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Paul, Patrons, and Clients

Peter Lampe

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## Chapter 23

# Paul, Patrons, and Clients

*Peter Lampe*

### Part I.

## Patrons and Clients in the Greco-Roman World

When describing modern societies, we tend to think in horizontal categories: in social strata, in lower, middle or upper classes. Horizontal layers also characterized the ancient society of the Roman Empire. At the same time, however, interaction between these strata divided society into vertical sections as well. The individual inhabitants of the Roman Empire lived in vertical relationships of dependency. These relationships were characterized by the reciprocal exchange of services and goods between those of lower and higher statuses. In fact, these vertical relationships defined a person's identity much more than his or her social contacts on the horizontal level. "I belong to Caesar's household," or "This senator is my patron, and I support his political causes, while he protects my economical and legal interests": such statements defined a person's identity, not statements such as "I belong to the working class." In general, class consciousness hardly existed in the Roman Empire. The cohesion, for example, among slaves or among lower-class people was very weak. Only the small social elite, the members of the three noble classes (senators, equestrians, and, to some extent, the *decuriones*, the local elite), developed cohesion among themselves and a "class consciousness."

The smallest vertical units in society were the individual households, the so-called *oikoi* (see "Paul and Family Life" [Chapter 10] and "Paul and *Pater Familias*" [Chapter 22] in these volumes). At the hierarchical top resided the "father of the household," the *pater familias*, or frequently also a (widowed) woman, a *mater familias*.<sup>1</sup> All members of the household—wives, children, slaves, freed persons—were reverently and obediently oriented toward this patron at the top and were dependent on him (or her) in all crucial aspects of life,<sup>2</sup> while the patron was expected to protect, support, and love

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<sup>1</sup> For references, see P. Lampe, "Family in Church and Society of New Testament Times," *Affirmation (Union Theol. Seminary in VA)* 5, no. 1 (1992): 2, 14 n. 5. For a definition of "household," see *ibid.* 1–2.

<sup>2</sup> Even the dignity of the individual household members depended on that of the *pater familias*. This was true since Homer's time (*Od.* 1.234ff.; *Iliad* 22.483–99) and can still be observed in modern-day cultures.



these dependents. The early Christian household codes followed this societal pattern.<sup>3</sup> The small unit of the household for its part was tied into larger vertical-dependency relationships. If the *pater familias* was a freedman (*libertus*) or a so-called client (*cliens*), he was personally bound in his loyalty to another, even more superior patron.

With scholarship often disagreeing on how patronage functioned in different parts of the Roman Empire and also in the pre-Roman era of the East, this article will adopt a wide definition of the topic "Patrons and Clients," also looking at sources that do not use technical terminology such as *patronus*, *cliens* or *prostates/-tis*, but nevertheless document vertical dependency relationships that entail more or less informal reciprocal responsibilities.<sup>4</sup>

(1) Freed slaves (*libertus*, *liberta*), even if they moved out of the former master's house and founded households and businesses of their own, were expected to remain respectful and loyal to him as a patron for the rest of their lives. Most of them stayed under the care of his legal protection, and most were obligated to fulfil unpaid services (*operae*) for their patron after manumission.<sup>5</sup> The patron, in return, was obliged to keep faith with his freed persons by providing them with legal aid, supporting them in need, and developing economic opportunities for them. The mutual loyalty went so far that neither the patron nor the freed person could be forced to testify against each other in court.

Although many of the freed persons were economically independent from their patron, sometimes accumulating great wealth for themselves, they nevertheless often also continued to work as agents or associates for their patron's businesses. In this way, large business clusters could emerge, "associations of households," which were involved in big, often superregional businesses. These clusters included a great many freed persons who were active for their patron in many places in the empire. The family of the *Faenii*, for example, traded in fragrances and had business branches run by the family's freed persons in Capua, Puteoli, Rome, Ischia, and Lyon. With their freed slaves, the *Olitii* family was in business both in Rome and Narbo, the *Aponii* family both in Narbonne and Sicily. Freed persons of the senatorial *Laecanii* family owned large land tracts near (modern) Trieste; these freed persons in turn employed their own freed slaves in businesses in Italian ports—all of these business people were extensions of the economically powerful senatorial family of the *Laecanii*. Other families of senators and the local aristocrats had freed persons or slaves working in the production and sales of textile materials or in the construction business. Thus, noble family masters, who as rich landowners were proud of not being "tainted" by craft or trade, nevertheless were able to participate in "dirty" but lucrative businesses through their slaves and freed persons. A business cluster of this caliber, based on patron-client

<sup>3</sup> Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:22–6:9; 1 Pet 2:18–3:7; 1 Tim 2:8–15; Titus 2:1–10; Pol., *Phil.* 4.2–6.3; cf. Did. 4.9–11; Barn. 19.5–7; 1 Clem. 21.6–9.

<sup>4</sup> Slave-master, guardianship or marriage relationships, however, all having their own legal implications, will not be considered.

<sup>5</sup> At manumission, a certain number of days' service to the patron was stipulated. Freed persons with Roman citizenship and with two children of their own, however, were freed from these services. Cf. Paulus, *Dig.* 38.1.37 pr.

relations, could profit from a whole production circle in one area: the landowner's flocks of sheep, for example, produced the wool that was subsequently woven into fabric and sold by the landowner's slaves and freed persons.<sup>6</sup> Obviously, the patron–client relationships, which made these clusters possible, were of the highest economic importance—not only for the families involved but also for the entire society.

(2) A *cliens*, on the other hand, usually was a freeborn person who entered a relationship of dependency with an influential patron. The two made a contract based on mutual trust and loyalty (*fides*). This meant that the client was expected to show respect and gratitude to the patron, to render certain services to him (*operae* and *obsequium*) and to support his political, economical, and social activities.<sup>7</sup> In return, the influential patron protected the client's economical, social, and legal interests by letting him profit from the patron's social connections and by allowing him access to the patron's resources.<sup>8</sup>

Patron–client relationships had existed for a long time in many places in the ancient Mediterranean world. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. rom.* 2.9.2) mentions them, for example, in early Athens and Thessaly as well as in early Rome. Early Rome, however, was unique in that it clearly defined the rights and duties of clients and protected their status in relation to the patron; this was recorded already in the fifth-century BCE Law of the Twelve Tables (8.21). In early Roman times, the contract between patron and client often involved the lending of land. Italian patricians established personal dependency relationships by giving small parcels of land (a *precarium*) to settlers for an indefinite period, maintaining the right to revoke this agreement at any time. With increasing urbanization, agricultural land became less important in patron–client relations. Whether land utilization was part of the contract or not, a client voluntarily<sup>9</sup> (or involuntarily)<sup>10</sup> subjected himself to the authority of the patron (*in fidem se dare*) who then accepted him (*in fidem suscipere*).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the literature reviewed by H. W. Pleket, "Wirtschaft," in *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, ed. F. Vittinghoff, Handbuch der Europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte 1 (Stuttgart: Klett, 1990), 40–41, 84, 125, 132.

<sup>7</sup> *Obsequium* means "obedience" and "subordination." The literal translation of *cliens* is "the obedient" (participle of *cluere*). Plutarch (*Rom.* 13) and others translated "client" into the Greek by πελάτης (*pelates*), which denotes a person who seeks protection and becomes dependent.

<sup>8</sup> The loyalty could extend so far that one was allowed to testify in favor of a client against a blood-related person (Gellius 5.13.4; cf. 20.1.40). Neither patron nor client could sue the other in court or testify against the other (CIL 1<sup>2</sup>. 583.10, 33). For these duties of both clients and patrons, see especially Dionysius Halic., *Ant. rom.* 2.9f.

<sup>9</sup> The voluntary submission of a client looking for protection was called *applicatio ad patronum* (Cicero, *De Or.* 1.177). It implied that the client could choose on his own to whose power (*potestas*), protection and loyalty (*fides*) he wanted to submit himself. This entirely private contract between client and patron was based on mutual consent. Inheritable but always-revocable land utilization (*precarium*) could be part of the contract but was not a prerequisite. Cf. Dionys. Halic., *Ant. rom.* 2.9.2 (one could choose a προστάτην [*prostaten*] one wanted); 2.10.4; Terence, *Eun.* 885, 1039; Gellius 5.13.2 ("clientes...sese...in fidem patrociniūque nostrum dediderunt"); 20.1.40 ("clientem in fidem susceptum").

<sup>10</sup> Often these settlers belonged to conquered populations and were given land that they previously had owned. The involuntary submission of defeated or conquered persons was not part of a private contract

The voluntary client did not lose his personal freedom or his legal capacity but was obliged to allegiance and to carry out services for the patron.<sup>11</sup> He strengthened the patron's social prestige and supported his political goals. The patron in return vowed to protect and help the client in all his needs, provided free legal advice and representation,<sup>12</sup> and offered economic advantages. "To put the matter briefly," the patron was expected "to secure for them [the clients] both in private and in public affairs all that tranquillity of which they particularly stood in need," Dionysius writes.<sup>13</sup> Because both parties to the voluntary and private contract could be Roman citizens,<sup>14</sup> and because the client retained his freedom and legal responsibility, the aspect of power (*potestas*) of the patron over an inferior, obedient client increasingly faded into the background, while the moral aspect of reciprocal loyalty (*fides*) increased.<sup>15</sup>

On the basis of this system of vertical-dependency relationships between patrons and clients or freed persons, large portions of the society were tied to a few influential families during the Roman Republic: not only the masses of slaves and freed persons, but also numerous freeborn persons, sometimes even entire communities in Italy.

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but a matter of public law; the submission under the power of a conqueror and the latter's vow to loyalty (*fides*, which was under the protection of the gods to whom the patron vowed) were rooted in international law that regulated the relations between citizens and non-citizens. Contrary to the voluntary clientage, this submission could imply serious limitations to the legal capacity of the client. He, for example, had to accept the *nomen gentile* of the patron; the power of the *pater familias* was replaced by the patronage; he could not marry whomever he wanted; the patron often inherited his estate after his death; and so on. Such limitations did not confront voluntary clients. See A. v. Premerstein, "Clientes," *Pauly/Wissowa* 4 (1901): 28–30, 33, 38f., 41ff., 51.

<sup>11</sup> For military service until the second century BCE, see *ibid.*, 37. For financial contributions to the patron, see Dionys. Halic., *Ant. rom.* 2.10; Livius 5.32.8 (cf. 38.60.9; Dionys., *ibid.* 13.5.1). These payments helped to cover extraordinary expenses of the patron. Apart from this, financial gifts to the patron were frowned upon, but they could occur (Dionys., *ibid.* 2.10.4; Plutarch, *Rom.* 13; Gellius 20.1.40; Livius 34.4.9; the *lex Cincia de donis*, probably from 204 BCE, had ruled that only very small presents to the patron were allowed; cf. A. W. Lintott, "Cliens, clientes," *Neue Pauly* 3 [1997]: 32). For the personal freedom of the clients, see, e.g., Proculus, *Dig.* 49.15.7 § 1: "clientes nostros intellegimus liberos esse, etiamsi neque auctoritate neque dignitate neque viribus nobis pares sunt."

<sup>12</sup> This was called *patrocinium*. Cf., e.g., Cicero, *De or.* 1.177; 3.33; Livius 34.4.9; Tacitus, *Ann.* 11.5; *Dial.* 3; Horace, *Ep.* 2.1.104; Dionys. Halic., *Ant. rom.* 2.10.1; Gellius 5.13.6. This task of the patrons, however, became less and less important the more complicated law and trials became. Already in late Republican times, professional upper-class lawyers often were consulted, and during a trial a temporary patron–client relationship was established between the professional attorney and the litigant (cf. Cicero, *Att.* 15.14.3). This form of clientage has survived until today, when "clients" put their legal dealings in the hands of lawyers. The original patrons' loss of legal competence contributed, of course, to the loosening of the ties between clients and patrons already in Republican times.

<sup>13</sup> Dionys. Halic., *Ant. rom.* 2.10.1.

<sup>14</sup> A client could even be of the equestrian rank, such as the poet Martial.

<sup>15</sup> Fittingly, since Republican times, a patron and a client could marry one another. Cf., e.g., Gellius 13.20.8; Plutarch, *Cat. Maj.* 24; Pliny, *Nat.* 7.61. The reciprocity between patron and client was idealized by Dionysius Halic. (*Ant. rom.* 2.10.4): "It is incredible how great the contest of good will was between the patrons and clients, as each side strove not to be outdone by the other in kindness, the clients feeling that they should render all possible services to their patrons and the patrons wishing by all means not to occasion any trouble to their clients." Although talking about earliest Roman times here, Dionysius insists that the patron–client relations described in 2.10 "long continued among the Romans." Satirical authors such as Martial (see n. 22 below) counterbalance this idealized picture.



Powerful and wealthy Roman families secured their societal and political influence through droves of clients in Italy and the provinces.<sup>16</sup> In fact, during the Roman Republic, political power to a large extent was based on the number of supporting clients one could count on in several strata of the society.<sup>17</sup>

In imperial times, the political influence of the noble families faded. Consequently, clientage became less a political factor but remained a social and economic institution. Unlike the freed persons who were tied to their patrons by clearly defined legal relations, clients' bond to their patrons was a very loose, *merely moral, social, and economic* dependency. Juridical implications were negligible; the patron–client relationship was legally irrelevant during imperial times.<sup>18</sup> Both sides voluntarily agreed upon it, and although it usually was hereditary,<sup>19</sup> it could be dissolved at any time. Often one client served several patrons at the same time.<sup>20</sup> Conversely, a patron usually had many clients—as a symbol of his power to provide for social inferiors. Dionysius (*Ant. rom.* 2.10.4) put it this way: “It was a matter of great praise to men of illustrious families to have as many clients as possible and not only to preserve the succession of hereditary patronages but also by their own merit to acquire others.” In the first two-thirds of the first century CE, the influential families still were very eager to increase their prestige through their clientele (Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.55.2; *Hist.* 1.4). The clients were a retinue for a rich patron, whose social status was reflected in the size of this following.<sup>21</sup> The patron in return saved the clients from unemployment and starvation.

In the morning, the clients presented themselves in the atrium of the patron's house and made their obeisances. In Rome, they were required to dress up in a toga for this occasion. During the day, they surrounded the patron as his entourage, accompanied him to the Forum, to the bath, or to his visits, joined him for his travels, clapped at his public speeches, and walked behind his sedan-chair.<sup>22</sup> They addressed him as

<sup>16</sup> Cf., e.g., Livy 5.32.8; Dionys. Halic., *Ant. rom.* 9.41.5; Plautus, *Men.* 574ff.

<sup>17</sup> It is not clear, however, to what extent the patrons in Republican times could control their clients' behavior at the polls. Bribery increased in the second century BCE, and this indicates that the ties between patrons and clients had loosened already in Republican times. See also n. 12, above, and Lintott, “Clients,” 32: From the *lex Gabinia* in 139 BCE onward, the Roman legislation contributed to the loosening of these ties.

<sup>18</sup> The *ius civile* proper did not regulate the clientage; and in the domain of public law these private relationships, of course, did not play any role either. Their only meager legal protection was provided by the criminal law, which punished the *fraus patroni*, the patron's violation of loyalty (cf. Servius, *Aen.* 6.609, and v. Premerstein, “Clientes,” 39–40, 46). The obligations of these give-and-take relationships, rooted in mutual loyalty (*fides*), were of a moral nature. They were not legally enforceable but rather were governed by custom and by reverence for the gods who protected the *fides*. Cf. Dionys. Halic., *Ant. rom.* 2.9.3: θέμις (*themis*) and ὅσιον (*hosion*) established the basis.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Dionys. Halic., *Ant. rom.* 2.10.4; 4.23.6; 11.36; Plutarch, *Mar.* 5.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., e.g., v. Premerstein, “Clientes,” 38, 52–53. Even freed persons could choose an additional patron besides their former slave master (cf., e.g., Cicero, *Sex. Rosc.* 19; *Att.* 1.12.2).

<sup>21</sup> Therefore even less wealthy patrons aimed for a large entourage, with some getting into debt in order to finance this status symbol (Martial, *Ep.* 2.74).

<sup>22</sup> For Roman clients, cf., e.g., Martial, *Ep.* 12.68.1–2; 9.100.2; 6.88; 4.40.1; 3.38.11; 3.36; 2.74; 2.18; 1.108; 1.59; 1.55.5–6; also Seneca, *Ben.* 6.33f.; Livy 38.51.6; Juvenal 1.95ff.; Suetonius, *Vesp.* 2.2.



*dominus* ("sir") or even *rex* ("king") and sometimes honored him with a statue.<sup>23</sup> In Pompeii, some actively supported their patrons' election campaigns for city offices.<sup>24</sup> These were time-consuming services. And most often clients were not enthusiastic about their "job." In cold weather, they cursed the early-morning walks across the city to the patron's house. They frowned when they were ranked lower than other clients at the patron's receptions or dinners. They deplored the lack of *fides* (loyalty). Martial, Juvenal, Lucian, and Epictetus continually report these numerous complaints.<sup>25</sup>

For their services, the clients were paid a *sportula* each day that they came to the patron's house. Originally, the *sportula* had been "a little basket," as the word is literally translated, containing food. In imperial times, however, the *sportula* often was pocket money. At the time of Martial, in the second half of the first century CE, this usually amounted to twenty-five *asses*. For that amount of money, one could buy twelve and a half loaves of bread or six liters of good wine.<sup>26</sup> In other words, the *sportula* was a sort of private support for the unemployed.

In addition to the *sportula*, the patrons occasionally invited the clients to dinner. This was especially done at the festival of the *Saturnalia*. Now and then the clients were given a piece of clothing or some extra money. Sometimes they were offered a loan, legal aid, or a surety. Very rarely did they receive a whole farm as a gift or were granted free lodging.<sup>27</sup> At the *Saturnalia* or on a birthday, clients usually offered little gifts, such as candles, to the patron<sup>28</sup> in order to receive more valuable presents in return.

In the realm of financial activities, there was no sophisticated banking system. Therefore, people tended to turn to friends, patrons, or clients rather than to banks in order to obtain advice, loans, or gifts. Aristocratic landowners, for example, when lacking cash for the financing of their careers, games, or electoral bribery, often asked not only superior patrons or equal friends but also inferior clients for loans. On the other hand, aristocrats exercised influence as *creditors* to friends and clients. Thus, an exchange between patrons and clients took place, both groups taking on the roles of creditors and borrowers. The social bond created by financial favors cannot be overestimated.<sup>29</sup> Loans and gifts helped to raise the status both of the receiver *and* of the donor. The latter's prestige was raised by his or her generosity. And the former's need for money to finance a career or other status-raising activities was met. At times the

<sup>23</sup> Cf., e.g., Horace, *Ep.* 1.7.37. For a statue: CIL 6.1390; cf. Pliny, *Nat.* 34.17.

<sup>24</sup> CIL 4.593, 822, 933, 1011, 1016.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. n. 22 above and L. Friedländer, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms in der Zeit von Augustus bis zum Ausgang der Antonine*, 4 vols. (Aalen: Scientia, 1979), 1:227f.

<sup>26</sup> For prices, see P. Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte*, 2nd ed., WUNT 2/18 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 163. For twenty-five *asses*, cf. Martial, *Ep.* 1.59. Under Trajan, twenty-five *asses* were the amount of the usual *sportula*. Martial (*Ep.* 9.100.2) also knows of a *sportula* of three *denarii* (= 48–54 *asses*).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Dig.* 7.8.2 §§1, 3; 9.3.5 §1; Tacitus, *Ann.* 16.22; and see Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte*, 1:227.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.7.33 (*lex Publica*, probably 209 BCE).

<sup>29</sup> For the financial exchanges between patrons and clients, see the material collected by R. P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 120ff., 205.

patron also helped a client retrieve money that had been lent to a third person. In order to protect the client's interests in these cases, the patron used his social connections to exercise social pressure on the borrower until everything was repaid.<sup>30</sup>

We are best informed about clients in the city of Rome. However, this form of patron–client relationship also existed in smaller Italian towns, such as Pompeii and in the provinces.<sup>31</sup> Private support for the unemployed or financial gifts and loans were only one side of patronage and clientage in imperial times. Another was the active sponsoring of (talented) individual persons—much the same way that it is done today. This was an even looser form of patronage, without the daily *sportula*, and it could be found throughout the entire Roman Empire. A senator, for example, sponsored a sophist,<sup>32</sup> and a matron named Phoebe sponsored and supported the apostle Paul.<sup>33</sup> Naturally, patronal relations between teachers and students also developed, for example, between physicians and their students<sup>34</sup> or sophists and their students.<sup>35</sup>

In summary, *vertical* units of different sizes constituted society and prevented the development of horizontal class consciousness below the ranks of the nobility. These vertical units prevented the socially lower population from developing homogeneous interests. Neither the freed persons nor the clients formed a “class.”<sup>36</sup> To a large extent, the members of the non-noble societal strata were distinguished from each other by *vertical* demarcation lines, created by the dependencies on different patrons and their households.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See Pliny, *Ep.* 6.8.

<sup>31</sup> CIL 3.6126. For further epigraphical evidence, particularly concerning Gaul, cf., e.g., v. Premerstein, “Clientes,” 54. For North Africa, see Saller, *Patronage*, 145ff.

<sup>32</sup> See the inscription in R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, eds., *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1998), 1: no. 03/02/28: The sophist Hadrianos of Tyre honors the consul Claudius Severus (second century CE) with a statue, thanking him for his patronage (προστασίας, προστάτην [*prostaties, prostaten*]).

<sup>33</sup> See below for Rom 16:2, where the same term is used: προστατίς (*prostatis*).

<sup>34</sup> Cf., e.g., the inscription in Merkelbach and Stauber, eds., *Steinepigramme*, no. 06/02/32: A medical doctor from Pergamon praises his deceased teacher, who left him behind “as a son, worthy of your art.” Greek physicians were like fathers to their students. According to our inscription, the student even gave a burial place to his teacher in his own tomb.

<sup>35</sup> Cf., e.g., the gift from students in the inscription Merkelbach and Stauber, eds., *Steinepigramme*, no. 03/02/31. For our purposes we will leave out the rural *coloni*, farmers who rented land from landowners and who were highly dependant on these landlords. Usually they were bound by heredity to the place where they were born and which they rented, being burdened by high rents and losing more and more rights. Sometimes these vertical relationships were considered client-like: Hermogenianus, *Dig.* 19.1.49 pr. (“colonom...in fidem suam recipit”). But the often oppressive relationships were governed more by solid, legally defined obligations than by the moral value of loyalty.

<sup>36</sup> For a definition of “class,” see G. Alföldy, *Römische Sozialgeschichte*, 3rd ed. (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1984), 126–27.

<sup>37</sup> Vertical borderlines also distinguished between *slaves*, *freed* persons, and *freeborn* persons, and between *rural* and *urban* lower class people. A free person, for example, did not automatically have a higher social position than a slave. Often it was the other way around. Any idea of horizontal borderlines between these groups would be misleading. Cf., e.g., G. Alföldy's pyramid model of the society of the Roman Empire (*Sozialgeschichte*, 125).

These vertical connections helped to increase the clients' chances for *upward social mobility*. Personal social advancement was largely influenced by loyalty toward a patron whose connections and resources could be helpful for ambitious clients. Municipal aristocrats, for example, had no chance of moving up socially without the patronal protection of some members of the senatorial or equestrian ranks.<sup>38</sup>

One important characteristic of the patron–client relation was that power (*potestas*) was much less emphasized than mutual loyalty (*fides*, *pistis*). The latter confined the display of power. In this way, reciprocal give-and-take relationships could develop which suited the interests of both partners in this vertical interaction. In the middle of the first century CE, these relationships still served the superiors' interests in prestige and the inferiors' desire for social protection. Later, patron–client relationships increasingly failed in meeting these goals.

(3) Not only individual persons were clients. Also clubs, entire communities, even provinces could obtain the client status. Rome's supremacy over subjected territories often was interpreted as patronage (*deditio in dicionem et fidem populi Romani*).<sup>39</sup> Conquerors of provinces and founders of colonies became their "patrons."<sup>40</sup> Cities selected influential senators, former municipal authorities, or other distinguished personalities to be their patrons. These patrons represented the community's political and legal interests, sponsored its various activities, particularly its building projects, and were generous with donations.<sup>41</sup> Sometimes a city selected several patrons simultaneously.<sup>42</sup> We are able to identify more than 1,200 city patrons of this kind between about 70 BCE and 300 CE in the Roman Empire.<sup>43</sup> In addition, patrons of religious and professional associations (*collegia*, clubs) were numerous. They excelled in donations, gifts, and the financing of banquets. And the more distinguished they were, the more they raised the social prestige of the club and its members. Women, too, often were the patrons of religious associations.<sup>44</sup> The profit the patrons received from these relationships was prestige: their grateful clients praised them in inscriptions and immortalized them in statues.

<sup>38</sup> Cf., e.g., Saller, *Patronage*, 120.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Paulus, *Dig.* 49.15.7 §1; Cicero, *Off.* 2.27; Livy 26.32.8; 37.54.17.

<sup>40</sup> Lex col. Gen. 97; Cicero, *Off.* 1.11.35: "ut ii, qui civitates aut nationes devictas bello in fidem recepissent, eorum patroni essent more maiorum"; Valerius Maximus 4.3.6; Livy 37.45.2; Dionys., *Ant. rom.* 2.11.1: "each of the conquered towns had...προστάτας [*prostatas*, patrons]." The term parallels προστάτης (*prostatis*) in Rom 16:2.

<sup>41</sup> Tacitus, *Dial.* 3; Cicero, *Sest.* 9; *Pis.* 25; Pliny, *Ep.* 4.1. Cf. also, e.g., the consul Cn. Claudius Severus, who in about 165 CE was honored as "protecting the city" of Ephesus. See the inscription in Merkelbach and Stauber, eds., *Steinepigramme*, no. 03/02/28.

<sup>42</sup> E.g., *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (ed. H. Dessau, Berlin 1, 1892–3.2, 1916), 6121.

<sup>43</sup> See J. Nicols, "Prefects, Patronage, and the Administration of Justice," *ZPE* 72 (1988): 201 n. 3.

<sup>44</sup> See F. Vittinghoff, ed., *Europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in der Römischen Kaiserzeit*, *Handbuch der Europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte* 1 (Stuttgart: Klett, 1990), 203, 211.



(4) The emperor, of course, was considered the most prestigious patron. His clientele included his freed persons, the urban Roman *plebs*, the soldiers of the army and fleet and the members of the local elite in the provinces. Senators and equestrians were often called *amici*, friends on an equal level. However, this was mere diplomatic language, because they were in fact clients, too.

Finally, the entire population of the Roman Empire was seen as being in a patronal relationship with the emperor, who was considered the *pater patriae*, the “father of the country.” Dion of Prusa depicted the ideal ruler as someone who “sees the social care for the people not as a triviality or a mere hassle..., but rather as his personal task and his profession. If he is busy with something else, he feels that he is doing something unimportant” (*Or.* 3.55).<sup>45</sup> Of course, many emperors did not live up to this ideal. Nevertheless, as *defensor plebis* (“defender of the common people”), the emperor looked after the *plebs* in the city of Rome with donations of money and grain; after earthquakes, he offered financial help to communities for rebuilding. The examples are well known and could easily be augmented.

Also in this special patron–client relationship, the clients were of course obliged to show their loyalty to the patron, by rendering “to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”—by paying taxes, by taking oaths of allegiance (e.g., ILS 190), or worshiping the emperor in the imperial cult (e.g., ILS 112). But it is clear that the second half of the above-quoted early Christian text, “give to God the things that are God’s” (Matt 22:21), focuses on a second, competing pyramid, with God at the apex. In times of political stress, such as the threat that the writer of Revelation perceived in Domitian, who wanted to be worshiped by pagans as well as Christians, this second patron–client relationship competed mightily with the first. The Socratic *Clausula Petri* (Acts 5:29; cf. Plato, *Apol.* 29d) also did not exclude such a competition. The early Christians developed the concept of an alternative pyramid with alternative loyalties. It was explosive, and, in Revelation, it led to the provocative thesis that the pagan pyramidal Greco-Roman system, with Satan, the emperor, and the priests of the imperial cult at the apex, merely mimicked the triad of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>46</sup>

There is no doubt that the alternative pyramid with God and Christ at the top was just as real for the early Christians as was the pyramid presided over by the emperor. For them, the risen *Kyrios* represented just as real a personal and social entity as the emperor himself. Thus, according to their perception, both pyramids were on the same level. The possible modern reproach that different categories are mixed here, and that human society and the religious world cannot be placed in competition with each other on the same level, would have perplexed the early Christians, leaving them shaking their heads.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. also Pliny, *Pan.* 2.21.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Rev 5:6 with 13:3, 12, 14, and 13:15 with 11:11 as well as 13:2, 4, 11; 16:13; 20:10; 7:3; 13:16. See also P. Lampe, “Die Apokalyptiker—Ihre Situation und ihr Handeln,” in *Eschatologie und Friedenshandeln*, ed. U. Luz et al., 2nd ed., SBS 101 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1982), 95.



## Part II.

### Patron and Client in Paul's Letters

Pagan sources that illuminate patron–client relationships most often focus on aristocratic patrons from Rome and the provinces. Patrons and clients of lower social standing left a lesser record of their activities; these have been found mainly in the inscriptions and the Egyptian papyri, but also in Pauline Christianity. In Pauline Christianity, patron–client relationships can be found both between individuals and between individuals and groups. However, at the same time, these vertical relationships were also questioned as being problematic. Two seemingly contradictory tendencies therefore coexisted in Pauline Christianity.

#### Egalitarian Tendencies

In Gal 3:27–28, Paul refers to the early Christian understanding of baptism. In baptism and in the postbaptismal existence, worldly differences among the baptized become irrelevant; regardless of their worldly status, all who are baptized are assured of the same closeness to Christ. Without differentiation, all Christians are “children of God through faith” (3:26).<sup>47</sup> Whatever the worldly differences among the Galatians may be, they are abolished. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female” (3:28).

The text differentiates between two social contexts that stand both beside and in opposition to each other. On the one hand, there is the worldly, Hellenistic-Roman context in which Jews and Greeks are differentiated from each other, as well as the not legally free from the free, and the men from the women. On the other hand, the Christian community has changed the paradigm. In the new social context of the Christians, these differentiations among people were no longer made. In the house churches and in the Christians’ interactions with each other, such worldly differences, vertical or horizontal, were considered irrelevant, so that the one person stood equal to the other.<sup>48</sup>

This was the egalitarian maxim in Pauline Christianity. On the other hand, however, there *were* vertical relationships even within Pauline Christianity. And we will have to ask how far the principal of equality radiated into these social relationships and possibly modified them.

<sup>47</sup> For the Christians as children of God, see also, e.g., Rom 8:14–17, 19, 21, 23. Christ, consequently, can be called their brother (v. 29), although he also appears as the vertically superordinated lord (see below).

<sup>48</sup> This is what is meant by “you all are one” (εἷς, *heis*) in 3:28. You are all together one and the same; nothing differentiates you. A paraphrase capturing the meaning would be: “You all are the same as each other.” Contrary to popular assumption, the masculine εἷς (*heis*) cannot mean that they all are “one (church) body.” The neuter of σῶμα (*soma*, “body”) contraindicates this.

## Patrons as a Basis of Early Christian Church Life

The Christian patrons and their private households played a most vital role in the life of the early church. In the first two centuries CE, almost the only real estate that the church used was the private rooms of patrons.<sup>49</sup> Church-owned buildings and land did not exist before the third or even fourth century. Only in the third century CE were so-called “homes of the church” (*domus ecclesiae*) set up, that is, special rooms that were reserved exclusively for worship purposes. In the first two centuries, the Christian congregations or “house churches” met in private rooms in the homes of patrons. These rooms, of course, were used for everyday purposes by their owners or tenants during the week.<sup>50</sup> Thus, in the first and second centuries the church existed not *beside* Christian patrons’ private households, it existed exclusively *in* them. This service rendered by Christian hosts was praised accordingly, and the virtue of hospitality was emphasized. Those who opened their homes were greatly appreciated—whether they had houses or only apartments such as the one on the third floor of a tenement house in Troas (Acts 20:8–9) or Justin’s rental apartment “above Myrtinus’ bath” in Rome.<sup>51</sup>

Usually, all of the Christians in a city could not fit into one private household. Therefore, several house churches coexisted in the bigger cities in New Testament times. In Corinth and its harbor satellite town Cenchreae, groups crystallized in the homes of Stephanas, Gaius, Titius Justus, Crispus, and Phoebe. In the capital city of Rome, at least seven Christian circles can be identified in the middle of the first century CE. In the Lycus Valley in Asia Minor, in the area of Colossae-Laodicea-Hierapolis, Christians met at the dwelling of Nympha or at Philemon’s house.<sup>52</sup>

We know of only one early central meeting place where all of the Christians of one city sometimes assembled: Gaius’ home in Corinth.<sup>53</sup> Other cities did not have plenary meetings of several house churches, certainly not Rome. The structure of the early church was thus fragmented; *several* house churches met in one city. That is, *several* patrons hosted church meetings, and no single patron gained a monopoly of the leadership in one city. This fragmented church structure was indeed one of the reasons why a central church government headed by a city bishop evolved relatively late. In Rome, for instance, it was not until the second half of the second century CE that city bishops emerged who at least *tried* to subject all Christian groups of the city of Rome to their leadership and patronage. They were not always successful in their

<sup>49</sup> Exceptions: At the very beginnings of Judeo-Christianity, the Christian life also took place in the Jerusalem temple and in the synagogues. In Ephesus, Paul preached in a rented lecture room (Acts 19:9).

<sup>50</sup> For literary and archaeological evidence, cf., e.g., Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 307–10.

<sup>51</sup> For the services of house owners, cf., e.g., 2 Tim 1:16–18; Phlm 2, 5, 7; 1 Cor 16:15; compare also Mark 10:30 and 1:29–35; 2:15; 14:3. For hospitality, cf., e.g., Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Pet 4:9; 1 Clem. 1:2; compare also 1 Tim 5:10; 2 John 10. For Justin, see *Acta Iustini* 3.3.

<sup>52</sup> For Asia Minor, cf., Phlm 2; Col 4:15; 1 Cor 16:19 (Ephesus); possibly 2 Tim 4:19. For Corinth, cf. 1 Cor 1:14, 16; 16:15; Rom 16:1, 23; Acts 18:7, 8. For Thessalonica, cf. possibly 1 Thess 5:27 (Paul implores that the letter be read to all Christians in the city; this makes sense if at least two different house churches existed in town). For Rome, cf. Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 301–13.

<sup>53</sup> Rom 16:23; cf. 1 Cor 11:18; 14:23.

attempts, not even Victor, whose tenure fell into the last decade of the second century. Before the middle of the second century, we only encounter leaders of individual house churches in Rome, but no sole, central bishop.<sup>54</sup> A similar development can be observed in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. There, the city bishops did not emerge before the first decades of the second century. Ignatius, for example, called himself the only bishop of Antioch. But whether these sole city bishops of early times were always acknowledged as such by all of the Christians in the town is doubtful; also in the east, some Christians did not want to be under the “bishop.”<sup>55</sup> And still at the end of the second century, at least the church of Ancyra in Asia Minor was led by a group and not by a single city bishop.<sup>56</sup> Neither from the New Testament documents nor *First Clement* nor the *Shepherd of Hermas* can it be proved that the term “bishop” implied a sole central leader of the Christians in one city. All these writings still reflect a collegial church leadership: a number of people governed the church in each city.<sup>57</sup> And this had to do with the fragmented structure of the church, represented by multiple house churches that were hosted by *multiple* patrons.

To summarize, *the hosts of congregational meetings*, of house churches, can be construed as patrons of these congregations. As parallels in the Hellenistic world we saw political communities and pagan religious associations that enjoyed the patronage of individual (often female) benefactors and sponsors. It would be fair to say that all early Christian hosts who opened their homes for Christian house church gatherings were “patrons.”<sup>58</sup>

Did these patrons of small house churches hold a position *over* the other church members in Pauline Christianity? As far as we know, the answer is no. There was no static vertical subordination under these patrons. Christian patronage did not automatically imply a hierarchical structure. The early Christian social relationships were more dynamic and less clearly defined.

(1) It would be a misconception to infer from their role as hosts that these patrons also were the leaders of the congregational meetings. According to 1 Cor 12 and 14, especially 12:28, the function of steering and leading the Corinthian congregation was not tied to one specific person, not even to a fixed group of persons. No one presided at the Corinthian worship services. No individual leader was responsible for its order, for its beginning, for the sequence of its elements (cf. also 1 Cor 11:17–32). The *whole* congregation was responsible (14:26 ff.). Thus, the worship service was spontaneous

<sup>54</sup> For the relatively late emergence of a monarchic bishop in the city of Rome, cf. in detail Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 334–45.

<sup>55</sup> Ignatius, *Phil.* 7–8 (cf. *Magn.* 6–8).

<sup>56</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* 5.16.5.

<sup>57</sup> Cf., e.g., Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen*, 336–39.

<sup>58</sup> The same can be said about those economically stronger Christians who took care of fellow Christians in need. In Rom 12:13 they are listed side by side with the hosts. Often both groups would probably have been identical. The “good person” in Rom 5:7 probably was considered a patron, too: It might have been conceivable for people to give up their lives for their benefactor because of the ties of patronage (cf. A. D. Clarke, “The Good and the Just in Romans 5:7,” *TynBul* 41 [1990]: 128–42).



and sometimes even chaotic. The Holy Spirit led. And everybody whom the Spirit inspired could perform “leading acts” (12:28, κυβερνήσεις, *kyberneseis*) in the congregation. Without a doubt this included the hosts, but was not exclusive to them. The task of leading was still in many hands.

(2) Paul had not a vertical but a symmetrical model in mind when he asked all Christians for *mutual respect*, for *mutual love* and for φιλαδελφία (*philadelphia*, Rom 12:10; cf. Gal 5:13). It is significant that this symmetrical model stands in the immediate context of the “patrons” who take care of the economically weak Christians and who open their houses as hosts (Rom 12:13).

(3) More than once, Paul had to admonish congregations to *respect* their leaders who had worked hard for them and to subordinate themselves (ὑποτάσσησθε, *hypotass-esthe*) to them (1 Thess 5:12–13; 1 Cor 16:16). Apparently, there was a lack of proper respect for those who performed “leading acts” (κυβερνήσεις, *kyberneseis*]; cf. 1 Cor 12:28). Did the maxim of Gal 3:28 play a role in this? This is probable. According to 1 Tim 6:2, Christian slaves often tended to show less respect for their masters if the latter were Christian brothers. The maxim of Gal 3:28 (cf. Col 3:11, also Jas 2:1–5) seems to have been realized to a certain extent in the life of the congregations—even to such an extent that Paul and the author of 1 Timothy felt obliged to steer in the opposite direction once in a while. Even though patrons and leaders were merely “brothers” and “sisters” in the house-church context, some subordination and respect for those who performed “leading acts” and opened their homes for worship meetings seemed appropriate in Paul’s eyes. After all, love among equals also entails “serving” others and self-denial (1 Cor 8; 13; Phil 2:5 ff., etc.). Whoever *insists* on his or her rights and status, insisting that she or he is “equal” to (or even “better” than) others, does not live according to Christ’s example of being ready to renounce his status for the benefit of others.

In summary, in early Pauline Christianity, there were no clear-cut and rock-solid static vertical relationships. Things were more dynamic. The same can be observed once we look at the social relationships in which Paul himself worked and lived.

## Patrons of Paul

Like the early church as a whole, also Paul in his missionary work relied on several patrons who supported his apostolic mission by hosting and encouraging him, by providing helpers for him<sup>59</sup> and an audience that also included the dependants of these patrons. Lydia in Philippi, a well-to-do importer of luxury textiles, was baptized by Paul, hosted him and his entourage in her house, and also arranged the baptism of her dependents (Acts 16:14–15). She certainly was one of the sponsors

<sup>59</sup> Cf., e.g., Tertius, to whom Paul dictated the Letter to the Romans in the house of Gaius in Corinth (Rom 16:22–23). Gaius hosted Paul and probably also arranged Tertius’ job as secretary. Or was it Phoebe who provided this scribe, as R. Jewett suggests? (*Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 23, 80, 89–91, 941–48, 979f.).



who enabled the Philippian congregation to send money to Paul more than once to support his missionary work in other cities (Phil 4:10, 14–18; 2 Cor 11:9). In Thessalonica a certain Jason supported Paul and Silas by hosting them in their house and shielding them against the local mob (Acts 17:5, 7). Several ladies of the local aristocracy in Thessalonica, several respected women and men in Beroea, and some of the local elite in Athens such as Dionysius and Damaris allegedly also became adherents of Paul's preaching (Acts 17:4, 12, 34) and may well have supported him, although we do not have direct information about this.<sup>60</sup> In Corinth, a certain Titius Justus opened his house for Paul's teaching activities (Acts 18:7), and Gaius hosted him when he wrote the Letter to the Romans (Rom 16:23). The mother of Rufus in Rome also was a "mother" to Paul once when she stayed in the east of the empire (Rom 16:13).<sup>61</sup>

The only person for whom Paul explicitly used the term "patron" (προστάτις, *prostatis*) was Phoebe in Cenchreae, as we already saw (Rom 16:1–2). As a "patroness," she supported and sponsored "many" Christians, including Paul. Paul may have enjoyed the hospitality of her home in Cenchreae for a while when he was working in Corinth. She carried Paul's Romans letter to Rome, possibly presenting it there orally. She also seems to have opened her home for the meetings of the local house church of Cenchreae (16:1b).

However, Phoebe's support for local Christians did not really establish a vertical relationship. In the same passage she is also called "our sister" and "servant" (διάκονος, *diakonos*) of the house church in Cenchreae. And when she travelled to Rome, the Roman Christians were supposed to support her dealings in Rome—as a patron would do. Thus, the roles of patron and client are reversed in this case, with Phoebe being the "client," if one really wanted to apply the patron–client model to this support relationship. The is same true for the relationship between Paul and Phoebe. On the one hand, Phoebe is a "patroness" for Paul (16:2c). On the other hand, Paul was an apostle, the founder of the Corinthian church, and, in Rom 16:1–2, he writes a short letter of recommendation in favor of Phoebe. That is, *he* assumes the role of patron here, wanting to make sure that the Roman Christians receive her well and support her in all that she needs during her visit in Rome. Thus, the roles of patron and client were not static, vertical-dependency relationships in early Pauline Christianity, but could even be reversed. This fact underscores that the principal equality of all Christians formulated in Gal 3:28 was no mere theory in the Pauline churches.

Because Phoebe was the only one for whom the technical term "patron" was specifically used, we may assume that this dynamic character of patron–client relationships also held true for the other patrons of Paul listed above. It certainly held true for Paul's

<sup>60</sup> The same is true about the Jewish-Christian Crispus (Acts 18:7; 1 Cor 1:14) and about Stephanas (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15). Both were masters of households and supported church life in Corinth, thus indirectly also Paul's apostolic mission.

<sup>61</sup> For other examples of patronage: If 2 Tim 1:16–18 preserves an accurate tradition, a certain Onesiphorus had a patronage role for the Christians in Ephesus and also tried to care for Paul when the apostle was in prison in Rome. Acts 19:31 mentions some leaders in the Province of Asia as "friends" of Paul. They were not Christians but allegedly tried to protect him from the turmoil that had been stirred up by the silversmiths in Ephesus.

relationship to Prisca and Aquila. As patrons they supported his missionary work in Corinth by housing him and giving him a job in their workshop (Acts 18:2–3). As patrons they hosted house churches in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) and Rome (Rom 16:5). They “risked their necks” for Paul’s life (Rom 16:4); this probably occurred during their stay in Ephesus, where Paul was exposed to serious dangers (1 Cor 15:32; 2 Cor 1:8–9). “All” Gentile Christian churches owed them thanks (Rom 16:4). On the other hand, Paul was more than just their “client.” In 1 Cor 16:19, it sounds like they were more Paul’s co-workers in Ephesus than his “patrons.” And in Rom 16:3, just one verse after Phoebe had been called a “patron,” the couple was *not* labeled with this term but with the attribute “my co-workers.” At least at the time of the Letter to the Romans, a *symmetrical* relationship had evolved between Paul and this couple. “Coworker” could even be used for helpers *subordinate* to Paul.<sup>62</sup> Thus, again, the vertical relations could be turned upside down, exemplifying the principal of the equality of all Christians.

This can be also illustrated for Gaius and Paul: Gaius on the one hand sponsored Paul’s activities in Corinth and hosted the apostle (Rom 16:23). The apostle, on the other hand, had baptized this “patron” (1 Cor 1:14) and thus had sponsored his faith.<sup>63</sup> The flexibility of relationships can finally be illustrated by Paul’s relationship to Barnabas. Barnabas was older than Paul and seems to have called Paul to Antioch, introducing him to the Christians of that city (Acts 11:25–26; cf. 9:26f.). He seems to have been a patron for Paul in these early years. Being more experienced and influential in the church than the newly converted Saul, Barnabas might even have played a fatherly role for Paul at the beginning.<sup>64</sup> Paul, however, soon seems to have turned out to be the more influential missionary, and this changed their relationship into a symmetrical one, as we can see during the apostolic conference in Jerusalem (Gal 2:1, 7–9).<sup>65</sup> Paul even seems to have become the speaker and leader (Gal 2:2, 5–8) until they separated (Gal 2:13; cf. Acts 15:36–40).

The ambiguity of this example is due to dynamic developments within the relationship of the two men. And this is the main point that we learn from this ambiguity: the patron’s position in Pauline Christianity is not rigid with one always over the other. Sometimes the patron appears equal to the client; sometimes the “patron” and “client” even change roles.

<sup>62</sup> 2 Cor 8:23 (Titus), cf. Gal 2:1–3; Rom 16:21 (Timothy); Rom 16:9 (Urbanus); Phil 2:25 (Epaphroditus); Phlm 24 (Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke); Phlm 1, 8 (Philemon); Phil 4:3. After the Emperor Claudius’ death in 54 CE, Prisca and Aquila had returned to Rome. This move might have been strategically motivated. Paul possibly sent them as his vanguard to Rome, where he wanted to gain a firm footing with his gospel before continuing to Spain.

<sup>63</sup> Also Rufus’s mother “mothered” Paul like a patron would do (Rom 16:13), probably by hosting Paul, but that did not make the apostle a subordinate “client.”

<sup>64</sup> Cf., e.g., S. Tarachow, “St. Paul and Early Christianity: A Psychoanalytic and Historical Study,” in *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, ed. W. Muensterberger and S. Axelrad (New York: International University Press, 1955), 4:240; B. E. Redlich, *S. Paul and his Companions* (London: Macmillan, 1913), 62. Barnabas also was one of the patrons of the early Jerusalem church (Acts 4:36–37).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. also Acts 13–14. From 13:13 on, most of the times Paul is even mentioned before Barnabas.

## Other Apostles as Patrons of Paul?

How did Paul define his relationship to the other apostles who had been disciples of Jesus of Nazareth during his life time and who had been apostles long before Paul was converted? In 1 Cor 15:8–9, Paul confesses: "Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." Two to three years after his conversion, Paul travelled to Jerusalem where he talked with Peter for fifteen days and met James. Were these two apostles therefore "patrons" of the newcomer Paul who instructed him, who taught him what it was like to be an apostle and who sent him into his missionary work? No, although being the least of all, Paul claimed to be an apostle *directly* dependent on Christ and not on any of the other apostles (Gal 1:11–12, 16–17). Only to Christ and God did he feel responsible and accountable as a "slave," "servant" or "steward" (Rom 1:1, 9; 1 Cor 4:1–2). That is, only in this relationship was there a vertical subordination that could be compared to patron–client structures.

## Paul as Patron of Co-Workers and Congregations

How is Paul's relationship to his other co-workers (besides Prisca and Aquila) and to his congregations to be defined?<sup>66</sup> What kind of leadership style did he exercise? Were these relationships strictly vertical, or did they also incorporate symmetrical elements that reflected the principal equality of all Christians? Did he leave room for situations in which equality was made manifest?

After the separation from Barnabas, Paul surrounded himself with helpers who travelled with him, preached with him, coauthored letters with him and were sent by him to congregations: Silas, Timothy, Titus, Erastus, Urbanus, Epaphroditus, Sosthenes, Tertius, Clement, Euodia, Syntyche, the travel companions Aristarchus, Gaius from Derbe, Sopater, Secundus, Tychicus and Trophimus along with anonymous persons.<sup>67</sup> Some of them were sent by congregations.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> We will not take into consideration the parties mentioned in 1 Cor 1–4: Corinthian Christians, who had been initiated into Christianity by Paul, or Peter, or Apollos, had formed three parties that were puffed up against each other. Similar to pagan teacher–students relationships, these parties looked up to their respective apostles as to patrons and venerated them and their respective theological "wisdom." Paul scolds this practice as a perversion. One can only adhere to Christ as a patron and venerate him, not human apostles. Cf., e.g., P. Lampe, "Theological Wisdom and the 'Word About the Cross': The Rhetorical Scheme in I Corinthians 1–4," *Interpretation* 44 (1990): 117–31.

<sup>67</sup> *Silas* and *Timothy* (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor 1:1, 19; 1 Thess 1:1; 3:2; Phil 1:1; 2:19, 22–23; Rom 16:21; cf. Acts 15:40; 16:1–3; 17:14f.; 20:4), *Titus* (2 Cor 8:17, 23; Gal 2:1–3), *Erastus* (Acts 19:22), *Urbanus* (Rom 16:9), *Epaphroditus* (Phil 2:25, 28–30), *Sosthenes* (1 Cor 1:1), *Tertius* (Rom 16:22), *Clement*, *Euodia*, and *Syntyche* (Phil 4:2–3), the travel companions *Aristarchus*, *Gaius* from Derbe, *Sopater*, *Secundus*, *Tychicus*, and *Trophimus* (Phlm 24; Acts 19:29; 20:4; cf. Eph 6:21–22; Col 4:7–8, 10), plus *anonymous* persons (Gal 1:2; 2 Cor 8:22, 18–19; Phil 4:3).

<sup>68</sup> 2 Cor 8:18–19; Phil 2:25, 30. In Paul's temporary entourage see also Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7), some anonymous "brothers" (Phil 4:21), Epaphras (Phlm 23; cf. Col 1:7–8; 4:12), Mark, Luke, Demas, Onesimus, and Jesus Justus (Phlm 23; cf. Col 4:9–11, 14; 2 Tim 4:10–11), Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (Rom 16:21). The latter might be identical with Sopater (Acts 20:4).



The question of Paul's leadership style has often been addressed and answered along the lines of a predominantly "democratic" style.<sup>69</sup> However, after Walter Rebell's thorough analysis using social-psychological categories, a damper has been put on this optimism.<sup>70</sup> There is no room here to go into the details of this extended discussion. To sum up its result: the material that reflects Paul's leadership behavior sends out ambiguous signals. On the one hand, the apostle leaves room for his congregations to develop a certain degree of independence. They may, for instance, choose on their own among alternative ethical options.<sup>71</sup> Paul also stressed the *φιλαδελφία* (*philadelphia*), the love between equal brothers and sisters, which should dominate life within the churches.<sup>72</sup> But on the other hand, Paul styles himself as their "father,"<sup>73</sup> to whom they owe "service" (*λειτουργία*, *leitourgia*, Phil 2:30) and "lasting obedience," as Walter Rebell words it.<sup>74</sup> He locates Paul in "a middle position between democratic and authoritarian leadership style," but he also has serious doubts that we really may speak about a "leadership style" in view of Paul's complex and ambiguous leadership behavior.

The ambiguity of Paul's leadership can be illustrated by his relationship to Philemon. As "co-worker," Philemon was subordinate to the apostle, for Paul had initiated Philemon into Christianity and could have "ordered" Philemon "to do what is proper" if he had wanted to (Phlm 1, 8, 19). Paul, however, refrained from "ordering": "For love's sake I rather appeal to you" (v. 9); "without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but

<sup>69</sup> Cf., e.g., A. Schreiber, *Die Gemeinde in Korinth: Versuch einer gruppensystematischen Betrachtung der Entwicklung der Gemeinde von Korinth auf der Basis des ersten Korintherbriefes*. Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen N.F. 12 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1977), 100–103; K. Stalder, "Autorität im Neuen Testament," *IKZ* 67 (1977): 1–29, esp. 4; E. Berbuir, "Die Herausbildung der kirchlichen Ämter von Gehilfen und Nachfolgern der Apostel," *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 36 (1973): 110–28, esp. 116; J. Eckert, *Der Apostel und seine Autorität: Studien zum zweiten Korintherbrief* (Habilitationsschrift München: unpublished manuscript, 1972), 494ff.; G. Friedrich, "Das Problem der Autorität im Neuen Testament," in *Auf das Wort kommt es an: Gesammelte Aufsätze* by G. Friedrich, ed. J. H. Friedrich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 374–415, esp. 392; J. A. Grassi, *A World to Win: The Missionary Methods of Paul the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1965), 135ff.; R. Pesch, "Neutestamentliche Grundlagen kirchendemokratischer Lebensform," *Conc(D)* 7 (1971): 166–71, esp. 170; G. Schille, "Offenbarung und Gesamtgemeinde nach Paulus," *ZdZ* 24 (1970): 407–17, esp. 409; R. Schnackenburg, "Die Mitwirkung der Gemeinde durch Konsens und Wahl im Neuen Testament," *Conc(D)* 8 (1972): 484–89, esp. 486f.; J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1975), 278; J. Hainz, *Ekklesia: Strukturen paulinischer Gemeinde-Theologie und Gemeinde-Ordnung*, Biblische Untersuchungen 9 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1972), 54, 291; W. Schrage, *Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paränese* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1961), 113; R. Baumann, *Mitte und Norm des Christlichen: Eine Auslegung von 1 Korinther 1,1–3,4*. Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen N.F. 5 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1968), 248; H. Ridderbos, *Paulus: Ein Entwurf seiner Theologie* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1970), 326; already E. von Dobschütz, *Die urchristlichen Gemeinden* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902), 51.

<sup>70</sup> W. Rebell, *Gehorsam und Unabhängigkeit: Eine sozialpsychologische Studie zu Paulus* (Munich: Kaiser, 1986), esp. 104–45.

<sup>71</sup> E.g., 1 Cor 6:5, 7 and 1 Cor 7. See also 2 Cor 8:17 (about Titus).

<sup>72</sup> E.g., 1 Thess 4:9; Rom 12:10.

<sup>73</sup> E.g., 1 Cor 4:14–16. See also 1 Cor 4:17 (Phil 2:22): Timothy as Paul's "child." In 1 Cor 16:10–11, Paul writes a recommendation for Timothy just like a patron does. The same is true for Epaphroditus for whom Paul writes a recommendation and who "serves" the apostle (Phil 2:29–30).

<sup>74</sup> Rebell, *Gehorsam*, 130. Cf. above the founders of colonies as patrons of these political communities.



of your own free will" (v. 14). This "appeal" at first glance seems to have put less pressure on Philemon, but at second glance it did not. The pressure only became more subtle and less direct this way. A little later Paul makes clear that he "has confidence" in Philemon's "obedience" (v. 21)—a statement that kept up the level of pressure to comply with Paul's wishes. The ambiguity of the relationship becomes even more obvious once we see Philemon taking on the role of patron. As a host of a house church (vv. 1–2) and as a host of Paul himself (v. 22), Philemon also was a "patron" not only of other Christians, but also of Paul. In Paul's eyes, the ambiguity of this relationship was best summarized by the symmetrical terms "brother" (vv. 7, 20) and "partner" (v. 17).<sup>75</sup>

## Paul as Onesimus's Patron

The Letter to Philemon confronts us with still another type of patronage. Philemon had suffered a material loss in his household; we do not know the details (maybe something precious was broken). Philemon accused his slave of this damage. Onesimus, the slave, was afraid of his master's wrath and chose to do something that often was done by slaves in similar situations, as legal texts show.<sup>76</sup> He left the master's house not in order to run away but to go to a friend of his master, in this case to the apostle Paul, and asked him to take on a mediating role in this conflict. Paul was asked to put in a good word for Onesimus; that is, he was asked to take on a temporary patronage or advocate's role. Paul accepted this role and wrote the Letter to Philemon, vigorously asking Philemon to swallow his anger and to accept Onesimus with love as a brother.

This temporary patron–client relationship between Paul and Onesimus was clearly vertical. And Paul used his patronage to convert the slave to Christianity and to teach him the Christian faith. However, in the course of his letter, Paul puts these vertical categories in another perspective by using symmetrical terms, thus undermining the absoluteness of vertical structures. The apostle claims that Onesimus is equal to him, "a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you" (v. 16). Paul even

<sup>75</sup> See also Phlm 1, 3–4, 8–9, 20: Both are equals. *Koinōnia* (*koinonia*) in Phlm 6, 17 clearly is a symmetrical term; see P. Lampe, "Der Brief an Philemon," in *Die Briefe an die Philipper, Thessalonicher und an Philemon*, by N. Walter, E. Reinmuth, and P. Lampe, NTD 8/2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 203–32 (212–32), with references. The ambiguity can be also seen in other relationships. Sosthenes and also the "co-workers" (Rom 16:21; Phil 2:25) Timothy and Epaphroditus were "brothers" (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 2:25), although the apostle could "send" these co-workers wherever he wanted to and Epaphroditus "served" him (e.g., Phil 2:30, 25, 28). Paul called Titus not only a "co-worker" but also a "partner" (2 Cor 8:23), who to a certain extent could make his own decisions (8:17). On the other hand, being younger than Paul, Titus was clearly subordinated to Paul at the apostolic council (Gal 2:1, 3). In all of these relationships, the ambiguity prevailed.

<sup>76</sup> Diog. 21.1.17.4–5; 21.1.43.1; 21.1.17.12; Pliny, *Ep.* 9.21, 24. For this analysis of the situation behind the Letter to Philemon, see P. Lampe, "Keine 'Sklavenflucht' des Onesimus," *ZNW* 76 (1985): 135–37; idem, "Der Brief an Philemon"; idem, "Affects and Emotions in the Rhetoric of Paul's Letter to Philemon: A Rhetorical-Psychological Interpretation," in *Philemon in Perspective: Interpreting a Pauline Letter*, ed. D. F. Tolmie, BZNW 169 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 61–77.

identifies with Onesimus: “If then you regard me a partner, accept *him* as you would *me*” (v. 17); “I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending *my* very heart” (v. 12); “if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to *my* account” (v. 18). Also by emphasizing his own imprisonment frequently (vv. 1, 9, 10, 13, 23), Paul puts himself on the same level as the enslaved Onesimus. In Christ, those who in worldly eyes are super- or subordinated to each other become equal brothers. Philemon therefore is expected to receive Onesimus as an equal and beloved brother (vv. 16–17). He is expected to redefine his social relationship with Onesimus—not only during worship services but also “in the flesh” (v. 16), in everyday life. That is, he is expected to put aside his secular social role as master of a slave or (in case he decided to free Onesimus) as patron of a freed man. He is expected to make this continuing worldly difference irrelevant in his interactions with Onesimus—which corresponds exactly to the maxim of Gal 3:28. This maxim can be filled with life when superordinate persons such as Paul and Philemon renounce their privileged status, without Onesimus, however, being relieved from his usual household duties as a slave.

To sum up the paradoxical result, in the Letter to Philemon, Paul *uses* his role as advocate and patron to *abolish* the relevance of such vertical hierarchies in inner-Christian social life.

## Congregations as Patrons?

In Rom 15:24, 28, Paul hopes that the Roman Christians will sponsor his missionary work in Spain, possibly by providing travel companions, food or money for the trip, perhaps also by arranging means of transportation (προπέμπω, *propempo*). Such sponsoring of travel activities by local congregations can also be seen elsewhere. Paul expects the Corinthians to support Timothy’s trip from Corinth to Ephesus (1 Cor 16:11) and his own trip to Judea (2 Cor 1:16; cf. 1 Cor 16:6). On this journey to Judea, with the money collected for Jerusalem in his bags, he is indeed accompanied by representatives of the congregations who had donated money for Jerusalem. These delegates of Macedonian and Achaian churches supported him on this trip. Through their presence, they also guaranteed and documented to any possible critics that everything in connection with this money transaction was handled properly (2 Cor 8:19–23; Acts 20:4–6). Furthermore, when Paul founded the Thessalonian and Corinthian churches, the Philippian congregation sponsored these missionary activities (2 Cor 11:8–9; Phil 4:14–16).

From a one-sided perspective, this sponsoring of apostolic journeys by congregations—through personnel or materials—could be interpreted as temporary *patronage*, with Paul or his co-worker Timothy being *clients* of the sponsoring churches. However, and here the above-mentioned ambiguity starts again, Paul also was the founder, the “father,” of the same congregations (see above). Thus, the patron–client roles were exchangeable. There was no one-sided vertical relationship between Paul and his churches. Once again, this fact illustrates the principle of equality in early Christian social life. The more adequate category, therefore, would not be the patron–client

model but rather that Paul and his congregations were partners connected by friendship (*amicitia*, φιλαδελφία [*philadelphia*]; see above). Of course, symmetrical relationships could include sponsoring activities; friends in the Greco-Roman world supported and helped each other. Especially the Philippians, who sponsored Paul's work more than any other congregation did, had a warm *amicitia* relationship with Paul, which was based on equality and reciprocity (Phil 2:25–30).<sup>77</sup>

In Corinth, Paul refused to take money from the local Christians when he founded their church; they did not understand this brusque refusal (1 Cor 9; 2 Cor 11:9–12; 12:13), especially since he did accept support from the Philippians while he was at Corinth. What were his motivations? He preached the gospel about God's free gift of grace to the Corinthians, and he did this at no charge; the content and form of his preaching corresponded to each other. By refusing support, he also avoided any dependencies on local donors that could be misunderstood as patron–client relationships. It may well have been that some Corinthians had not understood the ambivalence of equality and patronage that Paul had in mind. By declining donations from Corinthian donors, as a preacher, he remained free of having to please anybody to whom he “owed” something.<sup>78</sup> By preaching at no cost, he wanted to avoid any obstacle to the spread of the gospel (1 Cor 9:12b; 2 Cor 11:9). Several other factors motivated his refusal as well. God's will and not Paul's own forced him to preach; therefore, he felt uncomfortable taking reimbursement for his work (1 Cor 9:16–17). Also, he wanted to demonstrate that a Christian has to be free to forgo the use of one's rights if necessary—in this case, he did not insist on the missionary's right to be fed by those for whom he preached (1 Cor 9 in the context of chs. 8 and 10). Whatever Paul's conscious motivation might have been to refuse any support from the Corinthians during his stay in Corinth, his refusal prevented the development of a patron–client relationship with any local donor in Corinth.

The relationship between the church in Jerusalem on the one hand and the Pauline congregations on the other was a problematic case. According to 2 Cor 9:12, 14 and Rom 15:26–27, 30–31, the purpose of the money collection in the Pauline churches of Macedonia and Achaia was to ease the economic need of the Jerusalem Christians. At first glance, it seems that the Pauline congregations took on the role of a patron for the Jerusalem church. However, this was not Paul's intention. His aim was a symmetrical, egalitarian relation. In 2 Cor 9:14 and Rom 15:27, he emphasized that the Jerusalem church, being older, let the Pauline congregations “share in their spiritual things”<sup>79</sup> and often prayed for the Pauline Christians. Therefore, the latter were “indebted” to the Jerusalem church (Rom 15:27). In Paul's eyes, reciprocity at eye level was guaranteed. Even more important, Paul understood the collection of money as an economic balancing on the horizontal level; according to him, the money collection specifically aimed at *equality* (ἰσότης, *isotes*) in economic things (2 Cor 8:13–14). For in the future, when the Jerusalem Christians might have more financial means than

<sup>77</sup> See esp. Rainer Metzner, “In aller Freundschaft: Ein frühchristlicher Fall freundschaftlicher Gemeinschaft (Phil 2.25–30),” *NTS* 48 (2002): 111–31.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Gal 1:10.

<sup>79</sup> Κοινωνέω (*koinoneo*), like κοινωνία (*koinonia*), has an egalitarian aspect. See n. 75 above.



the Pauline churches, they would donate in return: “this present time your abundance is a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality.”

However, the Jerusalem Christians looked at the Pauline collection of money differently. From what we know, they most likely *rejected* this financial gift,<sup>80</sup> even though they were in need of money. In Rom 15:31, Paul had feared this disastrous outcome of the collection. And Luke did not know anything about a successful ending of it, although he knew about the offering (Acts 24:17) and although he usually liked to report success stories—even where it was inappropriate to do so.<sup>81</sup>

In the first place, Jerusalem’s rejection of the money offering was theologically motivated. In the time since the apostolic conference (Gal 2:3, 5–9), antagonism had started to color the relationship between the apostle of the Gentiles and the Jerusalem Christians. In the explosive situation in Palestine before the Jewish War, the Jewish Christians of Judea felt increasing pressure from their Jewish neighbors to prove their Jewish identity, especially in their obedience to the Torah. In this situation, a gospel free from the Law increasingly did not fit into the picture, and it became more advisable for the Jerusalem Christians to begin to distance themselves from Paul and his congregations. Presumably, this was one of the reasons they rejected Paul’s money offering, which was meant to be a symbol of *koinonia* and unity between Jerusalem and Paul’s Torah-free congregations (Gal 2:9–10).

A second reason for the rejection of Paul’s money offering is also plausible.<sup>82</sup> By accepting the support, the Jerusalem church would have run the risk of becoming a recipient of charity, of becoming a client of the economically stronger Pauline congregations in Macedonia and Achaia. The symmetry, the status of equals that was once established at the Jerusalem council (Gal 2), would have been lost. Consciously or subconsciously, the Jerusalem church avoided such a patron–client relationship when it rejected the offering of the Pauline churches.<sup>83</sup>

\* \* \*

To summarize, wherever we encountered vertical patron–client-like structures in the social life of Pauline Christianity, they were in conflict with the strong early Christian feeling that horizontal symmetry and equality should govern the social interactions of Christians. This maxim constantly questioned and undermined top-to-bottom social structures and often led to ambiguity in social relationships.

<sup>80</sup> Cf., e.g., P. Achtemeier, *The Quest for Unity in the New Testament Church: A Study in Paul and Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 60, 109.

<sup>81</sup> Especially at the end of Acts, where he seems to suppress the negative news of Paul’s martyrdom (cf., e.g., 1 Clem. 5) in favor of an optimistic tone (Acts 28:31). In the same way he apparently suppressed the news of the disastrous ending of the Pauline collection.

<sup>82</sup> See especially Rebell, *Gehorsam*, above all Part 1.

<sup>83</sup> Seneca reports an analogous case (*Ben.* 2.21.5f.). When receiving money from friends to pay for his praetorian games, Iulius Graecinus refused to accept anything from two particular persons whom he considered infamous. He did not want to be socially bound and obligated to such people.

The early Christian communities were not unique in this respect. Pagan Greco-Roman clubs also often combined hierarchical and egalitarian elements and thus departed from the hierarchical patterns of their social environment.<sup>84</sup> The Christians' religious reasons for this departure, however, were unique. Vertical structures were a given in the Hellenistic world in which the early Christians continued to live. Equality, on the other hand, characterized the coming of the new world that was expected by the Christians and that was believed to manifest itself partially already in the present. According to the early Christians, since the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, the old and the new aeons overlapped until the coming of the eschaton, when the old aeon with its worldly structures would disappear. Thus, wherever the new aeon became manifest already in the present time, wherever people interacted lovingly in relationships of equality, the eschaton was realized at least in a fragmentary way.

The theological reason for the early Christians' equality was their relationship to God: all were considered equally close to God. Thus, the only theologically legitimate vertical structure was God's relation to humanity.

## God and Christ as Patrons

An analogy can be drawn between the patron–client model and the relationship that Christ has with Christians. Christ is their Lord (e.g., Rom 1:4; 10:9, 12; 14:6–9, 14; 1 Cor 1:3). They are joined to him (Rom 7:4; cf. 1 Cor 3:23). They live for him and not for themselves (Rom 14:7–8; 2 Cor 5:15). Christ intercedes for the Christians before God (Rom 8:34; cf. 8:27), like a patron seeks the advance of his client in forensic and other social contexts.

The nexus between Christ and the Christians can also be expressed in the category of “corporate representation” (1 Cor 15:20–22; Rom 5:12–19). This category exhibits at least similarities to a patron–client relationship. According to Paul, both Adam and Christ represent two different aeons. They embody whole groups. Each one of them represents many people: Like Adam all humans sin and are therefore unable to evade sin and must die. Christ's act of righteousness on the cross, on the other hand, leads to justification of many, provided that they accept *Christ as their representative* and make Christ's attribute of being righteous their own attribute. Their righteousness then comes from Christ and not from their own achievements. Applied to resurrection, the category of “corporate representation” means: because God raised Christ from the dead, and because Christ is the *representative* of a whole new aeon, all people of this new aeon—the Christians (1 Cor 15:23b)—will be raised by God, too.

Thus, Christ elevates the eschatological status of Christian persons: they will be eternally saved, reigning with Christ, and made similar to Christ. That is, like a secular patron, Christ promotes the upward mobility of his clients—an upward mobility that depends on the loyalty (πίστις [*pistis*], *fides*) of the clients toward the patron *and* on the loyalty of the patron toward the clients.

<sup>84</sup> This is the main conclusion of T. Schmeller, *Hierarchie und Egalität* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995).

Because loyalty is a *mutual* attitude in patron–client relationships, the question whether the expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*pistis Jesou Christou*, Phil 3:9; Gal 2:16, 20) represents a subjective or an objective genitive might present false alternatives because it is both. Not by *our* “works of the Law,” but because *Christ* was faithful and loyal and because *we* faithfully believe in this Christ, we are justified.<sup>85</sup>

All these statements establishing a vertical patron–client-like relationship between Christ and the Christians, however, are counterbalanced by texts which emphasize Christ’s “brotherhood” in regard to the Christians,<sup>86</sup> his humility, which allowed him to “empty himself” for the benefit of the Christians, and to “take upon him the form of a servant” (e.g., Phil 2:6–8). So even here in the Christ–Christian relationship, an *ambiguity* arises. For the Christian idea of lordship and patronage includes the willingness to serve and to break open static, vertical structures (cf., e.g., 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:7). Christians become equal siblings and fellow heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17).

Last but not least, God’s role as it is pictured in Rom 1–5 can be interpreted in analogy to the patron–client model,<sup>87</sup> although Paul himself does not use these technical terms. As creator, God expects exclusive loyalty (πίστις, *pistis*) from all human beings. Like clients, they are expected to “praise” and “thank” God (Rom 1:21), and if they fail to do so the patron’s wrath is legitimate (1:18). The divine patron for his part shows his own loyalty by bestowing an act of beneficence (χάρις, *charis*): God reconciles humanity through the death of Christ (e.g., Rom 3:25; 5:8; 8:3) and “provides the believer with a new status (δικαιόω, *dikaioo*) and unprecedented access (προσαγωγή, *prosagoge*).”<sup>88</sup> In human patron–client relationships, acts of benefaction reinforce the difference in status between the benefactor and the client. This is also Paul’s concern in Rom 1:23, 25: in the realm of sin, the distinction between the Creator and creature was blurred, and this alienated humanity from God. Thus, God’s beneficial act of reconciliation re-establishes this distinction. Like all acts of patronage, this benefaction carries with it the obligation to honor the divine patron as sovereign God.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> The context (Gal 1:23; 3:6, 9) seems to indicate that Paul himself was more focused on an objective genitive. However, the author’s intention is not always congruent with the text’s entire potential. Gal 3:20, especially, can also be read as a subjective genitive, with the participles at the end of the verse expressing beautifully Christ’s loyalty toward his clients.

<sup>86</sup> See above, n. 47, above, and Heb 2:11–12 and John 20:17.

<sup>87</sup> See R. W. Pickett, “The Death of Christ as Divine Patronage in Romans 5:1–11,” in *Society of Biblical Literature 1993 Seminar Papers*, ed. E. H. Lovering (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 726–39. For God as benefactor and patron and Jesus as mediator of God’s favor in the New Testament, see also, e.g., D. A. DeSilva, “Patronage and Reciprocity: The Context of Grace in the New Testament,” *ATJ* 31 (1999): 32–84; A. Smith, *Comfort One Another: Reconstructing the Rhetoric and Audience of 1 Thessalonians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995); B. J. Malina, “Patron and Client: The Analogy behind Synoptic Theology,” *Forum* 4 (1988): 2–32.

<sup>88</sup> Pickett, “Death,” 736. For the προσαγωγή (*prosagoge*), see Rom 5:2.

<sup>89</sup> Pickett (*ibid.*, 738f.) also suggests: “By depicting God as divine patron in Rom. 1–5, . . . Paul may . . . have been challenging the emperor’s role as great patron of all.” There may be some truth to it, if the singular in Rom 1:23 (ἀνθρώπου, *anthropou*) really alludes to the imperial cult. In Rom 13, however, we look in vain for such challenging allusions. That receiving *charis* implies obligations, especially gratefulness and loyalty (*fides*, *pistis*), toward the generous patron according to Greco-Roman standards shows that this concept of grace, which Paul uses, is not unilateral but prevents “cheap grace.” However, assuming



### Part III.

#### Pauline and Paulinist Passages for Further Reflection

Rom 16:3, 7, 9, 21

1 Cor 1:1; 3:21–22; 12:28; 16:10–11, 15–16, 18–19

2 Cor 1:1, 11, 19; 2:13; 3:1; 4:5; 7:6–7, 13–15; 8:6, 13–14, 16–19, 22–23; 9:3, 5; 11:7, 12, 20, 28–29; 12:10, 17–18; 13:4, 9a

Gal 1:10; 2:1, 3, 7; 4:13–18; 6:6

Phil 1:1; 2:19–23, 25, 29–30; 3:17; 4:1–3, 9–19

1 Thess 1:1, 6–7; 2:6–9; 3:2, 5–6; 4:11–12; 5:12–14

2 Thess 1:1; 3:7–12; Col 1:1, 7; 4:1, 7–14, 17

Eph 6:9, 21

1 Tim 3:1–13; 4:13f.; 5:1–2, 4, 8, 16–17; 6:17–19

2 Tim 1:16–18; 4:10–12, 19–20

Titus 1:5–9; 3:12–13; and see the cross-references in the footnotes.

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that this concept challenges the soteriological *sola-gratia* formula of the Reformation (thus P. Pettersson, “*Charis och reciprocitet i 2 Kor 8–9*.” *SvenskExegArs* 73 [2008]: 101–21) may be misunderstanding the Reformers.

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