of the collection continuously remains dependent on God’s gifts of enabling χάρις and δικαιοσύνη, and the success of the collection reflects the new social reality that is found within the covenant community of Christians and the new creation they experience.⁴⁰⁶

God’s Gift of χάρις

In 2 Cor 9:11–15, Paul concludes his exhortation, describing the collection’s effect on both

creates, that which is pleasing to it.” Cf. Olli-Pekka Vainio, *Justification and Participation in Christ: The Development of the Lutheran Doctrine of Justification from Luther to the Formula of Concord (1580)*, SMRT 130 (Boston: Brill, 2008), 37, who frames the same idea in terms of imputed righteousness and renewal; and Fernando Bortolletto Filho, “Justification as *Shalom* for the People of God,” in *The Doctrine of Justification: Its Reception and Meaning Today*, ed. Karen K. Bloomquist and Wolfgang Greive (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2003), 74, who states that knowledge of God transforms Christians’ perspective on justice and relationships with other people.

⁴⁰⁴ 2 Cor 8:9. Michael J. Gorman, “Paul’s Corporate, Cruciform, Missional *Theosis* in 2 Corinthians,” in “*In Christ*” in *Paul: Explorations in Paul’s Theology of Union and Participation*, ed. Michael J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell, WUNT 2/384 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2014), .206.

⁴⁰⁵ 2 Cor 9:13; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 88.

⁴⁰⁶ Bieringer, “The δικαιοσύνη of God and the δικαιοσύνη of the Corinthians,” 4; Downs, *The Offering to the Gentiles*, 145; Gaventa, “The Economy of Grace,” 58–60; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 86; Wan, “Collection for the Saints,” 214.

the givers and recipients. His point in 9:6–15 was to demonstrate the concrete effects of the reception of God’s gifts, beginning with χάρις, in the lives of the Corinthians.⁴⁰⁷ He affirms God as the sole object of thanksgiving twice in wordplay with εὐχαριστία-χάρις,⁴⁰⁸ and he heaps on terms related to honor, praise, and thanksgiving. This kind of vocabulary, all related to the accumulation of “symbolic capital,” would generally be associated with the motivation for gifts and benefits.⁴⁰⁹ Paul again removes the Corinthians from the typical gift-cycle of gift and counter-gift between two parties. Here, God, the Corinthians, and the Jerusalem Christians are all participants, and the Corinthian gift to Jerusalem results in honor and praise directed to God, rather than to themselves.⁴¹⁰

Verse 11 forms a bridge between the preceding section and the present one, as it reiterates via the divine passive πλουτιζόμενοι⁴¹¹ that God is the one who enriches the Corinthians in every way, namely in ἀπλότης.⁴¹² This idea that the Corinthians may be open-hearted and attentive to a

⁴⁰⁷ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 144–45. Alternative explanations for verse 11 include that it is a conclusion to 9:9–10 or a reiteration of 9:10.

⁴⁰⁸ Downs, *The Offering to the Gentiles*, 143.

⁴⁰⁹ Downs, *The Offering to the Gentiles*, 142.

⁴¹⁰ This does not mean that the Corinthians receive nothing in return, but that they are removed from a calculating gift economy. Because of the gifts of God, they are enabled to be bound to other Christians as friends and engage in a true κοινωνία of giving and receiving. Therefore, there is a mutual meeting of needs (8:14–15), and Jerusalem will respond to their reception of the collection with prayers and longing for the Corinthians (9:14).

A parallel may be found in Philippians, a letter that generally has been accepted as one of friendship. The goal of the friendship between Paul and Philippians was to increase the δόξαν and ἔπαινον of God (Phil 1:11, 20, 26; 2:11; 3:3, 21; 4:10, 20), and the basis of their friendship was Christ (Phil 1:26; 2:16; 3:3; 4:1, 10, 17). Malas and Lyons, “Paul and His Friends,” 66.

⁴¹¹ The nominative participle πλουτιζόμενοι in 9:11 can be explained in multiple ways, but the preferred way is as standing for a finite verb that may then be imperative, optative, or indicative. The three preceding future verbs make it fitting to understand the participle as standing in for a future indicative verb (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 644–45). The previous three future verbs from 9:10 detail how God will supply, multiply, and increase. Being enriched is another way of restating that the Corinthian resources, whether spiritual or material, have been supplied, multiplied, and increased.

⁴¹² “Riches” then are metaphorical for life and salvation, rather than material goods. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 362.

single purpose, here to help supply the physical needs of others and to demonstrate gratitude towards God, is appropriately identified by Seifrid as “life with an open hand to receive from God and to give forth to one’s neighbor.”⁴¹³ Furthermore, it is the ἀπλότης of the Corinthians, not their gift or act of giving, that accomplishes the ultimate goal of thanksgiving to God in verses 11 and 12.⁴¹⁴

In 9:12, Paul changes direction with ὅτι and refers to the collection as ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης. The Macedonians in 8:4 begged for the privilege to participate in τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας, to be agents or mediators of God’s purposes. Now the Corinthians are participating in the same διακονία of love towards God and the Christian community. The genitive τῆς λειτουργίας ταύτης is epeexegetic, so διακονία and λειτουργία are synonymous: “the ministry consisting in this service.”

The noun λειτουργία occurs in two different contexts, both of which bear significance for Paul’s collection instructions. It could refer to (1) a public service, (2) priestly service or offering, or even (3) a combination of the two.⁴¹⁵ Both the public and priestly aspects are listed in 9:12, but the grammatical structure οὐ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καὶ is ascensive.⁴¹⁶ It is important that the collection will meet the needs of the saints, but it is more significant that the collection works

⁴¹³ 2 Cor 9:12. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 362.

See previous section on τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότης within “The Paradoxical Macedonian Experience of Poverty and Wealth,” 93–98, for further discussion of ἀπλότης.

⁴¹⁴ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 363.

⁴¹⁵ Cf. Rom 15:27; Phil 2:25, 30. Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 202; S. R. Llewelyn, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity 7* (North Ryde, NSW, Australia: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1994), §5, 93–111.

Support for λειτουργία as a public service is found in Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 239–40. Proponents of a cultic sense for λειτουργία include Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 443; Joubert, “Religious Reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6–15,” 86; and Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:586–87.

⁴¹⁶ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 650.

thanksgiving to God, the purpose of the collection.⁴¹⁷

Interestingly, Aristotle's discussion of *λειτουργία* within friendship is relevant here. Although *λειτουργία* may initially appear at odds with friendship,⁴¹⁸ Aristotle indicates that a true friend does his share of labors and *λειτουργία* for the sake of concord and the good of the people. It is the "base" who are incapable of friendship, because they attempt to reap all the advantages and benefits of such a relationship without assuming any of its responsibilities.⁴¹⁹ This matches the situation to which Paul speaks. The issue here is that the Corinthians are not merely donating funds to a dole for Jerusalem. Paul's very point is that the Jerusalem Christians are useful and are equal partners based on their *δικαιοσύνη* before God received through the Christ-event. The Corinthians, meanwhile, are tempted by the mindsets of their prior life to focus only on their good and to ignore the responsibilities towards others that they now have as a result of their new positional status.⁴²⁰

Therefore, to some extent, Paul's use of *λειτουργία* holds together its secular and religious connotations. The Corinthians are participating in an act of sacrificial service that will fill the needs of the saints and promote concord and good of the whole community. At the same time, this *λειτουργία* indicates that the public service is ultimately for God's honor and glory. Paul further redefines Christian *λειτουργία* to participation in Christ's offering of himself, as the

⁴¹⁷ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 650; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 363.

⁴¹⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.14.1163a29, talks about *λειτουργία* in the context of friendship among unequal people, that "if a man is of no use ... he ought not to have an equal share, for it becomes a charity and not a friendship at all."

⁴¹⁹ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.6.1167b5–16.

⁴²⁰ Positional status is linked to roles or positions with obligations, duties, privileges, and responsibilities. The Corinthians had previously relied upon their accorded status, which depends upon honor and prestige. Remarkably, Paul saw positional status as a gift from God, much as Pliny the Younger saw it as granted by "well-placed political leaders" (*Ep.* 3.2.1–6; 10.5.1–2; 10.26.2–3); Thomas R. Blanton, *A Spiritual Economy: Gift Exchange in the Letters of Paul of Tarsus*, Syn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 13, 86.

λειτουργία *par excellence*, to both God and to other people, which, in other words, is κοινωνία and friendship.⁴²¹ The collection should accordingly be understood primarily as an act of worship, as a priestly service, even as it was also a voluntary charitable donation, meant to bind Christians in the single body of Christ.⁴²²

The next verse, 9:13, builds upon the previous one further with an explanation for (διὰ) and the basis of (ἐπὶ) the thanksgivings to God.⁴²³ The genitive τῆς διακονίας ταύτης is subjective, so that it is the “evidence that this service provides.”⁴²⁴ Paul’s envisioning of the Jerusalem saints glorifying God as a result of their receipt of the collection⁴²⁵ demonstrates that the collection is not mere repayment to reestablish equality between the Diaspora churches and Jerusalem. The Jerusalem recipients praise God for the Corinthians’ τῇ ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ⁴²⁶ and their ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας,⁴²⁷ which is

⁴²¹ William O. Daniels, Jr., “Christ the Liturgy” (PhD diss, University of Nottingham, 2013), 7–10, 42.

⁴²² Daniels, “Christ the Liturgy,” 37; Georgi, *Remember the Poor*, 104; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 363; Minor, *Second Corinthians*, 177; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:586.

⁴²³ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 656.

⁴²⁴ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 651.

⁴²⁵ While the implied subject of the participle δοξάζοντες is not immediately clear – it may be (1) the Corinthians, the main subject in 9:6–11a (Jan Lambrecht, “Paul’s Boasting about the Corinthians: A Study of 2 Cor 8:24–9:5.” *NovT* 40 [1998]: 366; Matera, *II Corinthians*, 207, 210); (2) the Jerusalem Christians, the main subject in 9:11b–14 (Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:588; Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 240; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 364); or (3) deliberately ambiguous (Matera, *II Corinthians*, 210; Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 187) – only the Jerusalem recipients of the collection can fit as the subject. The Corinthians only glorify God through their confession to the gospel as a result of God’s work and gifts in them. The following verse additionally makes sense only if Jerusalem is in view as the subject.

⁴²⁶ The genitive τῆς ὁμολογίας is one of apposition. Klein, “Die Begründung für den Spendenaufruf,” 117; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 364; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:589.

The Corinthian confession is *to* the gospel of Christ, as an accusative of reference. Bruehler, “Proverbs, Persuasion and People,” 220; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 364.

The genitive in τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ is objective. Klein, “Die Begründung für den Spendenaufruf,” 117; Hans Klein, “Vereinbarung hinsichtlich der Mission? *omologia eis to euangelion* in 2Kor 9,13,” *ZNW* 103 (2012): 150.

⁴²⁷ The genitive τῆς κοινωνίας indicates that the single-mindedness or simplicity of the Corinthians is one that is appropriate to the sharing and solidarity that occurs among friends. Paul’s use of κοινωνία is not a mere synonym for the gift itself, since it not merely towards the Corinthians but εἰς πάντας. Malherbe, “The Corinthian

manifested in the collection but never reduced to the material gift itself. They are grateful for God's work that results in binding them together as friends in confession of the gospel and the meeting of each other's needs.

The genitive absolute ἐπιποθούντων and its accompanying dative of attendant circumstances δεήσει in 9:14 affirm the strengthened bond of κοινωνία between the Jerusalem and Corinthian Christians as a result of God's χάρις which is manifested in the collection.⁴²⁸ God interrupts the logic of the gift cycle. His χάρις is present at every stage of giving, even in the return of εὐχαριστία to himself, and invites all members of the Church to a life of giving and receiving.⁴²⁹

Finally, Paul concludes the chapter and the collection section with Χάρις τῷ θεῷ. The combination of χάρις and τῷ θεῷ occurs in the second epistle to the Corinthians a total of three times,⁴³⁰ and, in each of these occasions, it is an acknowledgement of God's action and giving.⁴³¹ Here in verse 15, it is a recognition ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγίτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾶ, an acknowledgment of God's self-giving in Christ, around which all his other gifts are oriented.⁴³² "It entails Christ's grace, which not only meets our every need but also elevates us to share in the divine giving. It

Contribution," 230.

⁴²⁸ Bruehler, "Proverbs, Persuasion and People," 221; Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 2:592.

Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 214, notes the parallel reconfiguration of the patronage system in 1 Clem 38:2 in which the poor thank God upon reception of generosity from the rich.

⁴²⁹ Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 145; Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 364–65.

⁴³⁰ 2 Cor 2:14; 8:16; 9:15.

⁴³¹ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 659.

⁴³² Note that the αὐτοῦ in ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγίτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾶ is emphatic in its attributive position (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 659).

The δωρεᾶ has also been interpreted as Christ himself (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 660; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 448); "the grace of God operative in the collection" (Thrall, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, 594); or the "whole salvation event" (Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 148).

includes God's creation of true community, in which the reality of giving is present."⁴³³

The thanksgiving and gratitude expressed by the Corinthians, Jerusalem, and all other Christians do not constitute a return gift to God, though these praises acknowledge that they have received his δωρεά. Thanksgiving is "the wondrous discovery of God in his love and care as the one, true Giver."⁴³⁴

Friendship and God's χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8–9

Paul's writings in 2 Cor 8–9 begin and end with χάρις, demonstrating its centrality to Paul's theology regarding the collection, plus Paul intersperses the term throughout his instructions.⁴³⁵ Commentators see multiple senses of χάρις in these two chapters, including χάρις as God's kindness, the benefits of the gospel, privilege or favor, the collection as a charitable act, the virtuous act of sharing, the collection as proof of goodwill, as expression of gratitude, and as the opportunity for reconciliation between Paul and the Corinthians.⁴³⁶ While all these aspects are legitimate, a list does not fully capture how the 11 senses of χάρις are interrelated when understood within its Greco-Roman background of friendship.

Within its secular Greco-Roman usage in later antiquity, χάρις is increasingly tied to the concept of favor and the gift cycle, rather than its broader sense of something beautiful and delightful.⁴³⁷ In more recent work, this has caused analysis of χάρις in 2 Cor 8–9 to move beyond

⁴³³ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 367.

⁴³⁴ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 363.

⁴³⁵ 2 Cor 8:1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16; 9:8, 14, 15.

⁴³⁶ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 458, 559–60.

⁴³⁷ Denis Vidal, "The Three Graces, or the Allegory of the Gift: A Contribution to the History of an Idea in Anthropology," trans. Eléonore Rimbault, *JEthTh* 4 (2014): 343. He continues to detail on pp. 343–45 that the Latin term *gratia* became the equivalent of χάρις. Despite lack of etymological kinship, the Latin writers deliberately and consistently used the two as equal. The two are distinguished slightly by the manner in which χάρις refers to "a quality inherent in any authentic social exchange," whereas *gratia* holds the sense of a gratuitous service, done

theological readings of divine χάρις as instrumental to the origin and act of the collection³⁸ in order to incorporate insights from the model of Greco-Roman benefaction and patronage. While some simply note χάρις as benefaction,³⁹ others provide varying applications of the sociological model to explain how God's preeminent χάρις has altered the expected return. Most, including deSilva, maintain that Christians are obligated to make a gracious response to God's generosity, to express gratitude, to increase his honor, and to show loyalty to him.⁴⁰ However, God's χάρις has transformed human relationships so that they are removed from the competition for status and prestige. Though the different scholars use their own terms to describe what has happened, they agree that God's χάρις actively empowers subsequent giving and sharing within the Church, providing both the means to give and the motivation to do so, and this new outlook is embodied and exemplified in the collection.⁴¹

The concept of friendship brings more precision to the connotations of χάρις, especially in terms of human relationships. Friendship is the paradigmatic relationship based upon χάρις, which is said to hold society together, and upon its circular cycle of reciprocity—giving, receiving, thanksgiving, gift, counter-gift, and gratitude. As others have argued before, Paul retains the basic concepts of χάρις, but he reorients them based upon his insistence that the Christ-event is the ultimate divine gift through which all other gifts are now to be understood.

without expectation of a counter-service, which prompts a sentiment of gratitude, which in turn inspires service.

³⁸ Nickle, *The Collection*, 109–10; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 72.

³⁹ Danker, *Benefactor*, 334, 437–38, 453, 472.

⁴⁰ David A. deSilva, "Patronage and Reciprocity: The Context of Grace in the New Testament," *ATJ* 31 (1999): 38, 61–63; Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 47–48; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 74–75.

⁴¹ Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 439–42, 573–74; deSilva, "Patronage and Reciprocity," 69; Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 246–47; Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 247; 284–88, 343; Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 202.

The language Paul uses to describe this gift in 8:9 involves Christ's incarnation, which brings together the material and spiritual realms.⁴⁴² Moreover, Jesus' self-impoverishment on behalf of others is the supreme example of χάρις, since true gifts entail the "self-giving of the giver."⁴⁴³ In this way, the Christ-event shapes Paul's understanding of history and the character of God. It not only reestablishes relationship, both between God and humanity and also within humanity, but it also provides the foundation for all other gifts within the divine economy.⁴⁴⁴ In the typical sociological model, the exchange of χάρις holds society together. Here, the gifts issued in the Christ-event, particularly the gifts of δικαιοσύνη and reconciliation, instead form the basis of the bond holding Christians together in ideal friendship, which is the basis for true εὐδαιμονία, life characterized by δικαιοσύνη, and human flourishing. In turn, friendship within the Church impacts the form of all reciprocity that occurs among its members so that it flows generously and without calculation.

Both 2 Cor 8:1 and 9:14 contain the phrase ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, which respectively refer to the χάρις experienced by the Macedonians and the Corinthians in terms of God's gifts of material provision, δικαιοσύνη, and salvation.⁴⁴⁵ God's χάρις is the key to the success of the Jerusalem collection, and it constitutes the only possible source of Christian generosity. It is God who makes all χάρις abound to them so that they can do every good work.⁴⁴⁶ Now the overflow of

⁴⁴² Brändle, "Geld und Gnade," 264–65; Craddock, "Poverty of Christ," 165–70; Barclay, "Because he was rich he became poor," 338.

⁴⁴³ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 319.

⁴⁴⁴ Reconciliation is a theme tightly related to the friendship topos. See previous section, "2 Corinthians 8–9 as Deliberative Rhetoric on Unity," 87–90.

⁴⁴⁵ On the gift of material provision, Philo, *Drunkennes* 117–119, presents a relevant parallel by calling God's creation and man's enjoyment of it a χάρις of God. However, as McFarland, "The God Who Gives," 240, demonstrates, while Philo insists on God's creation as the source of all gifts, Paul holds that the event of Christ's life, death, and resurrection is the ultimate divine gift through which all other gifts are understood.

⁴⁴⁶ 2 Cor 9:8.

God’s χάρις divinely empowers the Macedonians, Corinthians, and all other participants to complete the collection, also named a χάρις itself, which, in turn, demonstrates the material and real transformative results of God’s χάρις.⁴⁴⁷ Just as Christ’s incarnation minimized the separation between the material and spiritual realms, so here, too, generous giving demonstrates the presence of God’s χάρις.⁴⁴⁸ Paul’s vocabulary throughout 2 Cor 8–9 accordingly reflects a collection characterized by χάρις: “abound,”⁴⁴⁹ “abundance,”⁴⁵⁰ “simplicity,”⁴⁵¹ “voluntary,”⁴⁵² “willingness, readiness,”⁴⁵³ and “zeal.”⁴⁵⁴ Macedonia begs to take part in the χάρις in this type of χάρις-filled manner,⁴⁵⁵ and Paul exhorts the Corinthians to excel in this act of χάρις likewise.⁴⁵⁶

The collection as a χάρις reinforces the κοινωνία that binds the Corinthians with all other participants in the project. Within the sequence of receiving and giving, God grants his χάρις to humans, humans share it with other humans, and then the χάρις is finally returned to God.⁴⁵⁷ Therefore, the divine gift defines the community,⁴⁵⁸ and the full expression of χάρις involves the

⁴⁴⁷ 2 Cor 8:6, 7, 19; cf. 8:1, 9; 9:14; 1 Cor 16:3; Griffith, “Abounding in Generosity,” 115.

⁴⁴⁸ Antony, “He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food,” 307; Horrell, “Paul’s Collection,” 76.

⁴⁴⁹ περισσεύειν; 2 Cor 8:2, 7; 9:8, 12.

⁴⁵⁰ περίσσευμα, περισσεΐα; 2 Cor 8:2, 14.

⁴⁵¹ ἀπλότης; 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11, 13.

⁴⁵² ἀθθαίρετος; 2 Cor 8:3, 17.

⁴⁵³ προθυμία; 2 Cor 8:11, 12, 19; 9:2.

⁴⁵⁴ σπουδή, σπουδαίος; 2 Cor 8:7, 8, 16, 17; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 389; Matera, *II Corinthians*, 181.

⁴⁵⁵ 2 Cor 8:4.

⁴⁵⁶ 2 Cor 8:6, 7.

⁴⁵⁷ This sequence is non-circular, and the logic of reciprocity has been undermined. God gives the χάρις. Christians are enabled by that χάρις and enriched by that χάρις to be conduits of God’s χάρις. God glorifies himself through this sharing of χάρις.

⁴⁵⁸ As Barclay argues in *Paul and the Gift*, 439–42, the gospel demands communities that reflect the reality of God’s incongruous gift such that normal markers of worth are now meaningless. Developing his idea further, Christian giving is removed from the considerations of social status, and it is enabled to reflect the equality that is found in the highest form of friendship, that based upon virtue and goodness. Giving moves away further from

building up of the community.⁴⁵⁹ Paul directly affirms that others are bound to the Corinthians as well, that God's χάρις upon them is the reason for the Jerusalem saints to long and pray for them.⁴⁶⁰

Paul and the Corinthians do not give on account of their indebtedness to God. God's χάρις neither demands a response nor is conditioned by the expectation of a response, but it does transform its recipients, their attitudes, and their behavior. The Corinthians give in the same manner as God who gives to them freely and causes every χάρις to overflow to them,⁴⁶¹ and they give out of the excessive abundance which they have received.⁴⁶² God's gift flows through the Corinthians to help the poor. They thus embody God's χάρις.⁴⁶³ Giving is consistent with the reconciliation and being part of the new creation initiated by God's χάρις.⁴⁶⁴

On the human level, each aspect of χάρις establishes the highest and most ideal forms of friendship and equality, since the cycle is no longer dependent on a return from the other party. God instead provides for and sustains every step of the gift cycle. Just as the Hebrew Bible covenant relationships between God and his people were God' initiated and God-upheld, despite the failures of Israel to act appropriately, so now God holds the entire cycle of reciprocity together, and he extends friendship to Christians even as he remains Ultimate Giver.⁴⁶⁵

economic calculation, as "friends share everything in common."

⁴⁵⁹ Joseph Peter Becker, *Paul's Use of χάρις in 2 Corinthians 8–9: An Ontology of Grace* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2011), 53–55.

⁴⁶⁰ 2 Cor 9:14.

⁴⁶¹ 2 Cor 9:8.

⁴⁶² Young and Ford, *Meaning and Truth*, 178.

⁴⁶³ Barclay, "Circulation of Grace," 420.

⁴⁶⁴ McFarland, "The God Who Gives," 224.

⁴⁶⁵ Nickle, *The Collection*, 109, points out that "grace" designated the relationship of God to man in the covenant in the Hebrew Bible, seen by the way in which the LXX utilizes χάρις for the Hebrew term חַן. Cf. Hans Conzelmann and Walther Zimmerli, "χάρις, χαρίζομαι, χαριτόω, ἀχάριστος," *TDNT* 8:372–402.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: FRIENDSHIP AND GIFT IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8–9

The concluding chapter will place 2 Cor 8–9 in the broader context of the epistle, summarize the findings of each preceding chapter, and consider the intersection of friendship with justification and sanctification.

2 Corinthians 8–9 in the Context of the Larger Epistle

In the same way that the term *χάρις* is usually associated with a cycle of favor, gift, and counter-gift, here in 2 Cor 8–9, too, *χάρις* cannot have an individual focus but can only be understood within relationships to others. God’s provision of *χάρις* remarkably not only effects reconciliation between himself and his recipient, but also among his recipients. As a result, Paul’s instructions on the collection fit appropriately within the themes of the entire epistle, that of reconciliation and of sufficiency in God, and so arguably provide its main purpose and occasion.¹

Chapters 1–7 contain Paul’s explanation of his conduct and ministry in light of his refusal of Corinthian money and the charge of his opponents.² Since Paul is concerned with defending his apostleship, he appropriately depicts himself as a friend and not a flatterer. The frank speech of the “painful letter” was effective, so now Paul applies frankness gently and encouragingly in 2 Cor 6:13 and 7:2, imploring the Corinthians to *πλατύνθητε* and *χωρήσατε*, to allow Paul and

¹ Chang, “Fund-Raising in Corinth,” 248.

² Gnillka, “Die Kollekte der paulinischen Gemeinden,” 304–5.

his coworkers into their lives more fully and to reciprocate their openness and affection. After all, he calls the Corinthians his friends in 7:3 with his statement that ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἐστε εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν, and he continues in 7:4 to state that he is speaking with πολλή παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς. The section culminates with Paul’s direct appeal to reconciliation in 2 Cor 7, so the rest of the epistle details what that reconciliation would entail.

The first part of that reconciliation involves successful Corinthian participation in the Jerusalem collection. The second part of the reconciliation involves acceptance of Paul’s apostleship, which is identified with an acceptance of the true gospel. Here in 2 Cor 10–13, Paul utilizes παρρησία to defend his apostleship again, this time against the accusations of other newly arrived teachers. In contrast to these other teachers, Paul exhibits the right balance of speech for a friend. He is neither a perpetually cheerful flatterer, nor is he an unfriendly person who always finds fault. He does not adapt himself to the Corinthians’ interests or lets them have an upper hand in imitating the good; he instead calls them back to the gospel. He is consistent and only wants the best things for the Corinthians.⁴ He is disagreeable with the Corinthians for the sake of their good. He has simple language, not eloquent loquaciousness. He tempers his criticism with praise. Some have charged Paul with not being a true friend, but Paul has a strong ἦθος to support his παρρησία⁵ and has the bravery to utilize that frank speech.⁶ That Paul’s frankness is applied more harshly in 2 Cor 10–13—a rejection of his apostleship is likewise a rejection of the gospel—corresponds to Plutarch’s instructive that frankness be proportional to

³ 2 Cor 11:12; cf. 13:2.

⁴ 2 Cor 11:20; 12:17, 19; 13:8.

⁵ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 52A, 68C, 71E–F, 73B.

⁶ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 73D.

⁷ Contrary to Peter Lampe, “Can Words Be Violent or Do They Only Sound That Way?: Second Corinthians: Verbal Warfare from Afar as a Complement to a Placid Personal Presence,” in *Paul and Rhetoric*, ed. J. Paul

the crisis.⁸

Paul's instructions on the collection create a bridge between his two defenses of his apostleship. These chapters only make sense in light of Paul's desire that the Corinthians comprehend the counter-cultural gospel message and demonstrate this understanding through readying the collection. The collection embodies how societal norms of worth and value have been nullified by God's χάρις and how human weakness can only find its sufficiency in God. To be reconciled with Paul is to be reconciled with the Church and to be reconciled with God.

Summary

Paul's instructions regarding the Jerusalem collection in 2 Cor 8–9 are more clearly understood against the ancient Greco-Roman friendship topos, which provides a framework for understanding reciprocity, community, and human flourishing.

The first chapter assesses the current scholarship on this text and finds that socio-historical and socio-scientific studies have recently been the most fruitful for new insights. Many scholars have identified the collection as an alternative to or a modification of patronage and benefaction practices, and, though a few voices have identified the relevance of Hellenistic friendship, they have neglected to develop it further. This dissertation begins at this point, considering the contours of ancient friendship and establishing Paul's application of the relationship to the

Sampley and Peter Lampe (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 236–37, Paul's words in 2 Cor 10–13 stay firmly *παρρησία* and do not risk becoming insulting (*λοιδορία*). Lampe bases his assessment on his understanding that Paul “does write out of self-interest, anger, and hurt when he tries to rescue his severely tarnished reputation as a legitimate apostle,” which clashes with the instructions for *παρρησία* in Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 52B, 66E–67A, and 71D. He accepts that Paul personally saw these chapters as “beneficial” for the Corinthians, but he forgets that Paul's larger purpose is that the Corinthians accept the gospel. Paul is not concerned with his personal pride or self-interest but with the Corinthians' salvation. He is not angry, but he is using frankness proportional to the biggest crisis that there can be.

J. Paul Sampley, “Paul and Frank Speech,” in Sampley, *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, 308–9, is an example of a scholar who believes that Paul maintains frank speech in 2 Cor 10–13.

⁸ Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 69E–F.

Corinthian context.

Chapter two explains underlying assumptions about the significance for social status for the Corinthian congregation and how that affected its theological misunderstandings. All social relationships were affected by differences in status, and the particular historical situation of Corinth made her people more sensitive to issues of status. The church in Corinth contained members from different social strata and continued to follow secular attitudes; thus arises the problems Paul addresses in his epistles, including the question of participation in the collection. Corinthian acceptance of Paul's apostleship, reception of the gospel, and reconciliation with the broader Church all ultimately depend upon their successful completion of their contribution.

The third chapter considers the friendship topos developed in the writings of Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Dio Chrysostom, and Plutarch; it also notes its adaptation by Philo and Clement of Alexandria. Chapter four, with its exegesis of 2 Cor 8–9, is then poised to assess Paul's use of the friendship topos in these two chapters.

Paul's instructions on the collection begin with the Macedonian example, their response described as wholly rooted in God's χάρις.⁹ After God's gift of χάρις enabled the Macedonians to become a new creation in right relationship with God and with others, they are freed from competition for advantage, status, and resources; they are able to relate to other Christians in true friendship. The Macedonians, despite their material poverty, themselves have the desire to participate in helping the Jerusalem saints.

The example of the Macedonians parallels in several ways the highest example of Christ, who voluntarily impoverished himself and also exceeded all expectations.¹⁰ The Macedonians and

⁹ 2 Cor 8:1–5.

¹⁰ 2 Cor 8:9.

Christ experience a simultaneity of wealth and poverty, so both their examples reorient the Corinthians' perspective on wealth and poverty. The Corinthians, wealthy by worldly standards, are the ones who find themselves spiritually poor. They have not allowed themselves to be enriched by God's χάρις, and they have not allowed that χάρις to bind them with other Christians in friendship.

The Corinthians also can learn from the Macedonians' wealth of ἀπλότης. This term points to the attitude in giving, to the giver's sincerity and motivation, rather than to the size of a gift.¹¹ As Seneca discusses in *De Beneficiis*, the most important thing is that the Corinthians, whether they are in the place of the givers or the recipients, have goodwill. They should not confuse their giving with any kind of reward or return.¹² Rather, their participation in the collection is a byproduct of their first giving of themselves to God and their subsequent giving of themselves to Paul and his mission.¹³ The Corinthians' monetary contribution would represent both the actualization of their received χάρις and their acknowledgment of their mutual need for Christian κοινωνία, but the contribution itself is not the priority.¹⁴

Paul continues to describe how the Macedonians requested involvement in the κοινωνία that is fulfilled in διακονία. This choice of words points to how Christian fellowship is an active partnership among its participants who see themselves as being tasked by and enabled by God to fulfill each other's needs. The collection was not an opportunity for the Corinthians to serve as patrons to Jerusalem or even to present a return gift to their divine benefactor. The collection is

¹¹ 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11; cf. 9:13.

¹² Jean-Joseph Goux, "Seneca against Derrida: Gift and Alterity," in *The Enigma of Gift and Sacrifice*, ed. Edith Wyschogrod, Jean-Joseph Goux, and Eric Boynton, PCP 23, ed. John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 152–55.

¹³ 2 Cor 8:5.

¹⁴ 2 Cor 8:11–12; Seneca, *Ben.* 5.9.4; Goux, "Seneca against Derrida," 160.

representative of their involvement in God's χάρις, as they are themselves recipients of that χάρις, are commissioned by that χάρις, and are conduits of that χάρις to others. In this way, God's χάρις provides the basis of the friendship among Christians.

Finishing the collection benefits the Corinthians foremost, because their participation allows them to abound increasingly in the wealth of God's χάρις.¹⁵ The paradox here is that they cannot hold onto divine χάρις as a private possession or manipulate it as they formerly did with their worldly resources. If they give money to Jerusalem for the purpose of receiving a return or in response to a command,¹⁶ then they have no true "grasp" of God's χάρις.

Paul also draws the connection between the Corinthian participation in the collection and the establishment of ἰσότης. The word ἰσότης introduces and concludes a chiasmus so that its pivot point is focused not on material lack and surplus but on equality and the establishment of friendship through the act of supplying each other's needs, the performance of which Paul has already established as that which God has commissioned them to do.¹⁷ Paul's citation of Exod 16:18 and the manna narrative then clarifies that the Corinthians, along with all other Christians, demonstrate whether or not they trust in God's provisions and are willing to live according to his design for creation via their use of their resources, which are all a materialization of God's χάρις.¹⁸

Not only does Paul use the example of the Macedonians to aid in reorienting the

¹⁵ 2 Cor 8:7; 9:8. In both of these verses, the Corinthians are exhorted to περισσεύητε in χάρις, though the former reference contains the imperative and the latter the subjunctive. If the Corinthians wanted to boast in their spiritual gifts, then Paul all the more expects them to abound in χάρις. Nevertheless, Paul is unwilling to let the Corinthians forget that their abundance in χάρις comes from God and that it is always tied to abounding in good works.

¹⁶ 2 Cor 8:8; cf. 9:5.

¹⁷ 2 Cor 8:13–14; cf. 8:3.

¹⁸ 2 Cor 8:15

Corinthians' understanding of the gospel and of God's χάρις, but he also utilizes the delegation of Titus and the two brothers to continue to draw the Corinthians away from self-centeredness. Titus, himself spurred on by divinely given σπουδή, will serve as a friend to help the Corinthians complete the collection as an act of χάρις.¹⁹ He and the other two men are going to the Corinthians as living examples of persons who have allowed God's χάρις to work in their lives and are now willingly helping others as a result. Their administration of the collection will be done in an honorable manner, validated by their good reputations among the churches, and they do so without seeking a return. The Corinthian congregation should be inspired to demonstrate her members to be true friends. They should be encouraged by the goodwill and good character of Titus, the two brothers, and Macedonia, just as all these friends have been encouraged by news of the Corinthians' zeal in Paul's boasting.²⁰

Titus, the two brothers, and the Macedonians have all displayed the marks of friendship. Again, Paul poses the questions to the Corinthians whether they will choose to be friends as well. He gives them the alternative between a participation in the collection ὡς πλεονεξίαν or ὡς εὐλογίαν.²¹ The former is directly opposed to friendship. The latter option segues into the broader context of the collection as rooted in the action of God in creation, beginning with the metaphor that the one who sows ἐπ' εὐλογίαις will reap ἐπ' εὐλογίαις.²² Variations of this metaphor in antiquity often were used in the context of benefaction and reciprocity to express that what a person gives determines his return. While the modern tendency is to interpret this return solely in terms of future reward, Paul still is referring to alternative attitudes in giving,

¹⁹ 2 Cor 8:6, 16–23.

²⁰ 2 Cor 8:1–5, 24; 9:2.

²¹ 2 Cor 9:5.

²² 2 Cor 9:6.

whether the Corinthians will participate cheerfully as ones benefiting from God's bountiful provision or whether they will respond in greed and as though they still exist in an economy characterized by scarcity and competition. This recapitulates what Paul has been repeating throughout the collection instructions and the paradox of wealth and poverty, that the person who has embraced the reality of God's gift of χάρις is transformed to reflect this same type of giving in their lives. This giving, meanwhile, becomes mutuality and sharing in friendship; Christians are able to achieve the ideal that Seneca described in giving without the thought of a return. This is the kind of giver that God "loves" and in whom his gift of χάρις can abound.²³

One crucial facet of the divine gift of χάρις is the establishment of αὐτάρκεια in its recipients.²⁴ The quality of sufficiency is a precondition to friendship, to lack nothing and subsequently be freed to do and wish good for the sake of the other. Christian αὐτάρκεια entails participation in God's giving and in doing good works. As a result, God's provision of χάρις and αὐτάρκεια furthers the goal of friendship and interdependence within the Church.

Finally, Paul places the Corinthian participation in the collection within the context of God's gift of δικαιοσύνη.²⁵ The intentional ambiguity within his citation of Psalm 112:9 with respect to the referent of the verbs ἐσκόρπισεν and ἔδωκεν and to ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ points to how human δικαιοσύνη has its root in and is dependent upon God's δικαιοσύνη. God provides for the Jerusalem saints through the Corinthians and other members of the Diaspora churches, all of whom serve as conduits of his gifts. The subsequent citations from Isa 55:10 and Hos 10:2 establish that the Corinthians, as they have received God's gift of righteousness and are

²³ 2 Cor 9:7–8.

²⁴ 2 Cor 9:8.

²⁵ 2 Cor 9:9–10.

dependent upon his provision, find themselves within a new eschatological reality and a new creation. Within their new social reality, the Corinthians have been enabled to be generous, to take part alongside the Macedonians in the *διακονία* for Jerusalem, and to serve as friends.²⁶

Multiple strands of the friendship topos converge when the Jerusalem collection is understood as a sign of true community and friendship that is enabled by God's gifts. The Corinthians, having received *χάρις*, now participate in God's giving, which is appropriately characterized as cheerful, willing, and without delay. Corinthian giving takes place from the posture of equality with other Christians, not as benefactors or patrons. On one level, the equality Paul expects to be realized within the Church is dynamic and expressed in the midst of differences. The result is a mutuality in which members retain their social differences, serve in various capacities, and make varied contributions, and in which no person can be said to be better or more important than another.²⁷ Nevertheless, this equality in the midst of difference is based upon an *ισότης* of "status" before God. This marker of status becomes the only one that matters and is based upon the *δικαιοσύνη* of Christ that is imputed to each Christian, that is, the *δικαιοσύνη* of Christ that becomes attributed to them. With each person having the same standing before God and having equality of status, they can hold everything in common, in *κοινωνία*. They have been released from calculations of debt to each other and therefore from the potentially burdensome counter-obligations of a gift economy; they have been granted an *αὐτάρκεια* that frees them to be genuine friends.²⁸ Meanwhile, their new status of *δικαιοσύνη*

²⁶ 2 Cor 9:11–12.

²⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 12:12–31.

²⁸ Clement of Alexandria provides some interesting points of comparison and contrast here. He affirms the classical conception of friendship and his *Quis dives salvetur* also features a number of relevant pastoral parallels with Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians—they both address issues involving wealthier members of the church, including the tendency for the better-off to establish hierarchies according to the conventional markers of social status (O'Brien, "Rich Clients and Poor Patrons," 55). While he advocates for moderation in the name of *κοινωνία*,

corresponds with new responsibilities, especially towards their friends and neighbors.

On a slightly more theoretical level, because all Christians have an equality of status based upon δικαιοσύνη attributed to them through union with Christ, this δικαιοσύνη also provides the quality for which Jerusalem is lovable as a friend.²⁹ If Corinth loved Jerusalem for her contribution of spiritual riches, that would indicate merely a friendship of utility.³⁰ Their friendship would be temporary and last only as long as each party remained useful to the other. Paul's promotion of the collection cannot then be based upon a notion that Corinth owes Jerusalem or that Corinth gives now solely in the expectation of a future return from Jerusalem.³¹

To move more towards the philosophical considerations of friendship, δικαιοσύνη in Pauline theology may fulfill the traditional role of ἀρετή within ancient Greco-Roman ethical theory. The philosophers understood that (1) δικαιοσύνη and ἀρετή overlapped, that δικαιοσύνη is the sum of ἀρετή;³² (2) ἀρετή is the basis of the most ideal form of friendship;³³ and (3) friendship is the completion of δικαιοσύνη.³⁴ Paul avoids ἀρετή in favor of δικαιοσύνη, since his focus is never on human achievement but upon what God has achieved in and for

Clement, *Quis div.* 41, establishes a new alternative hierarchy in which the “poor” hold a privileged spiritual status. The “rich” give their surplus to the poor, an act that aids them in attaining salvation. The end result is that the church becomes an ideal friendship community via proportional equality, not only fostering friendship among Christians but also helping those same believers achieve friendship with God. In contrast, not only does Paul envision each member of the Corinthian church as participating in the collection, no matter their financial situation (1 Cor 16:2), but he understands God as having already established salvation and friendship. This point also speaks to the Corinthians' tendency towards status competition. Their giving is not a means of gaining leverage or serving as patrons to the Jerusalemites. Rather, they share because they are friends.

²⁹ With Philo (*Virtues* 179; *Spec. Laws* 1.51–52, 317; 3.155; *Moses* 2.171), that the Jews are bound together in the closest form of friendship due to their shared worship of God is a strong parallel to the idea that the Christians might be bound together in an even stronger friendship on the basis of their shared union with Christ and of imputed δικαιοσύνη, transforming them and reconciling them with God and with each other.

³⁰ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1236a31–33; *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1155b5–10.

³¹ 2 Cor 8:13–15; Barclay, “Manna and the Circulation of Grace,” 422.

³² Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 5.1.1129b30–32; 5.2.1130a9.

³³ Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 7.2.1236a31–33; *Eth. nic.* 8.3.1155b5–10.

³⁴ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.1.1155a28.

Christians. The connection between δικαιοσύνη and ἀρετή is important in that it establishes friendship within the church as based upon δικαιοσύνη and being the most ideal, most enduring form of friendship. It also orients Christian friendship within the discussion of pursuit of εὐδαιμονία. God with his gift of δικαιοσύνη extends to the Corinthians and to the rest of the Church the ability to live this ideal of human happiness and flourishing, both individually and in community.

Furthermore, there is the deep connection between being ethical and being happy. Within the modified Hellenistic framework, living according to the standard of δικαιοσύνη is necessary for the Corinthians to flourish and to live out the good and happy life, but it is only possible within the new creation, brought about by God's χάρις and enablement. Friends, here identified with Jerusalem, provide the Corinthians with an opportunity to practice beneficence and to engage in self-reflection.³⁵ Ultimately, they all reflect the work of God and seek to become more Christ-like. In concord, they work toward the same purposes.³⁶ They form a partnership and community in κοινωνία.³⁷

The members of the Church are conduits of divine χάρις, and they serve as commissioned agents of God to serve each other. All of God's gifts provide for renewed relationship between Christians and God and among Christians. Paul locates the fundamental underpinning of the Church as God's χάρις.³⁸ God's χάρις is initially manifest in the Christ-event, which, in turn, produces and transforms subsequent giving.³⁹ With God, χάρις is a gift, but also more than a

³⁵ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.9.1169b3–14, 9.9.1169b31–1170a11.

³⁶ Aristotle, *Mag. mor.* 2.13.1212a15–27; *Eth. eud.* 7.7.1241a16–33, *Eth. nic.* 9.6.1167a23–b16.

³⁷ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.9.1159b27–32.

³⁸ This contrasts with Seneca's depiction of the gift cycle as creating the social bond for the community (*Ben.* 1.5.5, 2.18.5, 2.21.2).

³⁹ Griffith, "Abounding in Generosity," 79, writes that, "κοινωνία within the body of Christ implies a sense of

mere gift. The divine gift, the self-giving of Christ, communicates the Giver along with his gift so that it creates its own worthy recipients as those recipients are bound with Christ and have Christ's δικαιοσύνη attributed to them. The resultant union with Christ entails reconciliation with God and with other Christians, a new relationship of friendship. The Corinthians and all other believers share everything that they have in κοινωνία, both in περίσσευμα and ὑστέρημα.⁴⁰ They share God's χάρις that they have received.

Paul utilizes the topos of friendship throughout 2 Cor 8–9 so that participation in the Jerusalem collection means that all members of the ἐκκλησία are unified as friends of equal status through the δικαιοσύνη of God through Jesus Christ—which takes the normal place of ἀρετή within the topos—with the result that Christians may participate in the highest, most ideal and permanent form of friendship and achieve εὐδαιμονία.⁴¹ God's self-giving is the definitive expression of his χάρις, and his self-communication shapes his recipients so that they have the appropriate δικαιοσύνη, on the one hand, to be worthy of receiving his gift and, on the other hand, to engage in giving to others. All subsequent giving finds its root and enablement in God's giving, so that the giving that takes place among the φίλοι-in-Christ is characterized by free and gracious generosity with no thought to a return, by ἀντάρχεια, by participation in κοινωνία, and by the working of εὐχαριστία to God, the original and ultimate Giver of all gifts.

Justification, Sanctification, and Friendship

spiritual equality. Thus, gift giving or the bestowal of benefits meets needs within an existing community; it is not meant as a means of establishing relationships.” Thus, the Jerusalem collection is an expression of and strengthens the κοινωνία between Jerusalem and Corinth, not an establishment of their relationship.

⁴⁰ 2 Cor 8:14.

⁴¹ First, ἀρετή identifies that which contributes to happiness and fulfillment, and it appropriately utilizes what one has in order to contribute to that εὐδαιμονία. In a parallel way, God's δικαιοσύνη within Christians helps orient them towards what is pleasing and worthwhile in life. Second, flourishing only takes place in the context of friendship. See previous section on “The Pauline Connection between δικαιοσύνη and ἀρετή,” 155–60.

Paul roots the Corinthian participation in the collection in their reception of divine χάρις and δικαιοσύνη and their subsequent union with Christ; the collection was a sign of their confession of the gospel. With these providing the foundation of friendship between Corinth and Jerusalem and the rest of the Church, the conversation has thus far primarily addressed the misunderstandings that the status-driven Corinthians had as a result of their understanding their contribution to Jerusalem within the honor-shame model of ancient Hellenistic social relationships; they were not to misunderstand themselves as patrons, and they were not to leverage their collection participation to gain more status and honor. Nevertheless, the basis of the collection in the χάρις of God, the same χάρις that is primarily conveyed and enabled through the Christ event in 2 Corinthians 8:9, points to the way in which the Christ event ushers in a new covenant and a new ministry of glory.⁴² Under this new covenant and within this new ministry, Christians have a new freedom to demonstrate works of love and to join in and imitate divine giving.⁴³ In other words, God's χάρις provides the basis for the radical alteration of the Corinthians' social paradigm.

The χάρις revealed in the Christ event causes a complete worldview shift. Χάρις as divine gift is no longer dominated by honor-shame considerations; it is removed from calculations of worth. There is no longer assessment of the value of counter-gift, there is no escalating contest for honor via the assessed worth of gifts exchanged, and there is no crushing shame when a recipient fails to make a return.⁴⁴ For Paul, then, the gospel entails that God's χάρις has erased shame

⁴² 2 Cor 3:6, 9.

⁴³ 2 Cor 3:17.

⁴⁴ Mauss's investigation of "gift" prompted many of the following sociological studies on reciprocal relationships. Most important among his conclusions is the idea that there is no such thing as a free gift, that every gift comes with the obligation to reciprocate, and that this reciprocation established solidarity between the two parties. Since gift is found in the context of economy, Mauss accordingly concluded that gifts could be used to vie for honor, with an unreciprocated gift resulting in inferiority. Mary Douglas, foreword to *The Gift: The Form and*

within gift exchange, not only between God and man but also among men. There is an opening of relationship without either exploitation or humiliating dependency.⁴⁵

The question of what aspect of God's gift, his χάρις, is "perfected" also arises. God's χάρις, when assessed only as a gift, has been highlighted by theologians throughout the years as perfecting all or some facets of superabundance, priority, singularity, incongruity, efficacy, and noncircularity.⁴⁶ These "perfections" all hint at the content of God's gift, the divine self-giving in the Christ-event, the "singular divine saving action" and "divine incursion into the world" which "establishes the new axis around which the entire world thereafter revolves and discloses the original meaning of the world as determined in the pretemporal counsel of God."⁴⁷

Unsurprisingly, Seneca's description of the qualities of gifts from the gods have some natural overlap with those attributed to God's gifts in the New Testament. There is agreement that God is the ultimate and generous source of all benefits,⁴⁸ and that humans can make no material return to God.⁴⁹ It is also *not* remarkable that God asks for no return⁵⁰ and that he confers

Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies, by Marcel Mauss, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), viii; Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 65.

Compare against Seneca, *Ben.* 5.4.2–5.5.4, where he writes that it is not shameful to receive a benefit if it is impossible to make a sufficient return because the character or position of the giver makes it impossible to do so. If a person tries to repay the benefit, this indicates that he or she was not outdone in intention, and so there is no shame.

⁴⁵ Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.3.1124b10–20, who understands reciprocity within the context of justice and equality. Gratitude, at most, is a secondary virtue, as the appropriate response to the non-sufficient person. However, Aristotle does prioritize the man who is indebted to nobody else; it is better to do good than to receive it.

⁴⁶ Barclay, *Paul and Gift*, 70–75, 80–182, surveying Marcion, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Karl Barth, Rudolph Bultmann, Ernst Käsemann, J. Louis Martyn, E. P. Sanders, and various scholars representing the New Perspective on Paul and afterwards.

⁴⁷ Francis Watson, "Is There a Story in These Texts?" in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 232.

⁴⁸ Philo, *Worse* 161–62; Seneca, *Ben.* 4.3.3–4.9.1.

⁴⁹ Philo, *Moses* 1.157; *Spec. Laws* 2.174; Seneca, *Ben.* 2.30.2; 4.3.2.

⁵⁰ Philo, *Cherubim* 123; Seneca, *Ben.* 4.9.1. In *Ben.* 4.3.2, Seneca writes, "[The gods would not] bestow the

benefits on the ungrateful, i.e., the undeserving.⁵¹ From a giver-oriented perspective, the “free” or “pure” gift is not a new idea. A benefit is assessed by the giver’s intention, not by reciprocity or the economy of the gift.⁵² The giver is supposed to imitate the gods in not demanding or expecting a material return; he is even supposed to forget that he gave a gift.⁵³ He gives for the sake of giving, not to seek profit, pleasure, or glory.⁵⁴

In the midst of the Hellenistic background, the Protestant tradition’s stress on the noncircularity of God’s gift seems to be what is unique, though recent scholarship questions this assumption with questions of how a relationship may exist without exchange.⁵⁵ These very questions on “pure gift” and its tension between the rejection and the necessity of reciprocity help narrow the focus onto what sets apart God’s χάρις from all other gifts. God’s χάρις, in providing for justification, opens up the very possibility of relationship. The vertical movement to create this opening of exchange points to God’s unilateral action; God shows himself to be the absolute giver and humans to be absolute recipients.

countless gifts that, day and night, they unceasingly pour forth ... they will, therefore, give to no man a benefit if their only motive in bestowing it is a regard for themselves and their own advantage.” Granted, these assume the gift of creation.

⁵¹ Seneca, *Ben.* 4.28.1; 5.15.1; 7.31.2–5.

⁵² Risto Saarinen, “The Language of Giving in Theology,” *NZSTR* 52 (2010): 282.

⁵³ Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 45.

⁵⁴ Seneca, *Ben.* 4.11.1.

So Seneca’s *De beneficiis* anticipates the modern conversation and ambiguity between the refusal of self-interest and exchange seen in Pierre Bourdieu, “Marginalia—Some Additional Notes on the Gift,” in *The Logic of the Gift: Towards an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. Alan D. Schrift (New York: Routledge, 1997), 231, for instance.

⁵⁵ Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 74–75, stresses the expectation of the return of gratitude in Seneca and Philo to argue that God’s gift of his Son was not a gift given without thought of a return. He declares that the deficiency of the non-circularity of gift is that, “The one-way gift establishes no relation, creates a permanent and humiliating dependency, and frees the recipient of all responsibility.” Cf. David A. deSilva, “‘We Are Debtors’: Grace and Obligation in Paul and Seneca,” in *Paul and Seneca in Dialogue*, ed. Joey Dodson and David Briones, APR 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 150; Bo Kristian Holm, “Luther’s Theology of the Gift” in *Gift of Grace: The Future of Lutheran Theology*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen et al (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 81.

The focus then comes back to the receiver, to the human beneficiaries of God's χάρις. While Seneca's thought allowed room for a "free" gift from a giver-oriented perspective, he maintained that the recipient was bound to have gratitude,⁵⁶ provide a material return whenever possible,⁵⁷ and to tell others about the benefit that was received.⁵⁸ Significantly, gratitude constitutes a sufficient return for a gift,⁵⁹ and the Bible continuously calls the human recipients of God's gifts to respond in gratitude to him, including the final line of Paul's instructions on the collection in 2 Cor 9:15. As a result, it appears that any gift of God, properly received, demands a reciprocal circularity from humanity, and this initially seems to weaken the claim that God's gift is noncircular.⁶⁰

However, there is not and cannot be a return gift for God's χάρις that is detached from the Creator's own work in the human recipient.⁶¹ As Paul establishes with his references to agricultural and Isaianic concepts in 2 Cor 9, God is the creator of everything, including the redemption of his people. The fruits of salvation then produce cheerful givers, righteous persons whose appropriate behavior consists of giving. God's giving establishes its recipients and empowers them to respond with faith,⁶² and his χάρις contains the possibility for the return of

⁵⁶ Seneca, *Ben.* 4.40.1–5.

⁵⁷ Seneca, *Ben.* 7.14.1–7.16.6. However, in *Ben.* 7.15.4, he acknowledges it is impossible to make a material return to the gods.

⁵⁸ Seneca, *Ben.* 2.24.4; 2.29.1–2.30.2; Griffin, *Seneca on Society*, 45.

⁵⁹ Philo, *Planting* 126, 130–31; *Moses* 1.58; *Joseph* 267; *Spec. Laws* 1.224 on how man should return praise to God but can otherwise make no return; Seneca, *Ben.* 2.31.1–3.

⁶⁰ Cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 74–75.

⁶¹ On the opposite end of the spectrum from Mauss is Derrida, who maintains that a gift in must "keep a relation of foreignness to the circle," to any symmetry or reciprocity. He later explains, "For there to be a gift, there must be no reciprocity, return, exchange, counter-gift, or debt. If the other *gives* me *back* or *owes* me or has to give me back what I give him or her, there will not have been a gift, whether this restitution is immediate or whether it is programmed by a complex calculation of a long-term deferral or difference" (Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992], 7, 12).

⁶² Bayer and Seifrid, "The Ethics of Gift," 452. "God's gift is undeserved, absolute, and unconditional. Nor is

gratitude back to himself. Moreover, in the same way that Paul replaces the ideal of a developed or acquired ἀρετή with δικαιοσύνη rooted fully in union with Christ, gratitude is no longer a moral virtue to be developed.⁶³ The ability to return gratitude comes from God, and gratitude is the Christian's acknowledgment of joyful dependency upon God.⁶⁴

God's pure gift without a return does not exclude giving and receiving, but it opens up its very possibility and makes it truly possible.⁶⁵ The connection between justification and reconciliation with God highlights the aspect of the divine gift which provides for relationship between God and humankind, with the result that justification is the opening of reciprocity, which is realized in sanctification.⁶⁶ Furthermore, God's χάρις provides for horizontal reconciliation and sustains friendship between the Corinthians and all other members of the Church. Their innocence, their status of being δικαιοσύνη, is that same status that provides the

it conditioned—not even secondarily—by the expected response of the creature and the creaturely gift in return ...” In further explanation, Bayer says, “God’s acting takes place absolutely, unconditionally, apart from merit—in this sense, ‘out of nothing’ (*ex nihilo*), prior to every created thing. It takes place as a giving which is grounded in itself alone, an absolute, categorical giving, that finds nothing in its recipients, but establishes them in the first place. God’s categorical giving therefore takes the threefold, radical form of the *iustificatio impii*, the *resurrectio mortuorum*, and the *creatio ex nihilo*.”

⁶³ Seneca considers gratitude as something to be pursued for its own sake (*Ben.* 4.24.2); he also lists gratitude as the worst vice (*Ben.* 1.1.1–2; 1.10.4; 3.5.2; 7.26.4–7.28.1). Cicero includes gratitude in his virtue list (*Planc.* 30.80).

⁶⁴ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 363, describes thanksgiving as “the wondrous discovery of God in his love and care as the one, true Giver.” The converse, appropriately, is that ingratitude is a form of self-deification, an expression of anger at being inferior to God. Seneca, *Ben.* 2.29.1–4.

⁶⁵ Furthermore, giving is the recognition and acknowledgment of the other. Seneca, *Ben.* 5.9.4; 5.10.1; Goux, “Seneca against Derrida,” 160; Dietrich Korsch, “Freiheit als Summe: Über die Gestalt christlichen Lebens nach Martin Luther,” *NZSTR* 40 (1998): 152.

Bayer and Seifrid, “The Ethics of Gift,” 460, 462, affirm the truth that humans are not removed from the “logic of life” that is found in giving and receiving, acknowledging that there are two forms of sin by omission: the neglect of taking and the neglect of giving. God frees humans from self-imprisonment and opens them up for giving and receiving. Rather, as Jason Whitlark, “Enabling Χάρις: Transformation of the Convention of Reciprocity by Philo and in Ephesians,” *PRSt* 30 (2003): 341–42, writes, God undermines the logic of reciprocity by providing the initial χάρις to initiate a relationship and all subsequent χάρις to sustain the relationship. Reciprocity is “no longer the foundation for salvation or sanctification.” Gratitude is not repayment of a debt for God’s gifts.

⁶⁶ Korsch, “Freiheit als Summe,” 147–50.

basis for equality among Christians and for their friendship.

The recipients of God's χάρις are also granted ἀυτάρκεια, the sufficiency that leads to freedom to give and to love and the sufficiency that produces interconnectedness and friendship.⁶⁷ They have freedom to imitate God's giving and to give horizontally without self-interest, because they already have had their reward in heaven secured, independent of any of their present giving.⁶⁸ Human gifts are always inspired and enabled by divine giving.⁶⁹ God supplies the seed,⁷⁰ and it is through knowing the χάρις of Christ that the Corinthians participate in the χάρις of the Jerusalem collection.⁷¹ Paul can correspondingly call the Corinthians to be willing to share exuberantly with their Jerusalem friends.⁷² The focus remains other-oriented, on blessing others, firstly because their future is already secure in God's gift and secondly because the Giver and his gift are inseparable so that his recipients are transformed to be givers, just like God.⁷³

The end result of God's χάρις is a new freedom. Christians are freed from the logic of exchange and reciprocity, freed from the competition for honor and status, and freed from the concern to obtain self-sufficiency. They are freed in order to experience the gift of genuine and true friendship with God and with each other. The Christ-event brings the opening of reciprocity, as gifts, all finding their source and example from God, can now flow unilaterally in every direction. God not only is the Ultimate Giver, but he stands at the middle of all giving and

⁶⁷ 2 Cor 9:8.

⁶⁸ Berndt Hamm, "Martin Luther's Revolutionary Theology of Pure Gift without Reciprocation," *LQ* 29 (2015): 149.

⁶⁹ Bayer and Seifrid, "The Ethics of Gift," 449, 451; Holm, "Luther's Theology of the Gift," 85.

⁷⁰ 2 Cor 9:10.

⁷¹ 2 Cor 8:7–9.

⁷² Bayer and Seifrid, "The Ethics of Gift," 447, writes that ethics should be driven by the question, "What has been *given* to us? What has been *given* to me—to me as one placed in the midst of others?"

⁷³ Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 358.

receiving. Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγῆτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ.

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