PATRONAGE AND REBUKE IN PAUL'S PERSUASION IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8–9

Mark A. Jennings

Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, USA

Introduction

Connecting patron–client ideas to the Pauline communities, especially to Corinth, is not a new idea. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of these studies have only focused on the importance of patron–client concepts with regard to 1 Corinthians.[1] Surprisingly, though the growing scholarly consensus appears ready to grant the influence of patron–client dynamics in 1 Corinthians, very little has been done on the importance of patronage in Paul's later correspondence with the Corinthian church.[2] This scarcity of attention towards 2 Corinthians is

---

1. Two scholars worthy of special mention for their work on the importance of patronage in 1 Corinthians are John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup, 285; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Render to God: New Testament Understanding of the Divine* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), pp. 144-90.

2. For example, esteemed scholars such as Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994); Victor P. Furnish, *II Corinthians: A New Translation and Commentary* (AB, 32A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984); C.K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1986); Hans D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC, 40; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986); Franz Zeilinger, *Kreig und Friede in Korinth: Kommentar zum 2. Korintherbrief des Apostels Paulus*. I. *Der Kampfbrief, Der Versöhnungsbrief, Der Bettelbrief* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1992), pp. 247-309; and Frank J. Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003) hardly make any mention of the patronage system in their discussions of 2 Corinthians 8–9. Ben Witherington, III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 414-23, does mention the

especially remarkable with regard to the collection section (2 Cor. 8–9) since it involves the exchange of goods and support that often characterizes patronal relationships.[3] As this study will show, Paul employs the language of patronal relationships, particularly the importance of reciprocity within patron–client networks, in his attempt to gain the

dynamic of patronage in his discussion of 2 Cor. 8–9. Nevertheless, though Witherington (p. 419) readily states 'it is no accident [given the presence of patronage] that chs. 8–9 use the language of honor and shame', he spends surprisingly little time on the presence and function of patronage in Paul's overall argument. Like several scholars, Witherington still wants to over-emphasize the 'voluntary nature' of the giving. Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), pp. 171-76, do mention the presence and function of reciprocity in 2 Cor. 8–9 (a key aspect of patronal relationships), but they err in continuing to view all such matters via the fictive kin relationships they see at work in the Pauline mission. A notable exception to this pattern is Stephan J. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor* (WUNT, 124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). With respect to 2 Cor. 8–9, however, Joubert's focus on the *paterfamilias* structure is too restrictive and fails to appreciate how patronage language fits within such a structure. Despite this oversight, Joubert's work is a most welcome development, for as the historian G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 364, aptly proclaims, 'Patronage, indeed, must be seen as an institution that the Roman world simply could not do without.'

3.   As Zeba Crook, 'The Divine Benefactions of Paul the Client', *JGRChJ* 2 (2001–2005), pp. 9-26 (9), notes, 'The language and imagery of patronage and clientage permeate the letters of Paul; failure to comprehend and to engage this language enfeebles Paul's work, both as it is preserved in his letters and in the communities he founded.' Other useful studies of the importance of patronage in the study of Paul include: David deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000); Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); H.L. Hendrix, 'Benefactor/Patron Networks in the Urban Environment: Evidence from Thessalonians', *Sem* 56 (1991), pp. 39-58; B.J. Malina and J.H. Neyrey, *Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of Ancient Personality* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); R.A. Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997); Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW, 130; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2004); and Neyrey, *Render to God*, pp. 82-211.

Corinthian church's full participation in his collection for those in Jerusalem.[4]

In seeking to apply a specific cultural context to the reading of a particular text, the simple but crucial test is whether or not the cultural dynamic in question makes the best sense out of the text. Although the apostle certainly draws upon several images in making this appeal, the overarching image or metaphor he uses in 2 Corinthians 8–9 is the dynamic of patronage. The manner by which Paul frames the entire discussion is best understood with patronage relationships in view. As this study will demonstrate, Paul's depictions of the various network relationships involved in the collection, the nature of the goods exchanged between God and the churches, the importance of honor and shame as well as his usage of χάρις are very much at home within the patron–client environment.[5] By gaining a better understanding of how Paul incorporates patronage imagery into his rhetoric of 2 Corinthians 8–9, we can see that Paul expected the co-operation of the Corinthian church on account of its place within the network of God's churches and the corresponding societal expectation of reciprocity.[6]

4. In this respect, this essay supports J. Neyrey's assertion (*Render to God*, p. 146) that Paul employs the patron–client model of social interaction 'not as a philosopher but as a rhetorician who argues certain points on the basis of the correct form of this relationship'.

5. For a good overview of the dynamic of patronage in the ancient Mediterranean world, see especially A. Wallace-Hadrill (ed.), *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London: Routledge, 1982); de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle*; Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987); as well as J. Hellegouarch, *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des parties politiques sous la république* (Paris: Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', 1963); C. Moussy, *Gratia et sa famille* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966); E. Gellner and J. Waterbury (eds.), *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies* (London: Duckworth, 1977); S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Jerome H. Neyrey, 'God, Benefactor, and Patron: The Major Cultural Model for Interpreting the Deity in Greco-Roman Antiquity', *JSNT* 27 (2005), pp. 465-91; and D.C. Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of the Client Kingship* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).

6. This paper was presented at the 2009 Society of Biblical Literature Midwest Regional Meeting and benefited significantly from the subsequent discussion. I am especially thankful to Alec Lucas who offered several insightful comments and corrections. In addition, I am grateful for the most helpful suggestions

Therefore, this essay provides what has been generally lacking in discussions of 2 Corinthians 8–9, namely, the recognition that Paul's application of patronage concepts to the problem of the Corinthians' refusal to fully participate in the collection has significant implications for interpreting the text. Paul presented the Corinthians' lack of participation as an affront to the patronal network of which they were a part by virtue of the fact that their church had been founded by himself, the apostle of Christ. By understanding this framework, we see that Paul is not simply trying to exhort or plead for the Corinthians' participation. On the contrary, he is primarily rebuking them for their failure to be subservient. In other words, Paul is not only calling the Corinthians 'clients', he is chastising them for being 'bad clients'. It would have been unlikely that the Corinthians would have missed the bite of Paul's rebuke in his choice to employ the language of patronage to the collection.[7]

The Collection Problem

The questions surrounding 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 are numerous. How are these chapters related to each other, and to the integrity of the epistle?[8] Why was Paul gathering money in the first place?[9] The

made by the *JGRChJ*'s readers. Finally, I want to thank Carol Stockhausen, the 'first reader' of this essay, for her support and encouragement in this paper, as well as for her careful teaching of Paul's Corinthian correspondence.

7.   The significance of this 'shaming' activity of Paul in 2 Cor. 8–9 has implications regarding the integrity of 2 Corinthians. Often it is argued that the tone of 2 Cor. 10–13 is substantially harsher than the tone of earlier chapters, thus indicating that the latter chapters represent a different letter. The harshness of 2 Cor. 10–13 is not so different once one perceives that in 2 Cor. 8–9, Paul is already engaged in a harsh rebuke of the Corinthians.

8.   Though I am not convinced of her conclusion that 2 Cor. 1–8, 9, and 2 Cor. 10–13 are three separate correspondences, Thrall (*Second Epistle*, pp. 36-43), provides an excellent and thorough discussion of the various options for solving the integrity questions of 2 Cor. 8 and 9. Kieran O'Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion: A Sounding in 2 Corinthians 8–9* (JSNTSup, 199; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), p. 165, effectively demonstrates how the rhetorical structure of 2 Cor. 8–9 shows it to be a single cohesive unit. O'Mahony's recognition that 2 Cor. 8.1-6 functions as an *exordium* that anticipates the entire argument (in reverse order) of 2 Cor. 8–9 would seem to settle the case. See also David R. Hall, *The Unity of the Corinthian Correspondence* (JSNTSup, 251; London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), pp. 114-19.

question of what motivated Paul to emphasize the collection in his ministry has yet to be definitively settled, but since Paul refers to the collection in different letters to various churches (1 Cor. 16.1-4; Rom. 15.25-32; Gal. 2.9-10; 2 Cor. 8–9), it is clear that the apostle invested a great deal into its success. For Paul, the matter of the collection was no small trifle. Regardless of how one answers the question of why Paul placed such importance on the collection, one issue is quite clear—the Corinthians had yet to fulfill, and might never fulfill, their obligation regarding their contribution to the collection (2 Cor. 9.4-5).

This concern motivated Paul to write (at significant length) in order to persuade them to co-operate. In order to garner the co-operation of the Corinthian church in the collection, Paul chose to frame the issue as a matter of reciprocity, particularly within the patron–client network. Even if Paul believed (as I suspect) that the offering occupied a place in the eschatological plan of God, this was not the approach Paul took to convince the Corinthians to participate in the collection. Paul was not concerned with 'winning the Corinthians over' to his argument. For him, all that should be necessary to gain the Corinthians' participation in the collection was to make them understand that they were in a patron–client relationship with God (and Paul). Consequently, their support of the collection was the only appropriate response. And it was expected.

The Hierarchical Network

The first key to seeing that Paul is operating within a patronage framework in this persuasion is the emphasis he places on the Macedonian churches at the forefront of the discussion (2 Cor. 8.1-5). The way in which Paul presents the Macedonian churches as a paradigm to be emulated governs much of the remainder of the discussion. In 2 Cor. 8.1-5, Paul introduces the matter of the collection by describing three characteristics of the response of the Macedonian churches. First, the Macedonians were eager to join in this service to the Lord's people, so much so that they went above and beyond, despite their own dire circumstances (2 Cor. 8.3-4). Secondly, they saw such giving as unto the

9.   David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (WUNT, 2.248; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 1-26, offers a very nice detailed analysis of the various arguments, while also supplying his own worthwhile theory.

Lord (2 Cor. 8.5). Thirdly, this giving to God is equated to their giving to Paul (2 Cor. 8.5). By beginning the entire discussion with the example of the Macedonian churches, Paul has brought into view the main characteristics of a patronage network in which those clients at the lower end of the network (the churches) eagerly support the desire and will of the patron at the top (God/Christ) in response to the benefaction they have received from their patron, with a patron mediator (Paul) operating on his behalf.

As Matthias Gelzer points out, such a patron–client network structure was quite common among religious and governmental associations.[10] A good example of this is the way various *collegia* frequently adopted a particular god as a patronal deity.[11] In this network structure, directly below the deities would be individuals who either mediated or somehow served as the patron's proxy to the members at the bottom. A mediating figure often took responsibility for the success of the group. In return, the mediating figure expected obedience from the lower members, and often received honor and praise from the group.[12] The use of a mediating figure between a supreme patron and the masses existed not only in associations, but was also evident within the Roman imperial governmental structure.[13] The emperor was frequently

10.   Matthias Gelzer, *The Roman Nobility* (trans. Robin Seager; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), p. 92. Some recent studies that compare Paul's communities with Greco-Roman associations include Downs, *The Offering*, pp. 73-119; Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations: The Social Context of Philippians and 1 Thessalonians* (WUNT, 2.161; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 149-51; Verlyn D. Verbrugge, *Paul's Style of Church Leadership Illustrated by his Instructions to the Corinthians on the Collection* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), pp. 150-53; and Thomas Schmeller, *Hierarchie und Egalität: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung paulinischer Gemeinden und griechisch-römischer Vereine* (SBS, 162; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995). Downs, *The Offering*, p. 89, demonstrates how the dynamic of patronage readily included large civic associations and groups. Downs also demonstrates (p. 118) how Paul's collection compares with the fundraising activity of other civic associations, contra Verbrugge, *Paul's Style*, p. 152.

11.   Chow, *Patronage*, p. 66.

12.   The well-known inscription from Lanuvium provides a good example of this (*CIL*, 14.2112 = *ILS* no. 7212).

13.   It is more likely that Augustus's effective use of patronage, more than the use of his military, was the reason he maintained social cohesion as he extended his power. Both Pliny (*Pan.* 2.21) and Seneca (*Clem.* 1.13.5) argued that the essence of a good emperor lies in his ability to be a good benefactor.

depicted as the ultimate patron, with local governors, magistrates and municipal leaders serving as mediators between him and the populace. Therefore, by describing the various subjects (the churches, God and himself) in the manner that he does in his opening remarks on the collection, Paul has already set the stage for viewing his entire discussion within the framework of these patronal network structures.

The rest of the argument of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 defines how the collection functions within the life of the various network relationships (Corinthians to God, Corinthians to Paul and Corinthians to other churches). Throughout these discussions, Paul uses the language of patron–client structures to make his point. The matter of the collection was not simply an act of solicitation, but rather a challenge by Paul to test their commitment to being part of a network that had God as their ultimate patron and himself as God's mediator (2 Cor. 8.9). The Macedonians passed the test of their love's sincerity by showing their eagerness to follow God's will regarding the collection that Paul was overseeing. Second Corinthians 8.1-5 is critical for properly under-standing 2 Cor. 8.8. The Macedonians were not commended for their charity *to those in Jerusalem*, but for their willingness to love, serve and give of themselves *to God and Paul*. In general, references to 'giving' in 2 Corinthians 8–9 should not be understood as giving to those in Jerusalem only, but first and foremost as giving to God (through Paul). By failing to be equally obedient in giving to the col-lection, the Corinthians would be violating the social cohesion of this patronal network. Paul's argument for the collection does not focus primarily upon the desperate need of those in Jerusalem, but upon the Corinthians' obligation to follow the lead of the churches in Macedonia by acting in a manner appropriate to their place in the network.

God as Patron

Though Paul never directly refers to God as the patron (εὐεργέτης) of the Corinthian church, the words he uses to describe the exchange of goods between the churches and God carry a strong patronal tone.[14]

14.   Paul's presentation of God as a divine patron would have been common in ancient Mediterranean culture. See Aeschylus, *Ag.* 510; Plutrach, *Cor.* 2.3.17; and Aristophanes, *Av.* 825, Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.4.32; 1.10.3; 2.23.5; *Syll*3 708.25, 30; 709.47; 731.19; P.Tebt. I 56. In addition to these references, Crook ('Divine Benefactions', p. 13), provides an excellent list of other references to the gods as

The essence of a patronal relationship is that it is asymmetrical regarding the value of the gifts exchanged.[15] In brief, the patron and the client do not share an equal status on account of the former's ability to provide desperately needed resources that the latter could not gain on his own. These resources were necessary in order for the client to survive (physically or socially). These often took the form of tangible commodities such as land to farm, money to start a business, or food. But they also frequently included intangibles like protection, commendation, advice and access to influence. It was not the particular *thing* that was needed by the client that drove this relationship, but rather it was that the client *needed* the particular thing.[16] It was this state of dependence, more than the actual goods exchanged, that formed one's identity as a client.

In exchange for receiving these needed goods from the patron, the client was expected to give back to the patron. Since it was their paucity of resources that connected the clients to the patron in the first place, a client could hardly give something *from himself*, and therefore could only give *of himself* to the patron. As David deSilva points out, this often took the form of enhancing the patron's reputation through public honoring and praising, voting in elections and participating in the patron's causes.[17] Thus, since this relationship was mutually beneficial, persons of unequal status could become strongly bound to each other for long periods of time. Therefore, the most effective way to deter-mine if a relationship was patronal in nature is to compare the quality and type of goods that were exchanged. If the two parties were involved in a continuing reciprocal exchange of gifts of different value, then one party would have been understood to be the patron of the other.

Based on this principle that a reciprocal exchange of unequal gifts creates a patronal relationship, Paul clearly presents the churches as

patron benefactors. See also Bruce J. Malina, 'Patron and Client: The Analogy behind Synoptic Theology', in his *The Social World of Jesus* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 143-75.

15.   Neyrey, 'God, Benefactor', pp. 467-68, provides a nice, concise presentation of the characteristics of patronage.

16.   R.A. Kearsley, 'A Civic Benefactor of the First Century in Asia Minor', in S.R. Llewelyn (ed.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, VII (North Ryde, NSW, Australia: Ancient History Documentary Research Center, 1994), pp. 233-41, provides a good account of the various goods and services a client received from a patron.

17.   DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, p. 97.

clients of God in 2 Corinthians 8–9. Even if some of the terms are understood metaphorically, the things that Paul says God gives the churches are those very commodities (money, food, aid) that a client would typically request from a patron. Paul describes God/Christ's gifts to the churches as 'riches' (2 Cor. 8.9; 9.11), 'all things at all times' (2 Cor. 9.8), 'need' (2 Cor. 9.8), 'seed/food/store of seed/harvest' (2 Cor. 9.10). Not surprisingly, in 2 Corinthians 8–9, the offerings that the churches give to God are the same as those intangibles that a patron receives from a client. God receives evidence of 'sincerity of love' (2 Cor. 8.8, 24), 'honor' (2 Cor. 8.20), 'thanksgiving' (2 Cor. 9.11, 12, 15), service in a project (2 Cor. 8.4; 9.1, 13), and 'praise' (2 Cor. 9.13). Though Paul does not refer to God as a patron, the language that Paul uses to describe the goods that are exchanged between God and the churches places his discussion of the collection within a patronage context.[18]

Reciprocal Exchange

In addition to Paul's presentation of the nature of the goods exchanged between God and the churches, Paul's emphasis on the importance of reciprocity also indicates that he is employing the patronage system in his persuasion.[19] The bonds between the two parties in a patronal

---

18.   Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT, 23; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), pp. 9-12. Even though commentators and scholars frequently note God's divine benefaction, not enough is made of the importance that such benefactions have for viewing God with a patronal identity. Nevertheless, one does have to be wary of 'patronage-mania', where one sees patronage everywhere. Neyrey ('God, Benefactor', pp. 465-92), argues that virtually every single title (e.g. king, father, savior, lord, creator) carries the dynamics of benefaction and patronage. This seems to be an un-warranted expansion of the patron–client concept. One should naturally be careful of collapsing all asymmetrical relationships into a patronage model. A study is on stronger footing if it limits discussions of patronage to those texts where an economic exchange is implied, even if only metaphorically. In 2 Cor. 8–9, the nature of the goods that are exchanged fits naturally within such a framework, making the text a good test case for such a study.

19.   With regard to the various types of reciprocity that existed in this cultural environment, Bruce J. Malina, *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986), pp. 98-106, offers a very useful classification.

relationship were cemented by the power of reciprocity. Peter Marshall rightly argues that the importance of returning a favor for a favor was one of the strongest, and most persistent, aspects of the Greco-Roman world.[20] The failure to participate in the reciprocating of goods and services was a significant mark against one's character.[21] This strength of reciprocity made continual participation in the patronage relationship as much a matter of morality as it was a matter of benefit. A failure to reciprocate would endanger the client's access to the needed resources from the patron. Such a failure would also shame the client and make it problematic for him to join additional patrons. Likewise, the failure to be a benevolent patron would seriously impact a patron's standing among his peers. A drop in societal standing could result in the loss of clients for the patron.[22] Once the process of a gift exchange began, it became almost impossible to stop, thus making the patronal bond quite enduring.

Paul sets the relationship of the churches to God in 2 Corinthians 8–9 in terms of an obligation of service based on the principle of reciprocity. The Corinthians are obliged to continue in their service, not only for what God has done for the people, but for what God will do in response to their future acts of obedience.[23] In 2 Cor. 8.9, it is Christ's first act of giving on behalf of the churches that requires a giving back to him in return. Likewise, Paul indicates it is God's acts of grace that began the cycle of reciprocity (2 Cor. 8.1; 9.14). Additionally, Paul asserts that God will reciprocate in turn, giving back more abundantly as a result of the church's participation in the collection (2 Cor. 9.8, 11). This is especially evident in 2 Cor. 9.10 where God first supplies

20.   Aristotle stated that even if a person cannot repay a giver with the same value, he must pay back what he can (*Eth. nic.* 8.13.8-9). Likewise, Cicero argued, 'no duty is more imperative than that of proving one's gratitude' (*Off.* 1.15.47).

21.   Seneca (*Ben.* 1.10.4) writes, 'Homicides, tyrants, traitors there will always be; but worse than all these is the crime of ingratitude.' Similarly, Cicero argued that a man who does not repay a *gift* (emphasis mine) could not be called a good man (*Off.* 1.48).

22.   Wallace-Hadrill, *Patronage*, p. 82.

23.   Paul (like Seneca, *Ben.* 4.3.3) is not arguing that God could somehow be obligated to a mortal, or that God somehow has needs that only a mortal can meet. Rather, Paul is indicating that God's continued participation in this cycle of giving is predicated on a mortal's willingness to give what is due to God. God does not need a mortal's praise, but this does not negate the claim that God does require it. See also Neyrey, 'God, Benefactor', p. 488.

the *seed* to the farmer and then increases the *store* and *harvest*. This continual and supreme giving by God keeps in motion the reciprocal exchange that is an essential component of a stable patron–client system. For Paul, the Corinthians are placing this cycle of reciprocity at risk by their failure to meet their honor-bound obligations in refusing to sufficiently participate in the collection.

Perhaps most revealing of Paul's emphasis on the importance of reciprocity is his use of χάρις language in 2 Corinthians 8–9.[24] DeSilva states that χάρις was the term best associated with 'encapsulating the entire ethos' of reciprocity (both between people and between people and the gods) in the ancient Mediterranean world.[25] χάρις could be used to describe the totality of the practice of reciprocal giving. χάρις also applied to a person's willingness to be generous, to the gift itself, as well as to the required response of gratitude to such a gift.[26] When one spoke of the obligations involved in an exchange relationship, one spoke of 'grace'. Even the mythical 'Virgin Graces', when they are described by Philo (*Moses II* 1.7), are presented as beautiful beings who dance together in a harmony of reciprocity, united in their receiving and imparting of benefits. Grace was not simply an act of unearned giving, but an act of giving that expected a response in turn. Sophocles (*Ajax* 522) sums up the dynamic of χάρις best when he states, 'Grace is always giving birth to grace'.

χάρις, more than any other concept, captured and conveyed the ties that bound unequal parties together in an enduring reciprocal relationship. The moral strength behind the reciprocal exchange of χάρις was the emphasis that such giving be seen as virtuous. There existed an interesting tension in that even though grace was an act of expected reciprocal exchange, it also required no hint of obligation in order to maintain its essence as a virtue.[27] Julian Pitt-Rivers sums up this tension best by stating, 'You cannot pay for a favor in any way, or it

24.   James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Greco-Roman Context* (WUNT, 2.172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), provides a good study of Paul's use of χάρις language within the context of the Hellenistic reciprocity system.

25.   DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, p. 136.

26.   As the LSJ indicates, χάρις was primarily used in association with the acts of giving that occurred within everyday economic exchanges.

27.   For, example, Seneca (*Ben.* 1.2.3; 4.29.3) writes that people should give solely for the sake of giving, not for the prospect of receiving. Conversely, Cicero says that gratitude (χάρις) is a duty, not an option (*Off.* 1.47-48).

ceases to be one, you can only give thanks, though on a later occasion you can demonstrate gratitude by making an equally "free gift" in return.'[28] It would be inappropriate, therefore, when discussing the process of an exchange of χάρις, for someone to overtly demand or mandate someone to reciprocate. Nevertheless, the absence of such an imperative does not reduce the expectation that one was to respond appropriately. Though in the twenty-first century the idea of uniting 'grace' with a system of patronage might seem paradoxical, in the first-century Mediterranean world, it was 'grace' that carried the message of the patronage network.

Therefore, it is not surprising, given that he has been working with the imagery of a patronage network, that Paul frequently incorporates the term χάρις into the discussion. Of the eighteen times that Paul uses χάρις in 2 Corinthians, ten of the occurrences are in chs. 8–9.[29] Not only does Paul use χάρις in this section more than in any other section of 2 Corinthians, he uses it intensely throughout the two chapters. Almost one-fourth of the thirty-nine verses in 2 Corinthians 8–9 contain the word χάρις. Based on a simple word count alone, it is clear that χάρις is the glue of the entire unit. Furthermore, the diverse ways in which χάρις is used in 2 Corinthians 8–9 reflects the diversity of how χάρις was understood within reciprocal exchanges.[30] In 2 Cor. 8.1, 9.8, and 9.14, Paul uses χάρις to describe the gift that God (the patron) has

28.   Julian Pitt-Rivers, 'Postscript: The Place of Grace in Anthropology'. In Julian Pitt-Rivers and J.G. Peristiany (eds.), *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*, 215-46. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 236.

29.   If one removes the two times that Paul uses χάρις as part of his formulaic greetings and closings (2 Cor. 1.22; 13.3), this ratio is even more profound.

30.   Barrett, *Second Epistle*, is a good example of those New Testament scholars who read χάρις only in terms of its subsequent theological understanding. On p. 222 he mistakenly argues that one should avoid translating χάρις with such 'mundane' terms as 'generosity' in order to 'preserve the divine aspect of the gift'. Such a restriction of meaning forces Barrett, *Second Epistle*, p. 232, to state, 'Grace is used in these chapters in a bewildering variety of ways.' This 'variety' would not have been 'bewildering' to the Corinthians, who would easily have understood the diverse ways χάρις was used in exchange relationships. Betz, *2 Corinthians*, p. 42, correctly perceives that ordinary 'gifting' is the background to this passage. The NRSV translation committee did a commendable job of recognizing the variability of χάρις by using, in addition to 'grace' (2 Cor. 8.1; 9.14), such terms as 'privilege' (2 Cor. 8.4), 'generous undertaking/act' (2 Cor. 8.6, 7, 9, 19), 'thanks' (2 Cor. 8.16; 9.15) and 'blessing' (2 Cor. 9.8).

given. In 2 Cor. 8.9, χάρις refers to the character of Christ in his benefaction. χάρις also refers to the gratitude due by those who receive a gift from God (2 Cor. 8.4, 7, 16). The collection itself, as the manifestation of this gratitude, is referred to as a χάρις (2 Cor. 8.6, 19). Paul comes extremely close to Sophocles' maxim in 2 Cor. 9.15 when he writes, 'Grace be to God for his indescribable gift'. The way in which Paul employs χάρις supports reading the collection within the dynamic of reciprocal giving found in patron–client relationships.

Furthermore, Paul's claim that he is not directly commanding them to participate in the collection (2 Cor. 8.8), as well as his emphasis on how God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9.7), serves to protect the virtuous nature of this cycle of grace. As stated before, these claims, though emphasizing the virtue of giving, do not reduce the power of the expected response.[31] An overt command would have violated the importance of keeping acts of grace virtuous and noncompulsory. Jerry McCant captures this well when he states, 'Despite disclaimers that he does not give "orders", Paul clearly engages in vigorous rhetorical arm twisting.'[32]

Paul's Role in the Collection

31.   Harrison, *Paul's Language*, p. 313, argues that Paul was concerned that the Corinthians might comply with the collection demands 'not because of any sense of gratitude for the divine grace…but more due to the silent demands of the Greco-Roman reciprocity system'. Harrison fails to appreciate that, throughout 2 Cor. 8–9, Paul has been arguing that God's benefaction demands such a response. For Paul, it is the Corinthians' participation in the collection that will demonstrate the rightness of their heart. Paul is not worried that he might come to Corinth and find that the Corinthians had given without a 'cheerful heart', but rather that they had not given at all. Joubert, *Paul*, p. 180, is correct when he states, 'The only proper response to the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ in this context would be to become involved in the χάρις for Jerusalem again.'

32.   Jerry W. McCant, *2 Corinthians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 83. Joubert, *Paul*, pp. 174-75, though fully aware of the implications and obligations inherent in these reciprocal social relationships, still prefers to read Paul's rhetoric in 2 Cor. 8–9 as an attempt to avoid explicit commands. Joubert has misunderstood Paul's indirect language as evidence that Paul 'refrains from authoritative language'. On the contrary, Paul is actually exerting his authority in accordance with the appropriate vernacular of a patron.

In addition to framing the Corinthians' co-operation in the collection as the proper response due to God based on their patron–client relationship, he also extends the patronage metaphor to his own role. As noted earlier, it was very common for associations with a patronal deity to have a mediatoral figure. This mediator between the gods and the members of the association often took a 'patron by proxy' position. In this respect, Paul's own self-presentation throughout his Corinthian correspondence is consistent with such a framework. In 1 Cor. 4.1, Paul outlines how he expects the Corinthian church to regard their position in relation to his. In 1 Cor. 9.16-17, Paul describes his own mission to the Gentiles as one of obligation (ἀνάγκη), an obligation befitting an οἰκονόμος. As Dale Martin has shown, the οἰκονόμος was typically a middle-manager figure responsible for overseeing a patron's affairs.[33] In many cases, an οἰκονόμος served as a patron proxy.

Paul's apostolate was founded upon his understanding that, as one of God's chief clients, it was his responsibility to obey his assignment of advancing the gospel to the nations.[34] To the extent that Paul saw himself as the ambassador of Christ, he also served as Christ's representative in the capacity of a mediatoral patron (2 Cor. 5.20). It is not surprising that Paul frequently said that he was 'sent' by God in his efforts to establish that he was God's (or Christ's) proxy. In this respect, Paul's conception of his own apostolic position would fit within the metaphor of a patronal network. Paul was not simply a 'proclaimer of good news', but his very presence was evidence of God's benefactions. Interestingly, in 1 Cor. 15.10, Paul presents his apostolic role in terms of the benefaction language of χάρις ('By the benefaction of God, I am what I am, and his generosity, which was given to me, was not in vain. Rather I labored more than all of them, not I but the gift of God, which is with me.') Paul's own depiction of his apostolic position easily fits within this patronal dynamic.[35]

---

33.   Martin, *Slavery*, pp. 22-42.

34.   It may be more accurate to describe Christ as the true mediating figure, or patron proxy, between God and the churches. Crook, 'Divine Benefactions', p. 18, offers a very suggestive assertion that Paul's conversion should be viewed as his change in patronal brokers from Moses (or perhaps from the priestly cult) to Jesus regarding his service to his patron god.

35.   See also Joubert, *Paul*, pp. 172-73.

Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 8–9, Paul continues to present himself as occupying a patronal-type position over the Corinthians.[36] With his claim that he is an arbiter of either honor or shame (2 Cor. 9.1-4), the apostle sets himself up as a mediatoral figure who is in a position to boast on behalf of his churches.[37] Often in large patronal networks, the 'coin' of the network was access. In order to gain the greater gifts, one had to have access to the greater patrons. But, since audience with such patrons was reserved for only a handful of privileged clients, a hierarchical network naturally developed where 'higher clients' were simultaneously clients to their patrons as well as patrons (of a sort) to the 'lower clients'. Thus, it became of paramount importance for 'lower clients' to maintain good relations with these 'higher clients' so that these privileged individuals might speak favorably on their behalf to the powerful patrons at the top of the network.[38] This commendation often took the form of the mediatoral 'higher client' boasting to the patron on behalf of a 'lower client'.[39] Such a commendation would be considered

36.   Paul does reserve the key obligation of a patron, the bestowing of gifts, as an exclusive action of God (2 Cor. 8.1, 9; 9.7-11). Paul does not take any personal responsibility for the actual provisions that the Corinthians will receive in return for their participation in the collection. Though Paul indicates that giving to him is in keeping with their giving to God (2 Cor. 8.5; 9.11), the actual exchange that occurs is between God alone and the Corinthians. Paul responds similarly to the Philippians when they give support directly to him (Phil. 4.14-16). He describes the gift as a gift that is not to himself but actually to God (Phil. 4.17-18). Therefore, it is God, and not Paul, who will reciprocate (Phil. 4.19). Likewise, since the gift is given to God and not to Paul, Paul avoids any possibility of becoming indebted to the Philippians. This was also his practice in Corinth (1 Cor. 10.12, 19; 2 Cor. 11.7). Paul seems quite careful to avoid becoming directly entangled in patronal exchange relationships.

37.   By citing the superior performance of the Macedonians in their participation in the collection, Paul introduces the entire section by shaming the Corinthians for their failure to keep up. Even though the collection is an ecumenical event between his churches and those in Jerusalem, this does not mean that Paul is precluded from using a sense of competition in order to achieve his ultimate aim. Besides, the overall purpose of the collection was not to unite the Pauline churches, but to bring an offering from the Pauline churches to the poor in Jerusalem (contra Downs, *The Offering*, pp. 121, 133).

38.   Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, p. 9.

39.   Examples of this are found in the letters of Pliny the Younger to Trajan where he boasts of his clients' merit in order to garner offices and citizenship for them.

a necessary good for those who needed to acquire the support of the higher patronal figures outside their immediate sphere of access.

Like other mediatoral figures, Paul presents his boast as one of his key activities in the patronal network of God's churches. Paul has clearly been boasting in the Corinthians in the past (2 Cor. 9.1-3). Now it is the Macedonian churches that seem to be the beneficiaries of his boasting, while the Corinthians are in danger of losing it (2 Cor. 8.24).[40] This ability to grant or withhold a valued commendation was one of the driving forces behind larger patronage systems. And it is this very thing (Paul's commendation) that the Corinthians are putting at risk due to their failure to appropriately participate in the collection.[41]

Paul's direct statement in 2 Cor. 8.8 that he is not commanding them to give to the collection does not negate his self-presentation as a patron proxy figure. On the contrary, 2 Cor. 8.8 actually reinforces his patronal stance. Since patronal relationships were strong vehicles of honor and shame in antiquity (being a client indicated that one was indebted to another), it was not uncommon for a patron to avoid directly shaming a client by overtly referring to them as a client.[42] Jerome H. Neyrey

40.   Paul is obviously willing to set up a competitive atmosphere between the Macedonian and Corinthian churches. As Betz, *2 Corinthians*, p. 49, points out, this would only have exacerbated the already competitive spirit between Achaia and Macedonia. When Paul indicates that he is comparing the sincerity of the Corinthians' love with the earnestness of others (2 Cor. 8.9), he might be indicating that his approval is not an unlimited good, but is the result of how a church performs relative to its peers.

41.   Furthermore, since the integrity of his boast is critical in order for it to maintain its worth, Paul is especially concerned that it will be stripped of its value if the Corinthians are found to be lacking in their obligations to the collection (2 Cor. 9.3). This would be especially problematic if one of the motivating forces behind the Macedonians' giving was the thought that those in Achaia were already heavily invested into the giving and were 'ahead of the game' in gaining the place of honor in Paul's boast. Paul clearly wants his boast to be considered of value, and therefore desires the Corinthians to follow suit and participate in the collection. This would not only indicate that the Corinthians valued his boast, but would also make sure that his boasting of them to the Macedonians was based in reality.

42.   As Carl H. Lande, 'The Dyadic Basis of Clientism', in S. Schmidt, L. Guasti, C. Lande and J. Scott (eds.), *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. xiii-xxxvii (xx), argues, 'shame' existed between the patron and the client, and not necessarily between the client and others. Indeed, a client of a powerful patron often received honor among his peers based on his access to such a patron.

writes that a 'kinship glaze' was often employed to 'reduce the crassness of the [patronal] exchange'.[43] Therefore, the language of friendship or kinship was often preferred over direct references to patronage. Paul's overt claim that he is not actually mandating their participation should be seen, not as a way of treading softly in order to maintain positive relationships, but rather as the appropriate way in which a patron-type figure communicates his wishes to his clients. It would have been improper for Paul to speak bluntly regarding the Corinthians' client status.[44]

In 2 Corinthians 8–9, Paul implies that he is a legitimate patronal mediator between God and the Corinthians, one who is in a position to grant or withhold his boast. In this 'office', Paul can expect the Corinthians to respond appropriately to his demand for the collection out of an obligation to him because of his role in the network. Paul can speak of giving to God and giving to Paul in similar terms (2 Cor. 8.5) because he understands his ministry to be the true representation of the actions of God (2 Cor. 5.18, 20). Furthermore, Paul's presenting himself as a patron figure in 2 Corinthians 8–9 would not be inconsistent with the general thrust of 2 Corinthians 1–7, where he engages in sustained self-commendation.[45] The overall message of 2 Corinthians 1–7 is that if the Corinthians do not become reconciled to Paul, they risk being found outside favor with God. Such an argument would not be out of place among the religious or governmental associations where a mediator was a centralizing figure for the network.

Paul's self-presentation as a patron proxy would also be consistent with the language of 2 Corinthians 10–13 where he describes the Corinthians as the sphere God has assigned to him (2 Cor. 10.13), along

43. Neyrey, 'God, Benefactor', p. 468.

44. Contra Downs, *The Offering*, p. 137, who argues that Paul's continual emphasis in 2 Cor. 8–9 on the voluntary character of the contribution indicated that Paul was attempting to downplay such obligations. Downs fails to understand that the meaning was carried below the surface of the language.

45. In 2 Cor. 7 there is patron-type language where Paul speaks of his boast in the Corinthians, especially in connection to their obedience to the apostle (2 Cor. 7.4, 14-16). The patronal language may serve to form a thematic unity between 2 Cor. 7 and 2 Cor. 8–9. This may be further strengthened by the use of χάρις in 2 Cor. 6.1. In 2 Cor. 8.1, Paul may likely be binding the collection to the discussion he began in 2 Cor. 6.1. This essay does not intend to answer all the integrity questions of the epistle, however, the consistent use of patronal language may support the argument that 2 Cor. 1–13 should not be so easily partitioned.

with his apostolic power to punish every act of disobedience (2 Cor. 10.16).[46] Paul's attack in 2 Corinthians 11 against the false apostles, and his bold denial that they can be considered his equal, fits within his continual self-presentation as the only authentic, God-ordained mediator between God and the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 11.12-15). Paul's declaration in 2 Cor. 12.19-21 that he holds the power to place the Corinthian church either under the benefaction or under the judgment of God underscores how Paul sees himself as one who possesses patron proxy powers. Therefore, Paul's presentation of himself in 2 Corinthians 8–9 as a patron proxy, as a 'higher client', under God's universal and ultimate patronage, is consistent with how he describes his activity in the network of churches throughout his Corinthian correspondence.[47]

46.   There is an interesting parallel between 2 Cor. 10–13 and 2 Cor. 8–9 with regard to obedience. Paul hints at punishment in 2 Cor. 9.4 should the Corinthians fail to be obedient. In 2 Cor 10.6, the threat is much clearer. The reference to their obedience being 'complete' in 2 Cor. 10.6 may likely refer to the collection since such an act could easily be measured. Furthermore, Paul presents obedience to Paul's ministry as a 'test' of love and faith (2 Cor. 8.8; 13.5). It may be that the collection figures more prominently in 2 Cor. 10–13 than is often assumed. Disappointing a patron (especially a patronal deity) would not only put future benefactions at risk, but might also make an enemy out of the patron. Paul acknowledges the potential danger he stands in should he cease to proclaim the gospel on behalf of his patron god (1 Cor. 1.16). David A. deSilva, 'Exchanging Favor for Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron–Client Relationships', *JBL* 115 (1996), pp. 91-116, demonstrates how the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews employed this concept in his exhortation for his audience to persevere in their faith. Though Joubert, *Paul*, p. 173, prefers to emphasize the *paterfamilias* model, his reading of the possible implications that would result should the Corinthians fail to reciprocate in obedience is consistent with the findings of this essay.

47.   It is unlikely that the Corinthians would deny their client obligations to God (and Christ) as their patron deity, rather it was probably Paul's claim that he was God's sole mediating figure, who could demand their participation in the collection, that they rejected. Second Corinthians 8–9 is a good example of the Corinthians' growing rejection of Paul's mediatorial role. Ivar Vegge, *2 Corinthians: A Letter about Reconciliation* (WUNT, 2.239; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 219-21, is quite right to emphasize the importance of the καὶ ἡμῖν in 2 Cor. 8.5. As Vegge points out, giving to the Lord and giving to Paul stood together as the reason for Paul's praise of the Macedonians. From Paul's standpoint, a church could not adequately be in 'right standing' with Christ while being at enmity with his apostle. Reconciliation with Paul was reconciliation with Christ and vice versa.

2 Corinthians 8.13-15

The final intra-network relationship that Paul presents as part of his persuasion in 2 Corinthians 8–9 is that of the Corinthians with the other client churches. The general principle of patronal reciprocity is that if one gives to another, or meets a need of another, the recipient is now in debt to the benefactor and remains so until the debt is repaid. Therefore, it is quite likely that the Corinthian church might have seen the Jerusalem recipients as now being in their debt. Even though he has been working within the standard operating procedures of patronage regarding the Corinthians' indebtedness to God (and to his apostle), in 2 Cor. 8.13-15, Paul denies the Corinthians the right to claim a patronal status over the Jerusalem community. He accomplishes this by placing all the churches under the banner of equality. Just as an asymmetrical exchange indicated the presence of a patronal relationship, an equal exchange between similar parties was understood to be one of friendship.[48] Paul is advocating that the Corinthians view the other churches, especially the recipients of their gift, as friends and not clients.[49]

Paul's attempt to change how the Corinthians perceive the collection will only be successful if he can change the Corinthians' idea about to whom they are giving the money. Paul wants them to see God, instead of those in Jerusalem, as the recipient of their gift.[50] While it is critical

48. According to the classification system of reciprocity presented by Ekkehard Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (trans. O.C. Dean, Jr.; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), pp. 34-38, the relationship between the two communities is a 'balanced reciprocity', as opposed to the Corinthians' 'general reciprocity' relationship to God (and Paul).

49. The fact that Paul feels the need to make sure that there would not be a perceived patronal relationship between those in Jerusalem and the church in Corinth further demonstrates that Paul has been operating within a patronage framework throughout his persuasion. Since Paul has been making the point that the demands for reciprocity in a patronal relationship necessitate their service in the collection, it would have been quite logical that the Corinthians would have assumed that these same rules applied to their relationship with those in Jerusalem.

50. It is possible that the Corinthians did not want to participate in giving to the Jerusalem community in the first place because they could not envision a scenario in which they (the Corinthians) would benefit from having such a far-away people as their clients. In other words, the Corinthian church probably considered the collection a bad investment, with little hope of return.

for Paul that the Corinthians interpret their support of the collection in terms of God's (and Paul's) patronal standing over them, it is equally important that the Corinthians do not extend this principle to their relationship with the other churches.

Paul does not want the Corinthians to equate their support of the collection to some sort of benefaction that they are giving to the Jerusalem community. At no point in his discussion does he indicate that the Corinthians (or even the Macedonians) should expect the poor in Jerusalem to offer them honor and praise in response to their giving. Instead, what the Corinthians can expect to receive from the poor in Jerusalem is the same type of tangible gifts that clients receive, and not the type of intangibles that are offered to patrons.[51] Thus, in the midst of arguing from the obligations of patronage, Paul speaks of equality between the two communities in 2 Cor. 8.13-15. If Paul's overarching discussion has not been one based on patronal inequality, then the emphasis here on equality seems somewhat out of place. Therefore, here in 2 Cor. 8.13-15, as well as in 2 Cor. 8.8, even though the language seems to go against the presence of patronage, it actually reinforces the argument that Paul has chosen to use this dynamic in order to make his appeal.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to analyze 2 Corinthians 8–9 through the lens of the patron–client imagery of the Greco-Roman world. By describing the various relationships in this exchange network in the manner that he does, Paul has chosen to frame the issue of the collection as a matter of patronage. Paul builds upon this metaphor by demonstrating the unequal nature of the exchange between God and the churches. Such an

---

51.   It is worth noting that one of the common elements shared by the poor in Jerusalem, the Macedonians and the Corinthians is their economic instability. The Macedonians are identified as being quite poor (2 Cor. 8.2-3) while 2 Cor. 8.14 implies that the Corinthians should not expect to maintain a sustained period of abundance. While the argument of Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Studies of the New Testament and its World; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), that extreme poverty was the status for virtually everyone (including Paul's churches) in the Greco-Roman world might be slightly overstated, his caution against assuming that any real financial security existed should be heeded in any study of the collection.

asymmetrical exchange requires the Corinthians to continue the cycle of giving and giving back. A failure to participate in this reciprocal practice of χάρις could result in the Corinthians' loss of God's patronal benefits. Furthermore, Paul indicates a failure to meet their obligations to the collection could also impact his willingness to serve as their patronal mediator.[52] Finally, as discussed above, even seemingly anti-patronage passages such as 2 Cor. 8.8 and 2 Cor. 8.13-15 actually support the likelihood that Paul has grounded the entire argument within a patronage motif.

The themes and language of 2 Corinthians 8–9 consistently sound the clear note of patronage. It is the melody that drives the entire symphony of the passage. If this argument is correct, then Paul's willingness to use patron–client language implies that Paul did not reject this societal structure but rather saw it to be of value if it was properly oriented towards God and his apostle to the Gentiles.[53] The manner in which Paul described the relationships of the churches to God, to himself and to each other indicates that Paul saw the reciprocal demands of the patronage system as the proper template for presenting his concern regarding the collection in 2 Corinthians 8–9. Paul intends for the Corinthians to see their failure to participate in the collection as a cause of shame. For, as Sophocles makes clear, the only proper response to an act of grace from one's patron is an act of grace in return.

52. As Crook, 'Divine Benefactions', p. 12, points out, there are several examples of ancient Greco-Roman benefactors writing to clients in order both to chastise them for their dishonorable behavior and to exhort them to remedy the situation immediately. See P. Brem. 11 (= *CPJ* 2.444); P.Oxy. X 1348; *Epist.* 46 (repr. in R.J. Panela, *The Letters of Apollonius of Tyana* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979]).

53. I believe Downs's book, *The Offering*, should be required reading for those studying Paul's collection. Downs argues that Paul saw the collection as a matter of worship that challenged the ideologies of patronage and benefaction. While I agree with Downs that Paul endeavored to have the Corinthians view the collection as a form of 'worship' and 'praise' to God, I disagree with his argument that these acts of giving honor to God are somehow outside, or opposed to, the dynamic of patronage. Downs errs in failing to fully appreciate that Paul is describing this 'gifting-worship' as part of their obligations as clients.